

Dual Vision: Background and Prospect: the 'Single Eye',
'Heart Right' in Hopkins' *The Wreck of the Deutschland*

Thomas Carroll Heffernan

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A paradigm: John's gospel reports that Jesus gave sight to a man born blind. Asked to blame Jesus as a sinner for performing a miracle on the Sabbath, the man says, 'I was blind, but now I see' (John 9.25). Then Jesus asks if he believes him the son of God, and the man answers, 'Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him' (9.38). This gift of sight to bodily eyes was at the same time the gift of sight to the spiritual eye of faith--a classic story of amazing grace.

Dual vision is seeing at the same time in one act of consciousness two things: outwardly seeing something with the outer sense of physical vision and inwardly seeing something with the inner sense of spiritual vision. The words spoken by the man born blind illustrate an event of dual vision: his words manifest his dual vision as a point of view. Hopkins' speaker sees by dual vision, in *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. Dual vision, I argue in the following remarks.

At the climax of *The Wreck of the Deutschland* the speaker shows the tall nun's experience of dual vision. By his own power of dual vision the speaker recognizes hers. The tall nun's words 'O Christ, Christ, come quickly' manifest her dual vision---at the same time in one act of consciousness, she sees outward and inward realities, the storm she outwardly sees taking her temporal life is at the same time the occasion when by faith she inwardly experiences her approaching entrance to eternal life.

As I have said, to see with dual vision is to see *at the same time* in one act of consciousness an outer, physical reality and an inner, spiritual reality. For more than two thousand years the existence of dual vision was commonplace in the works of poets, philosophers and spiritual writers. Plato for instance saw his dual (Eternal/temporal) vision in 'the eye of the mind'. Later, Christians spoke of 'the eye of the heart'. Until the so-called Enlightenment, the existence of dual vision was familiar, taken for granted, culturally mainstream. But by 1803 William Blake was able to complain of the loss of inner senses, the loss of dual vision; he lamented the encroachment of 'Single vision and Newton's sleep', that is, a merely physical, mechanical way of seeing reality.

By the time Hopkins wrote *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, the 'single eye' that sees dual vision, the 'eye of the heart' that names the controlling point of view of his poem, was no longer familiar to the common reader in England. It was familiar to Hopkins, however, the brilliant student of Plato and

other Classical writers at Balliol, and especially as the Jesuit practicing the *Spiritual Exercises* of his order's founder, Ignatius Loyola, whose instructions for meditation involve dual vision.

The dual vision Blake saw to be passing was related to what medieval psychology knew as the Five Inner and the Five Outer Wits, and to what Plato called the 'eye of the mind' and Christians with added intent called the 'eye of the heart' and Hopkins calls the 'single eye', an allusion to Christ's words in Matthew 6:22, 'The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.'

Christ told his apostles, 'I am the light of the world,' in John's account of the amazing grace that gave dual vision to the blind man. For, restored to bodily sight, the man answered 'I believe' to Christ's challenge, 'Dost thou believe on the Son of God? it is he that talketh with thee.'

While simply holding a Christ-centered view obviously does not make great poetry, it is undeniable that, being the person he was, Hopkins' life in religion animates the poems by which we measure him great.

Born in 1844, an accomplished poet by the time he went up to Oxford, where in 1866 he became Roman Catholic. After graduation in 1867 having decided to enter a religious order, and wishing to devote his attention to spiritual life, he renounced the writing of poetry, in the poem 'The Habit of Perfection'. He entered the Jesuits in 1868. In 1875, after seven years of Jesuit life, when by his own 'elected silence' he did not practice poetry, but developed his powers of observation, insight, reflection and expression, he wrote one of the great poems in the English language.

The Wreck of the Deutschland is dedicated 'To the / happy memory of five Franciscan nuns / exiles by the Falck laws / drowned between midnight and morning of / Dec. 7th, 1875'. The poem is in two parts. Part One has ten stanzas of eight lines; it does not directly speak of the German ship or the drowned nuns; it identifies the speaker; his is a voice seeking understanding in internal dialogue with God. The poem, including matter from the writer's life, is in the manner of an ode; more, as address to God, it is prayer. Part Two narrates this particular speaker's interpretation of the wreck, centering on words and actions of the tallest nun according to survivors' reports Hopkins read in the *London Times*.

The ship *Deutschland* going full speed in a blinding winter storm slammed into shoals near the mouth of the Thames, suffered hours of battering, and eventually was lost. The climax of the narrative Part II of *The Wreck of the Deutschland* occurs in Stanza 24, where 'they the prey of the gales; / She to the black-about air, to the breaker, the thickly / Falling flakes, to the throng that catches and quails / [the tall nun] Was calling 'O Christ, Christ, come quickly': / The cross to her she calls Christ to her,

christens her wild-worst Best.' Immediately, in the next stanza, 25, the speaker asks, 'What did she mean?' when she called out 'O Christ, Christ, come quickly'. He considers the nun under several aspects and then in Stanza 29 he says:

Ah! there was a heart right! 225
There was single eye!
Read the unshapeable shock night
And knew the who and the why;
Wording it how but by him that present and past,
Heaven and earth are word of, worded by? 230
The Simon Peter of a soul! to the blast
Tarpeian-fast, but a blown beacon of light.

As I have said, the 'single eye' refers not to a literal physical eye, but refers to a way of seeing, or ways of seeing, things not knowable by the physical senses, or physical senses alone, a commonplace until the Enlightenment, after which the language describing it passed from public speech. The language people used in earlier periods to talk about this way of knowing was passing by 1803. William Blake's 1803 letter to his patron Butts showed his alarm that it was passing; he wrote 'God save us from single vision and Newton's sleep.' Blake was speaking of the necessity of dual vision, a point of view he practiced in his multiplex art. Blake's attachment to Swedenborg is not the only explanation for his tone in this aspect. Nor is Hopkins' personal practice of dual vision explained solely by his Jesuit training in the Ignatian *Exercises*. His sense of dual vision was supported by a lineage, by his ability to articulate it---he is able even to include in his poem internal instructions about how to read the poem (for stressing 'the single eye', the 'heart right' in the poem points to sources of interpretation)---his own registration of dual vision was supported by his wide knowledge of the Classical and Christian sources of Western culture.

Often diverse in nuance and application, awareness of inner and outer vision is common in thinkers and writers before the Enlightenment, for example Plato, St. Paul, St. Augustine, Shakespeare, St. Teresa of Avila, William Blake. For Plato (in the *Phaedo*) the bodily eye's 'simple sight' brings images that distract the 'eye of the mind' from seeing what is real, confusing the mind as if it staggered, drunken. The analogy the 'eye of the body'/'the eye of the mind' was preferred by non-Christian Greeks. The Christian St. Paul's 'analogy of faith' (Rom. 12), whereby by grace each has his 'measure of faith,' suggests the eye of faith. Building upon his love for neo-Platonism and passing beyond it, Augustine made a three-tiered distinction between fleshly, intellectual and spiritual levels of experi-

ence in his analogy of ascending awareness. That is, he said Plato saw intelligible things, but did not have the faith, he did not know the Incarnation. Plato knew there is a Creator; he had used the word Creator in the *Republic*. But Plato did not have the faith (Augustine wrote), he did not know of the One Three-Personed God, whose second person joined in himself human and divine natures. The Incarnation of the Word of God, Christ, in the body of Jesus had put one person's (the man Jesus) human nature in union in the Trinity, and so had lifted up all of Creation. But this was unknown to Plato: and so Augustine wrote, I did not read of the living God there. Later, a Greek word, hypostasis, became the term for the union of the human and divine natures in Christ, as well as the union of the Three Persons in One Divine Being. I will return to hypostasis, in connection with Stanza 5 of *The Wreck of the Deutschland*.

An instance of cultural transmission: a thousand years after he wrote it a copy of Augustine's *Confessions* came into the hands of St. Theresa of Avila (at age 40); the book was most valuable in helping her to understand what happened to her, she tells us in her autobiography. Two hundred and fifty years further on, St. Theresa's *Life* was one of William Blake's 2 or 3 favorite books. Blake's father had brought him up as a Swedenborgian. And Blake himself was accused of 'popish' tendencies. Blake had an Irish friend John Barry with whom he shared a love of the spiritual lines of Gothic architecture. Somewhat similarly, sketches in page upon page of Hopkins' notebooks repeat Hopkins' sense of the spirituality of line, Gothic line, as distinct from the fleshly volumes of later chiaroscuro styles. For Blake, St Theresa and the Gothic line manifested the spirit, one incarnate in flesh, the other impetrinate in stone.

Hopkins and Transcendence: The Primacy of the Human Nature of Jesus in the Created World.

Transcendence and Immanence are two sides of the same question which, originally, could have been phrased, What is the origin of the world, the universe, and of its organization? Plato's answer was a cosmic efficient cause; Aristotle's answer was a transcendently lovable and desirable "Supreme Intelligence," the final cause to which all activity in the universe tends. For Plato, in his *Republic*, the Creator's energy moves, moves in, the world; his pupil Aristotle's teleology includes immanent and transcendent motifs. This picture remained more or less the same until Christians associated what to the Greeks were impersonal transcendent and immanent causes, with the Triune God. Augustine, for instance, in Book X of *Confessions*, remembers Paul's remark that man 'can catch sight of God's invisible nature through his creatures' (Romans 1:2), but, says Augustine, man's love 'of these material things becomes too great' (bk. 10.6). Whenever this happens, says Augustine, Man becomes their 'slave' and loses his inner power of judgment. This is a concern that Hopkins voices in 'To What Serves Mortal Beauty?' For the purpose of bodily senses and their perception of mortal beauty is to raise the

soul to love their Creator. And Augustine says, 'It is clear that I have both body and soul, the one the outer, the other the inner part of me.' (Bk. 10.6).

In relation to such consideration, of the outer and inner man, there developed the notion of The Five Inner and Outer Wits, a commonplace in England by Chaucer's fourteenth century. The OED gives numerous examples: as to the bodily wits, in 1300 a reference gives 'Hering, sight, smelling and fele, cheuing, er wittes five' [hearing, sight, smell, touch, taste [chewing] are five wits]; The 1340 *Ayenbite of Inwit* has 'v'e wyttes of [the] zaule[five wits of the soul]'. In 1380 Wyclif speaks of the 'fyve wyttys, uttyr and innyr [five wits, outer and inner]. In 1509 Stephen Hawes *Pastime of Pleasure* xxiv. ii. (Percy Soc.) 108 gives his version of the five inner wits; 'These are the .v. wyttes remeuing inwardly: Fyrst, commyn wytte, and than ymaginacyon, Fantasy, and estymacyon truly, And memory [These are the five wits moving inwardly: first, common wit, and then imagination, fancy, and true judgment. And memory.'

To give a further example of what was once in England a mainstream idea, almost a century later, Shakespeare speaks of the Five Inner and Outer Wits as a commonplace reality in a literary work that assumes an audience who know what these 'wits' are: except that Shakespeare departs from earlier terminology, and uses the term wits only for the inner senses, reserving the word senses to the outer wits, which he calls, as we do now, the five senses. In Sonnet 141 Shakespeare's speaker addresses a person the poem's speaker unwisely but faithfully loves: 'But [neither] my five wits nor my five senses can / Dissuade one foolish heart from loving thee' (ll. 9-10).

Both inner and outer wits are in thrall, and, as in Augustine's terms, the speaker is a 'slave'. Losing his inner power of judgment, his own heart is enslaved to the 'proud heart' of this unsuitable beloved: 'Thy proud heart's slave and vassal wretch to be: / Only my plague thus far I count my gain, / That she that makes me sin awards me pain' (ll. 12-14).

We see by this sonnet a traditional contrastive figure, the outer versus the inner wits or senses. Among these---the bodily eye as distinct from the ghostly or spiritual eye---, the eye of the heart takes primacy, being and having primary sense.

Association of heart and eye in this psychology of the Five Inner and Outer Wits is further illustrated in an emblem in George Wither's 1635 emblem book which borrowed (without acknowledgment) the plates of an emblem book by Gabriel Rollenhagen, a continental Jesuit. The illustration in Wither's Book I, the 43rd emblem, from Rollenhagen's 1611 *Nucleus emblematum selectissimorum, centuria prima*, depicts a heart on which an open eye gazes toward the reader. With other details in the illustration, this visual image, according to Wither's accompanying verse, 'signifie[s] / A minde, which [dwells] on Celestial Matters.' (See this illustration at "<http://emblem.libraries.psu.edu/withe043.htm>)

Jesuit and English, Hopkins in his time using the image 'eye of the heart' participated in a continuum, namely this dual Jesuit and English aspect, in the history of English religion and culture. Of interest also is another continuum regarding his poem's contextual image, the image of a soul's shipwreck as occasion for response to Christ's call.

A traditional Jesuit use of this image, itself owing to yet older tradition, occurs in the Anglican Francis Quarles's 1635 *Emblemes*. From the continental Jesuit Herman Hugo's 1624 *Pia Desideria* Quarles (without acknowledgment) takes an emblem of shipwreck and a soul being called to Christ.

The shipwreck is difficult to see in original editions of Quarles: Comparison of printed books once in my possession, showed the plate in Quarles less clear than that in Hugo. See, for example, <http://www.emblem.libraries.psu.edu/qu164_65.htm>. Also available on the internet is Henry Bonwicke's 1684 English translation of Hugo's book, in which a better copy of Hugo's illustration clearly shows a wrecked ship, and Anima, personifying the human soul, lost at sea, swimming toward the outstretched hand of winged Amor who personifies divine love. This illustration can be seen at <<http://emblem.libraries.psu.edu/hu052053.htm>>. I have been unable to find Hugo's original illustration online. Bonwicke's translated verse expounding the emblem's meaning ends, if rather plainly, with direct address to the divine: 'Behold, O Lord, / By thy Almighty hand / I shall quickly reach the wish'd-for Land.'

Traditional image, reality, poetical brilliance, devotional insight combine when in *The Wreck of the Deutschland* Hopkins shows the tall nun in the midst of shipwreck answering Christ's call. Her behavior and outcry had been reported in the English press. Here, an actual event---the shipwreck and the nun's response to Christ's call, which in her vocation, the call to be a nun, she has answered already as living nun, she is now answering as dying nun entering eternal life---this actual event resonates with a traditional mimetic typological image, familiar from Biblical, Patristic, and Jesuit writings. One may say Hopkins' personal background and education prepared him to 'see' the nun's behaviour, to 'understand' it, and to show it in his poem.

Special historical senses of 'understand' of especial pertinence to Hopkins as Jesuit and as Greek and Latin classicist deeply aware of meaning and words, shall receive mention some paragraphs below.

To illustrate (for viewing by the physical eye) what cannot be seen by the physical eye is a contradiction or confusion of experiences, and requires a certain cultural environment to seem natural or at least not strange; needless to say, in the rationalistic environment of public discourse since the Enlightenment, the devotional emblems, above, look strange.

Such corporal metaphors had been commonplace for centuries. In the *Republic* (533d) Plato spoke of the dialectical method raising 'the eye of the soul, buried in barbaric mud,' and thereafter the 'eye of the soul' metaphor is taken up by classical and Christian writers. 'In this usage the visual power of the

physical eye is transferred to the perceptive faculty of the intellect. Inner senses are coordinated with the outer, ' says Curtius. The heart also has ears; Augustine has 'the ears of the heart' in Confessions (I, 5 and IV, 27). Other bodily organs get their turn. The Christian writers look back to Old Testament metaphors like 'praeputium cordis' (Deut. 10: 16; Prov. 4:4).' Paul answers this with 'the circumcision of the heart' (Romans 2:25-29). 'Characteristic of Augustine are metaphors which violate visual perception: 'the hand of the heart' (Conf. X, 12), 'the head of the soul (Conf. X, 7)'. Curtius, who gives such examples, says, 'The field is immense and unexplored. An entire volume could be filled with examples from patristic literature alone.... Modern style-psychology would perhaps call this entire class of metaphors 'Baroque. In that case, literary Baroque is as old as the Bible'... (Curtius, 137 et al.).

Wither's emblem from Rollenhagen is a heart having a single eye, to which Wither puts the motto, 'The Minde should have a fixed Eye / On Objects, that are plac'd on High.' Figure 1 below shows this Single eye, of the Heart, a representation of the traditional 'single eye' by which the nun in *The Wreck of the Deutschland* 'sees' in her mind's eye, heart's eye; in her by love of Christ the 'single eye' sees by Christian faith, she sees by faith (not by hallucination) Christ; she hears by faith, with what Augustine and others call 'the ears of the soul,' Christ's promise at the end of John's Book of Revelation, 'I will come quickly' and repeats his words, the words of his promise, in prayer back to Him. At the same time her Outer Wits are conscious---she sees and hears the sights and sounds of the dreadful storm, so at the same time that she hears her own voice calling Christ, to her Inner Wits her expectation of his presence is conscious: her Inner Wits---in her heart, mind, soul, to use vocabulary Christian tradition developed to talk about this range of experience.

According to this reading, the psychology of Sonnet 141 derives from Augustinian tradition as developed by medieval mystical thought (Ancrene Wisse, Walter Hilton, e.g.) about inner seeing or contemplation. The speaker conceitedly misdirects the familiar traditional schema or schemae from sacred love to something less: he claims enslavement to profane love. Yet in the sonnet this love articulates as paradox: both inner wits and outer wits or senses advise him not to love the faithless beloved, but at the same time fallen humankind in fallen Creation nevertheless allow glimpses of divine love, even when misdirected toward sin and pain, the opposite of the ideal of what one may term 'ordinary' Christian mysticism, namely, to 'see' the created world as transformed by the Incarnation.

Hopkin's understanding, everywhere in his mature poems, is grounded in the Incarnation. Augustine's *De Trinitate* had early on explored the wonder of a Creator/creature united in one person, the second Person of the Trinity, Christ, whose divine nature conjoins the human nature of the particular, unrepeatable, unique man Jesus, and by bringing the human creatureliness of Jesus Christ the Word made Flesh into the Godhead, God at the same time in this particular direct way entered into his Creation: 'The world is charged with the grandeur of God.' As to the way that reading Duns Scotus (d. 1309) had confirmed and clarified ideas and insight Hopkins already experienced: We see in 'God's

'Grandeur' the linking between Scotus's doctrine of the Primacy of the Human Nature of Jesus in the Creation and of the uniqueness of Jesus: Scotus's notion of *haecceitas* the 'thisness' or uniqueness of every existent being, every blade of grass, every person, is grounded in the unique situation of Jesus Christ, unique as every creature is unique, at the same time he is unique as the Second Person in the Triune God: in Scotus's view, God wanted to love a creature who could love him with the same love with which he loves himself; this creature is Christ or, rather, the human nature of Jesus with which the divine Word unites itself fully.

In this relation, it is notable that the Oxford English Dictionary cites Dun Scotus, quoting his Latin text from the year 1300, as the earliest source for the word *transcendent* in the English language: a philosophical term the Schoolmen applied 'to predicates which by their universal application were considered to transcend the Aristotelian categories or predicaments.... '1300 Duns Scotus Rep. Par. in Sent. i. viii. v. fl.13 Praedicata... quae dicuntur de Deo... sunt praedicata transcendentia... quidquid convenit enti antequam descendat in genera [i.e. the categories] est transcendens. [Predicates which are said of God are transcendent predicates...].'

In Stanza 5 Hopkins's speaker says Christ is 'under' the appearances of Creation.

This usage reminds us of similar analogical use in the pre-Socratics' proto-metaphysical idea of water or air or fire unifying, by 'standing under', the apparent diversity of things. The later Greek word hypostasis (*hypo*, under; *stasis*, stand), it happens, is used to name the union of the Three Persons and of the Two Natures in the Second Person. Thus for the classical-scholar, Jesuit, this-person Hopkins the word 'understand' resonates with the meaning: Christ. Likewise, the first meaning the Oxford English Dictionary gives for the word 'substance' (*sub*, under, *stantia*, standing) is: 'Essential nature, essence; esp. Theol., with regard to the being of God, the divine nature or essence in respect of which the three Persons of the Trinity are one.'

Hopkins revitalizes this English word 'understand' at the end of Stanza 5, where the 'instress'---the presence of God---in the starlight and the sunset is Christ 'under the world's splendour,' a cause of love in the speaker: 'I kiss my hand / To the stars, lovely-asunder / Starlight, wafting him out of it; and / Glow, glory in thunder; / Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west: / Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder, / His mystery must be instressed, stressed; / For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand.'

There are certain resemblances between Hopkins's outlook in *The Wreck of the Deutschland* and Augustine's *Confessions* and *De Trinitate* and *Tractates* on the Gospel of St. John. To Augustine, the purpose of a human life on earth was to achieve a *reditus*, or return, to be in final union with the Creator from whence that life came. Hopkins ends *The Wreck of the Deutschland* with a triple *reditus*. 1)

The nun has made her *reditus*: the speaker prays to her as one of the saints in heaven interceding for those on earth; 2) he prays that England will make a *reditus* by return to the ancient Church that was her glory before it was all reduced as Shakespeare said to 'bare ruined choirs.' As to these two returns, Hopkins concludes his poem: 'Dame, at our door / Drowned, and among our shoals, / Remember us in the roads, the heaven-haven of the Reward: / 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, / Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest, / Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' chivalry's throng's Lord.'

And 3), a third return: it is remarkable that one of the last poems Hopkins wrote before renouncing poetry in his poem 'The Habit of Perfection' joins full circle with the story of the nuns in *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. For in the poem 'Heaven-Haven' (subtitled 'A nun takes the veil') the nun has prayed for safety from storms, her eye on heaven, her final haven. The nun-speaker says: 'I have asked to be / Where no storms come, / Where the green swell is in the havens dumb, / And out of the swing of the sea.' That poem is imagination, before Hopkins had actually left secular life. Now, breaking seven years of 'elected silence' during his Jesuit life, in the final stanza of *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, seeing by the single eye, in the dual vision of prayer, Hopkins writes again of 'heaven-haven': 'Dame, at our door / Drowned, and among our shoals, / Remember us in the roads, the heaven-haven of the Reward.'

Hopkins died in 1889, aged 44, of typhus in Dublin. Much is made of his terrible sonnets, written not long before, expressing dark nights and storms of the soul.

Yet did not that part of his life preface something quite otherwise?

His last words were, 'I am happy.'

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