THE POETICS OF
MALLARME, HOPKINS AND APOLLINAIRE

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Centre for Comparative Literature
University of Toronto

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Abstract

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The Sapir-Whorf linguistic relativity hypothesis is employed here in a study of three grammatically innovative poets: two late-19th century experimenters, Stéphane Mallarmé and Gerard Manley Hopkins, who push the cognitive predispositions of French and English towards the limits; and one early-20th century poet, Guillaume Apollinaire, who to a great extent overcomes such linguistic determinism, demonstrating how Gallic "essence" and Germanic "existence" may be balanced in a more consciously transnational poetry.

Given the linguistically archetypal character of the work of these poets, this study is also an investigation into the nature of language itself: on the one hand, aesthetic artifice (as in Mallarmé), and on the other hand, immediate connection to the world (as in Hopkins); and when these modes of understanding are combined, language becomes (as in Apollinaire) a medium of active intellectual engagement with the world, by which we both create and are created -- a poetry, in the words of Wallace Stevens, "wholly containing the mind".

A simple description of this study could thus be given in the Hegelian formula: primary mind (Hopkins) + secondary mind (Mallarmé) = World Spirit (Apollinaire). But the argument's full elaboration is less simple than that, since both Mallarmé and Hopkins counterbalance their poetry to a great extent with its non-native complement: Mallarmé incorporating "musique" and "mystère" into his predominantly mentalist abstraction, and Hopkins being open to Latin-based Christianity as the idealized end-point and consummation of endless Germanic flux. Apollinaire's more pragmatic poetry may be considered to be a work of social and personal love, combining Gallic abstract desire and Germanic belonging.

Numerous poems by each of these writers are analysed and interpreted in the light of this theory, with frequent reference to Hegel in the reading of Mallarmé, to Heidegger in the reading of Hopkins, and to various thinkers (particularly Nietzsche, J.L. Austin, and Julia Kristeva) in the reading of Apollinaire.
for Salvatore DiFalco

and Antonio DePasquale
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Preface

the realm in which the dialogue between poetry and thinking goes on can be discovered, reached and explored in thought only slowly... (Heidegger "What Are Poets For?" 98)

Since the dialogue between poetry and philosophy may be considered to constitute the essence of philosophy (pragmatic communication on the one hand, a pure logic of signs on the other) it is unsurprising that Martin Heidegger should write that the realm of this dialogue can be discovered only slowly. But might it it not also be the case that, from a position quite different than Heidegger's, one not so stubbornly unitary and historical, but instead rationalist, structural, mechanistic, and basically atemporal, the realm of dialogue in question may be discovered (if not fully explored) very quickly? That is, as quickly as one can recognize that the relation of sign and referent may be, in some respects, quite arbitrary, and mind and world separate domains?

This, essentially, is the primary philosophic opposition operative in any comparison of Germanic and Romance cultural products, and the one I rely upon in the following study of the philosophic grounding of three innovative poets, Stéphane Mallarmé, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Guillaume Apollinaire. The first two, I argue, push their languages' inherent world views to the extreme; and the third, Apollinaire, to a great extent overcomes such linguistic determinism, and demonstrates how Gallic "essence" and Germanic "existence" may be balanced in a more consciously transnational poetry.

Given the linguistically archetypal character of the work of the three writers under consideration, this study is also an investigation into the nature of language itself: on the one hand,
aesthetic artifice, and on the other hand, immediate connection to the world; and when these modes of understanding are combined, language becomes the medium of active intellectual engagement with the world, by which we both create and are created -- a poetry, in the words of Wallace Stevens, "wholly / Containing the mind".

A simple description of what I have undertaken here could thus be given in a Hegelian formula: primary mind (Hopkins) + secondary mind (Mallarmé) = World Spirit (Apollinaire). But the argument's full elaboration is somewhat less simple than that, since both Mallarmé and Hopkins counter-balance their poetry to a certain extent with its non-native complement: Mallarmé incorporating "musique" and "mystère" into his predominantly mentalist abstraction, and Hopkins being quite open to Latin-based Christianity as the idealized end-point and consummation of endless Germanic flux. One might argue, indeed, that even in their livelihoods these poets sought the force of linguistic complementarity or contrast -- Mallarmé working as a teacher of English, Hopkins becoming a priest in the Society of Jesus, and a teacher of Greek. Contrariwise, it is apparent that Apollinaire's project of merging linguistic world views is handicapped during his months in the trenches during the Great War, when the German becomes the enemy.

Such lapses notwithstanding, Apollinaire's development of a fully modern poetry (carried forward above all by T.S. Eliot in the English-speaking world) marks a transformation in philosophy, as the model of thought is changed from a tension between the organic and the mechanical, to a more unitary mode -- that is, to a democratic contextualism. Of course, the earlier philosophical models, even antiquity's "formism", still have their place and their use; but the nature of contextualism is recognition of the human power to shift models at will, so that every individual
can, as it were, incorporate a "multi-party system" into his personal politics of living. Such continual shifting, being the basis of Apollinaire's theory that the new poetry is grounded in surprise, is put into practice throughout his work, most famously perhaps in the curious breaks from lyric form in "La Chanson du Mal-Aimé", and in the paradoxicality of "Zone". However, rather than focusing on such popular poems of maximal effect, I have concentrated more upon poems that better reveal the fundamental cause of the new poetics, such as "Les Fiançailles". Likewise, in the study of Mallarmé and Hopkins there is more philosophic explanation than overt aesthetic admiration -- consistent with the critic's standard, and one hopes not too irksome, practice of putting judgement before enjoyment.

Ideally, then, readers of this study, explorers of the realm of dialogue between poetry and philosophy, will gain not only a greater respect for linguistic relativism within the bounds of poetic/philosophic creation, but also an enhanced sense of the multivalency of the modernist text. And if, in demonstrating how national linguistic prejudice can be framed and understood, I have been governed to a certain extent by my own hybridizing English prejudices, it must be tolerated as another example of the English destiny, this time in the form of the English tongue, to be ever the "arbiter of Europe". Though English, in its turn, cannot, of course, be properly understood without an examination of the two language families from which it has been formed.
CHAPTER I

Mallarmé

It may be said that literary study has tended to proceed along three separate paths, essentially corresponding to the three varieties of knowledge recognized by Kant -- the "synthetic a priori", the empirical, and the analytic-logical -- or, in terms of Hegelian psychology, primary consciousness, self consciousness, and analytic Spirit. Most theory and criticism mixes all three types quite freely, of course, but it does not do so indiscriminately; indeed, the prioritizing of the kinds of knowledge within any given critique is of the first importance in setting its "theoretical orientation," and in determining its relation to schools past and present. For example, the "synthetic a priori" manner of proceeding, grounded in primary awareness, is dominant in phenomenological approaches that consider the relation to a text and its referents immediately, and in New Criticism which, eliminating external context, performs a comparable reduction of focus onto the literary object. The empirical mode, grounded in individual self consciousness and the temporality of the ego, dominates in countless works of biographical, historical and psychological criticism that through observation and sensus communis gather data for continually-revised judgment (e.g., the Anglo-American tradition generally). Finally, the atemporal analytic stream, born of apperception's cogito, and concerned with manifestations of rules assumed to be absolute, comprises especially formalism and structuralism -- that is, inquiry concerning the immanent relations within semiotic systems (Croce, Jakobson, Frye, Barthes, etc.)¹.

I set out this very brief organon of theory because Mallarmé's poetry, our subject in this
first chapter, tends, due to its strikingly innovative grammar, to push theory's limits in every
direction, to challenge it, and force it to redefine itself. Indeed, for the critic his writing may be
considered a limit case of the difficulty of taking a work of art's full measure -- and a limit case to
date often considered without as much dialogue as might be wished between the three approaches
outlined above. From the phenomenological school the pre-eminent study has been Jean-Pierre
Richard's, characterized by a continuous positive engagement or relation with the Mallarmé poem
as phenomenon in present consciousness. For Richard, who assigns himself the task of making an
inventory of the referents in Mallarmé's imaginative universe through a "phénoménologie concrète
de ses objets fétiches" (19), this means resisting the

si puissant vertige de l'absence que veut créer en nous la poésie mallarméenne, et
qui a emporté tant de ses meilleurs commentateurs : car cette poésie, elle, demeure
bien présente, et c'est cette présence que nous devons d'abord interroger .... C'est
dans le monde sensible que la spiritualité la plus pure traverse son épreuve, fixe sa
qualité. (20)

The empiricist stream is admirably exemplified by the work of L.J. Austin who has carried
forward the sensitive academicization of Mallarmé begun by Paul Valéry. In his view, as an
independent subject regarding a separated aesthetic object,

La lecture attentive et répétée des poèmes les plus difficiles de Mallarmé conduira
peu à peu vers une compréhension plus grande. Ici la règle d'or a été formulée par
Valéry : "il fallait leur donner un sens qui ne fût pas indigne de leur forme
admirable" (Oeuvres, I, p.646). L'analyse rigoureuse de leur syntaxe, toujours
cohérente chez Mallarmé, et le rapprochement des mots, des images, des idées
avec d'autres poèmes ou textes en prose, aideront dans cette recherche du sens.
(Introduction to Poésies, 35)

In the analytic camp, Julia Kristeva's Révolution du langage poétique is less sanguine
concerning the coherence of Mallarméan syntax, and suggests that while the poetry is ultimately
coherent, it only becomes so by breaking down the subject in a "traversée globale" (85) of the signifying process. This exploration of semiosis undertaken by both author and reader transforms linguistic structures to the point that the vital transforming literary work can be understood only by individuals open to active self-transformation within a dynamic unity of the pre-conscious and conscious:

Cette pratique du procès [the writing practice of Mallarmé and Joyce] n'a pas de destinataire; il n'y a pas de sujet, fût-il divisé, qui puisse l'entendre. Cette pratique ne s'adresse pas, elle emporte tout ce qui fait partie du même espace pratique : des "unités" humaines en procès. (96)

Where does Mallarmé's poetry fit in to this triadic classification of knowledge? Clearly suffused with a Hegelian sensibility (cf. Janine Langan's Hegel and Mallarmé), its ultimate orientation is towards the analytic absolute Idea. But as the only way to fuller knowledge on this level of symbolic form is through balancing and fusing self consciousness with "primordial" knowledge -- i.e., primary rhythmic, sensual and volitional drives on the a priori level -- it is necessarily more open to this primary level of consciousness as well. While on the surface Mallarmé's art may seem to be more concerned with analysis, with abstraction and "virtualité", with flowers absent from all bouquets, etc., it can only achieve this continual symbolic analysis, and "compensate" for it, via a sensitivity to the phonic, musical aspects of poetry that is, in French, unprecedented. The result of this extension of the boundaries of verbal communication both upwards and downwards is a more balanced, because better grounded, poetry. The antithesis of the "juste milieu", it is all the same a "juste équilibre" of the knowledge triad of body, mind, and spirit.
"Juste", that is, within the context of French as a linguistic medium, the context of the colours of thought on the national "palate". If, once again, Mallarmé seems to favour abstraction, it is in large part because French itself (due to its separation of subject and object by the verb, lack of a tonic accent, description by a progression of discrete divisions, a quite rigid lexicon, etc.) favours the abstract. Mallarmé himself recognized, both in general and in the specifics of French, linguistically-motivated predispositions of thought. In his meditation on Wagner, for example, he focuses specifically on the contrast between the Germanic focus on origins (associated with primary consciousness) and the French one on abstraction (empiricism and analysis). While grammatical differences are not touched on specifically here, they are clearly encompassed in the general argument that in Germany -- for the German "public" -- the world is drenched in the well of the primitive, while the French "esprit" seeks the abstract, and loathes ("répugne") the primordial level of "la Légende":

Avec une piété antérieure, un public pour la seconde fois depuis les temps, héllenique d'abord, maintenant germain, considère le secret, représenté, d'origines. Quelque singulier bonheur, neuf et barbare, l'asseoit : devant le voile mouvant la subtilité de l'orchestration, à une magnificence qui décore sa genèse.

Tout se retrempe au ruisseau primitif: pas jusqu'à la source.

Si l'esprit français, strictement imaginatif et abstrait, donc poétique, jette un éclat, ce ne sera pas ainsi : il répugne, en cela d'accord avec l'Art dans son intégrité, qui est inventeur, à la Légende. (544)

As we shall see, however, Mallarmé does, in fact, undertake his own less overt examination of origins; and his conception of poetry as abstraction does not forbid (this is the dialectical antithesis generating his art) that he should perceive an intimate link of sound and
meaning in a given language, or even, as he rather extravagantly speculates in *Les Mots Anglais*, across all languages. In this particular prose work though, this contradiction between atemporal rational abstraction and historical sound-sense correspondence is not to be overcome through poetic fusion of sound and meaning, but only through rationalistic deferral (différence):

... il sera prudent d’analyser [le lien entre les spectacles du monde et la parole] seulement le jour où la Science, possédant le vaste répertoire des idiomes jamais parlés sur terre, écrira l’histoire des lettres de l’alphabet à travers tous les ages et quelle était presque leur absolue signification, tantôt devinée, tantôt méconnue par les hommes, créateurs des mots. (921)

It is, then, in this continual, archetypically French, separation of phenomena and concepts, even when their connectedness is being looked at straight on, that all Mallarmé’s aesthetics lies. This aesthetics of difference has two aspects:

1) There is a foregrounded aspect in the separation of signifiers and signifieds, of empirical consciousness that names things, and analytic consciousness that sees in those names the ideal. This is the level of syntactic and lexical ambiguity, and generally of "l’Idée":

Un désir indéniable à mon temps est de séparer comme en vue d'attributions différentes le double état de la parole, brut ou immédiat ici, là essentiel. (368)

2) There is a backgrounded aesthetic aspect in the separation of word-concepts from sound and rhythm, i.e., the separation of the symbolic and the semiotic (in Kristeva’s terminology), of the empiric-analytic that represents and the a priori that simply presents itself, and is normally taken for granted in French thought. For Mallarmé this relation or separation is the realm of "le Mystère" where all the musicophononic values of the poetry are coordinated with its conceptual content. Or, better, he considers poetry as the movement from sound into sense and never the other way
around, as is more frequent in Germanic poetry, accented alliterative verse, etc., from sense back to sound. For him the goal is always the translation of sound's admittedly "more truthful argumentation" into idea:

--Je sais, on veut à la Musique, limiter le Mystère; quand l'écrit y prétend.

Les déchirures suprêmes instrumentales, conséquence d'enroulements transitoires, éclatent plus véridiques, à même, en argumentation de lumière, qu'aucun raisonnement tenu jamais; on s'interroge, par quels termes du vocabulaire sinon dans l'idée, écoutant, les traduire ... (385)

The outcome of the first of these two divisions in Mallarmé's aesthetics, that of signifiant and signifié, is a sense of sublimity and beauty: sublimity as the words for things are in one way or another transformed, aufgehoben, into ideas; and beauty as, amidst all the ambiguities that offer the reader momentary victories of sublime analysis, there is induced a fresh appreciation for words and their related image, as the uncongealed context temporarily allows us to consider them in isolation. Clearly, the suggestiveness and bewilderment of ambiguity also opens the door to what I have called the "background" of Mallarmé's aesthetic (its lush aural quality, rich rhymes, formal purity) as the reader, by turns baffled and enthralled, temporarily abandons the symbolic level to focus attention on the aural (and graphic) elements. But I shall postpone discussion of this elementary emphatic background until after more thorough consideration of the poetic effects sprung from the signifiant/signifié divide.

On this level Mallarmé presents, we could say, a poetics of isolated reason, and of isolated language, that is particularly suited to analysis from the point of view of rationalist aesthetics. Symbolist aesthetics is, after all, in principle, governed by the idea of a full separation of the
aesthetic from the practical, from predetermined concepts, from that which is incomplete in itself, and from the particular -- in other words, by a philosophy of aesthetics first worked through by Kant. Mallarmé's chief modification on Kant, the transposition of the focus of the aesthetic from nature to language, is, from the rational perspective, essentially an encapturing of the more elementary aesthetic response of the Kantian subject to real objects. For the word-symbol is a distillation of a multitude of phenomenal experiences related to a given object -- indeed, as the presentation of an overall impression it is even a sort of abstract noumenon. And the symbolist poet, emphasizing and, perhaps, exaggerating this abstract universal character of language, becomes, so to speak, an intellectual perfumer, gathering unstable, volatile essences into his phials, preserving "rien que la suggestion" (365):

A quoi bon la merveille de transposer un fait de nature en sa presque disparition vibratoire selon le jeu de la parole, cependant; si ce n'est qu'en émane, sans la gêne d'un proche ou concret rappel, la notion pure. (368)

Let us take a moment to savour the full Kantian purity of this symbolist approach to poetry outlined in "Crise de Vers". We see that, consistent with the first moment of Kant's aesthetic, the practicality of the "proche ou concret rappel" is banished. The absence of a predetermined concept (the second moment of Kant's aesthetic) is suggested in "le jeu de la parole", and wholeness or finality (Kant's third moment) is indicated by the transposition of "un fait" into "la notion". As for the fourth moment of the aesthetic, necessity and universality, these are a basic premise of language, and at least hinted here in the notion's being "pure" -- and stated outright in the sentence following this one, where Mallarmé asserts that the word is the virtual
representation of all its referents:

Je dis : une fleur! et, hors de l'oubli où ma voix relègue aucun contour, en tant que quelque chose d'autre que les calices sus, musicalement se lève, idée même et suave, l'absente de tous bouquets. (368)

Here the very separation of words-in-themselves from their potentially practical-determined-incomplete-particular referents is a sort of guarantee of their aesthetic integrity.

For Kant, the beautiful (as distinct from the sublime) is the realm of free play of the imagination (active and analytic) with the understanding (passive and a priori). Carrying this over to Mallarmé, we could say that the beautiful tends to appear in his poetry first of all on the lexical level since, unable immediately to fit the words and phrases encountered there into a rational whole, we admire them for their relative completeness in themselves. Considering, that is to say, the "form of finality " in the word "so far as perceived in it apart from the representation of an end" (Kant 80) we experience a harmonious balance of understanding (signifié) and imagination (signifiant). And once we have fitted the words into a multivalent pattern, they present even more than do single words a ground for free play of the interpreting mind.

The sublime, on the other hand, is as distinct from the beautiful as quantity is from quality, and as reason (involving analysis) is from understanding (involving more primary being):

... the beautiful seems to be regarded as a presentation of an indeterminate concept of understanding, the sublime as a presentation of an indeterminate concept of the reason. Hence the delight is in the former case coupled with the representation of Quality, but in [the latter] case with that of Quantity. (Kant 91)

The beautiful object is limited in extent and "as it were, preadapted to our power of judgement", while the sublime object is grandiose and "may appear, indeed, in point of form to contravene the
ends of our power of judgement, to be ill-adapted to our faculty of presentation, and to be, as it were, an outrage on the imagination, and yet it is judged all the more sublime on that account" (91).

The pleasure of the sublime derives from reason's analytically making sense of a grandiose, seemingly infinite, phenomenon that sense and understanding are unable to enframe. Kant observes that there is an identification of the subject with the grandiose object, a sort of transference; as he writes, "the feeling of the sublime in nature is respect for our own vocation, which we attribute to an object of nature by a certain subreption (substitution of a respect for the Object in place of one for the idea of humanity in our own self -- the Subject)" (106). This is an anticipation of Hegelian dialecticism, and perhaps of Nietzschean irrationalism as well, but Kant's emphasis, of course, is on the totalizing movement of reason transcending the outsized. From our own perspective, though, being psychically transported into the grandiose object is altogether as important as rationality's totalization. In the face of the infinite the mind has its legs swept out from under it and is temporarily absorbed within the infinity, so that on the one hand there is Dionysian enthrallment, on the other Apollonian containment. Or in Hegelian terms there is negation of negation, as the level of mind that rejects a phenomenon is itself rejected by another level of mind presenting another mode of knowledge.

In Mallarmé the rational sublime appears in at least two ways. It appears first of all in our continually being presented with the "infinities" of syntactic and lexical ambiguities -- that we can, however, provisionally give one or more stable meanings to via the transcendence of our reason
over confused understanding. It appears as well in the consequent recognition of the constructedness of all consciousness, and the pleasure of transcending the fearful gulf between ideal and real in a poetic language that is self-voiding, i.e., that recognizes its own fragile artifice and transience. At this point artifice and ambiguity, beauty and sublimity, fade into each other: confounding complexity overcome modulates into harmony, words clear by themselves become massed with tangled signification in context, and we attain to the IDEA. In terms of the history of poetics, Mallarmé takes the traditional content of sunsets, swans, glass, flowing hair, fauns, etc. and turns it inside out via an aesthetic concentration on the ambiguity of the language describing it. At the same time, the grammatical and thematic complexity that had traditionally in poetry been aimed at aesthetic effect is multiplied beyond the limits of the reader's understanding in order to highlight the virtuality of the medium. Just as we are forced to construct meanings for ourselves in the world, so are we obligated to construct them for ourselves in language; thus language and world are both shown to be inherently idea, and we speakers in the world are encompassed in that idea.

In Mallarmé's own creative development, of course (ontogeny rehearsing phylogeny), we may trace this gradual multiplication of levels, and the early poems are interesting for their relatively simple dualism of sublimity and vulgarity, and, a cognate Baudelairean feature, the grounding of the symbolism in an externalized metaphysical absolute.

In Mallarmé and the Sublime, which deals only with Mallarmé's theoretical statements on sublimity (being thus "a critical tool for an eventual study of the poetry" (xiii)), Louis Wirth
Manick observes that sublime experience is composed, in variable proportions, of irony and enthusiasm. Irony in this context is the divided movement of mind rationally enframing an infinity while admitting its incapacity for full understanding. Enthusiasm, by contrast, is a unitary movement of the mind identifying its infinity-enframing transcendence with imaginative enthrallment in the infinite object. These terms, like the term sublimity itself, link various phases of criticism in the post-Kantian era, from romantic irony to post-structuralist irony, to which correspond the phases of Mallarmé's creative life.

Of Mallarmé's early poems there is none that more adroitly combines the movements of irony and enthusiasm than "L'Azur" (1864), which begins,

De l'éternel azur la sereine ironie
Accable, belle indolentement comme les fleurs,
Le poète impuissant qui maudit son génie
A travers un désert stérile de Douleurs. (37)

In this poem the poet ostensibly longs to flee the infinity of the blue sky and abandon himself to materiality:

donne, ô matière,
L'oubli de l'Idéal cruel et du Péché
A ce martyr qui vient partager la litière
Où le bétail heureux des hommes est couché. (38)

In Kantian terms "l'azur" is the infinite object which the senses cannot comprehend; and there is a movement of dissatisfaction in the poet's mind as he realizes his inability to embrace the grandiose (which here becomes a desire for the physical). In the end, because he all the time knows that his mind is joined to the infinite by virtue of his "génie", because he will in the material world be at best a martyr, and because he can rationally imagine a limit to the infinite sky ("Le Ciel
est mort"), he psychically translates himself into it, and experiences the sublime: "l'Azur triomphe
... / Je suis hanté. L'Azur! L'Azur! L'Azur! L'Azur!" The "serene irony" of the blue sky in the first
line is thus the poet's projection of his own irony. He has, finally, no intention of fleeing the ideal,
merely enjoys considering the infinite grandeur of what he strives after, and his mental superiority
over lesser men who are content with materiality ("le bétail heureux").

In such late-Romantic verse the theme is still the imagination's relation to nature, and the
sense of sublimity consequently is aroused (as in Kant's aesthetics) by an external infinity. As Jean-
Pierre Richard has written with respect to the motivation of the young Mallarmé's creative activity,

... l'initiative n'est pas encore pour lui le fait d'une conscience créative,
encore moins celui d'un langage purifié et réactivé : elle appartient au dehors, dieu-
ciel ou autre-dieu. (58)

Already, however, there are intimations of a self-sufficient "creative conscience", for
example, in the very intensity of the poet's perverse wish to be rid of an external ideal, and in the
suggestion that the ideal itself is fabricated, a painting on a wall merely:

ma cervelle, vidée
Comme le pot du fard gisant au pied du mur,
N'a plus l'art d'attifer la sanglotante idée... (38)

The drive toward interiorization of the absolute is symbolized in another poem of this
period, "Renouveau" (1862) -- that, significantly, praises dormant self-contained winter at the
expense of spring -- by the poet's burying his face in the ground and eating the earth: "creusant de
ma face une fosse à mon rêve, / Mordant la terre chaude où pousse les lilas" (34).

The poem from this period that is grounded within the self, in perceptivity alone, is "Las
de l'amé Repos..." (1864). The last of the ten poems appearing in the Parnasse Contemporain
anthology, it sets out the new poetics of conscious artifice, after the model of the art of the Far East. Correspondingly, this is his first poem with a syntax that is somewhat confusing and ambiguous, a syntax that forces the reader to, at points, take charge of the meaning himself, as in the lines,

```
-- Que dire à cette Aurore, ô Rêves, visité
Par les roses, quand, peur de ses roses livides,
Le vaste cimetièrë unira les trous vides? -- (35),
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that des Essarts judged, in a letter to their author, "durs, embarrassés et mal venus" (O.C., 1428). This is, then, a grammatical disorder producing the sublime for the reader who provisionally reconstructs it into a more or less rational whole and at the same time abandons himself to the multiplicity of possible meanings. One translation could be, for example, "What's to say at this dawn, o dreams, while one is visited by roses, given that later, as dawn's pinkness fears, the huge cemetery will unite void holes?", but the "roses" are also pinks, "at this dawn" is also "to this dawn", the identity of the "visité" is a bit uncertain, as is the referent of "ses." The meaning of the whole sentence is also, in keeping with its form, a question. Does the future "unira" refer to dusk, when empty graves will be subsumed in the black of night? Insofar as there is a connection to the pits the author has dug at night in his own brain (mentioned in the lines immediately preceding) the unification of "les trous vides" would seem to represent a Void for consciousness.

The copying of a Chinese style is here remarkable for its fidelity to that tradition's extreme metaphoricity and suffusion in suggestion, which Mallarmé here borrows from vase painting. Presumably he was assisted to the accompanying sage negation of negation at the world's still
centre not so much by readings in Buddhism ("le Néant, auquel je suis arrivé sans connaître le Bouddhisme," he was to write two years later (Corr. 297)) as by his own intuition, and perhaps by some familiarity already with Hegel\(^3\) (Hegel who, according to Joseph Needham, is heir to Chinese philosophy in a line traceable backwards through Herder to Leibniz to the Jesuit missionaries\(^4\)). Certainly a negation of negation works on multiple levels in this poem

-- on the thematic level, for example, in the negation of the poet's own sterility, of the open grave in his mind, and of the world's reproach; and in the negation implicit in the poet's creation of a charming landscape via the Chinese sage's dream of death;

-- on the syntactic-lexical level, as the reader's initial interpretive impulse to reject secondary meanings in ambiguities is itself rejected; for example in the line, "Et la mort telle avec le seul rêve du sage", in which the reader first excludes the possibility of "la mort telle"'s referring to a mortal woman, and then realizes that the "lac" is indeed the eye of a pale nude;

-- or on both these levels at once as in "l'extase pur est de peindre la fin / Sur ses tasses de neige à la lune ravie / D'une bizarre fleur", where the negative "la fin" (the end/death) becomes simply the tip of a flower; and then in the poem's conclusion the meaning of this "fin" is altered once again, coloured with a tint of sexual exstasy as the lake, flower and woman come together with the flower-enraptured moon that dips its horn in the water (les "O"'s).

"Hérodiade", begun in October, 1864, in Touzon, nine months after "Las de l'amer repos...", and to which Mallarmé devoted profound attention for years, returning to it again in the 1880's, and once again in the months before his death, suffers the stigma of being a fragment.
Ultimately, however, fragments may be the most appropriate "form" for a poetry of suggestion, for a poet preoccupied with the artificiality of language-thought, for whom to read is "authentiquer le silence" (387). Certainly, in any case, the general outline of this particular work is clear enough, and once we append to the central "Scène" the "Ouverture Ancienne" in the manner of an ancient prologue, and, as a conclusion, the "Cantique de Saint Jean" (as Mondor does in the Oeuvres Complètes) we might even admire in its "incompleteness" an exemplary sparseness and concision. For the three parts of this poem, each dominated by a different character, represent the three "modes of knowledge" outlined above, corresponding to Hegel's divisions of consciousness, self-consciousness and Spirit, and here mirroring the three classes of society -- the popular, the noble, and the hieratic. To each type of knowledge there applies as well a type of beauty, as Mallarmé explained in a letter to Lefebure (May 27, 1867), following a Hegelian dynamics. The beauty of primary consciousness is represented by the Venus of Milo, "Beauté complète et inconsciente, unique et immutable". The beauty of self-conscious mind, on the other hand, is typified by Renaissance art, and by la Gioconda in particular: "la Beauté, ayant été mordue du cœur depuis le Christianisme, par la Chimère, et dououreusement renaissant avec un sourire rempli de mystère forcé, et qu'elle sent être la condition de son être." Finally, there is the modernist beauty that combines and transcends the other two: "La Beauté, enfin, ayant par la science de l'homme, retrouvé dans l'Univers entier ses phases corrélatives, ayant eu le suprême mot d'elle, du temps du Vinci, s'étant rappelé l'horreur secrète qui la forçait à sourire mystérieusement -- souriant mystérieusement maintenant, mais de bonheur et avec la quiétude éternelle de la Vénus de Milo
retrouvée — ayant su l'idée du mystère dont la Joconde ne savait que la sensation fatale" (Corr. 349-50). In the notes to the Correspondance Bertrand Marchal suggests that, after the stages of Greek Venus and Gioconda, "Hérodiade est [la figure] de la Beauté moderne désormais consciente d'elle-même" (349) — a comment valid insofar as Hérodiade does, after much mental preening, eventually pass beyond her pre-modernist virginal fear of "le sinistre ciel" with its "regards haïs / De Venus qui, le soir, brûle dans le feuillage" (48). For in the six line soliloquy at the end of the scene she admits her dishonesty to herself and a desire to, in Saint Paul's famous words, "put away childish things. For now we see as in a glass darkly, but then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I myself am known" (1 Cor.13:11,12)5.

To her mirror image she says,

Vous mentez, ô fleur nue
De mes lèvres!
J'attends une chose inconnue
Ou peut-être, ignorant le mystère et vos cris,
Jetez-vous les sanglots suprêmes et meurtris
D'une enfance sentant parmi les rêveries
Se séparer enfin ses froides pierrières. (73)

The brilliant "Cantique de Saint Jean" is in some measure the awaited "chose inconnue" (composed three decades after the other sections, and then not seen by the public until 1913), which reunites mind and body ("refoule ou tranche / Les anciens désaccords / Avec le corps"), for in it "elle" can be construed as Herodiade as well as the Baptist's head, as she likewise, conceivably, becomes "illuminee" in the Spirit. But we should perhaps begin with the "Ouverture".

Abolie, et son aile affreuse dans les larmes
Du bassin, aboli, qui mire les alarmes,
Des ors nus fustigeant l'espace cramoisi,
Une Aurore a, plumage héraudique, choisi
Notre tour cinéraire et sacrificatrice,
Lourde tombe qu'a fuie un bel oiseau, caprice
Solitaire d'aurore au vain plumage noir... (41)

Being so grounded in primary consciousness, the "Ouverture" lends itself more readily than does more rhetorically sophisticated writing to the theory of the "hypogram". Here the word -- or the word-concept, at least -- that is expanded is "Aurore", and Mallarmé confirms this for us in the one line recapitulation a third of the way through: "Une Aurore trônait ses ailes dans les larmes!" (1.37) The celestial dawn, one could say, transmutes itself into "l'or", while also suggesting "horreur" and temporal "hora/heurees". Such transmutation takes place through obliteration, through matter and sense being "abolis" or aufgehoben. Dawn, who destroys the night of diamond stars is herself destroyed; and it is not only the primary matter of the dawn that is suppressed or "abolie", but also her mirror, the water, in an absolute Hegelian cancellation (death or Spirit). The feminine and masculine forms of "abolie" here reinforce, too, the metaphorical character of the dawn as woman-Hérodiade-Leda, whose "bassin" or pelvis is blent with the metonymic phallus, "aile affreuse", of the swan representing Zeus or Saint John the Baptist (associated throughout with the sun).

The entire manner of this "Ouverture" is "prophétique" (l.90) and "héraudique" (l.4) as is suitable for an opening chorus, and, indeed, through the first three sections -- that is, until the aforementioned reassertion of the "hypogram" -- the thought is so closely tied to its object that it is quite a priori, primitive expression. Gradually, however, there is a separation of language and
thought from pure phenomenality. The second section (ll.17-19) enframes the first with moral judgement ("Crime!") and an open stained-glass window ("grand ouvert, ce vitrail"). The third section (ll.20-37) gives us acknowledgement of framing in the opening line -- "La chambre singulière en un cadre" (presumably Hérodiade's). The fourth section frames the poem itself in a graceful interrogative movement toward self-consciousness:

Ombre magicienne aux symboliques charmes!
Une voix, du passé longue évocation,
Est-ce la mienne prête à l'incantation? (ll.38-40)

The last section gives us language, by which even poetic self-consciousness may be framed (in a philosophy of the Absolute Idea):

Elle a chanté, parfois incohérente, signe
Lamentable!
le lit aux pages de vélin,
Tel, inutile et si claustral, n'est pas le lin!
Qui des rêves par plis n'a plus le cher grimoire,
Ni le dais sépulcral à la déserte moire,
Le parfum des cheveux endormis. L'avait-il? (ll.58-63)

The "cygne" has become the "signe", symbol has been exposed as the essence of transient things; yet the velum book no more has the value of love's linen than death gives off the odour of sleep. Did the book of spells, or sacred bible, once have such power to charm? "L'avait-il?" Again, the phrases may be construed in manifold ways, according to the free play of our own judgement and the provisional supervision of "sublime reason".

The process here outlined of progressive levels of enframement is really, however, something of a "formalist simplification", because what reason really observes here in the a priori
"confus amas" of this prologue is essentially its own genesis. The opening lines' obsession with the [a] sound, the poem's start with the "a-b" of "Abolie", the half-unconcealed morphophonemic contrasts of "bol" ("bassin") and "aboli", of "larmes" and "alarmes", point already to a preoccupation with beginnings and primary language functioning. By the fourth section, as mentioned, there is consciousness of language's arising in the yellow folds of thought:

    dans les plis jaunes de la pensée...
    Par les trous anciens et par les plis roidis
    Percés selon le rythme et les dentelles pures
    Du suaire laissant par ses belles guipures
    Désespéré monter le vieil éclat voilé
    S'élève; (ô quel lointain en ces appels céle!)

(II.4.1, 44-48)

The "vieil éclat voilé" is the flash of the sun and the loud sound of a voice, particularly that of John crying in the wilderness, prophesying the coming of the Word made flesh. The "trous anciens" and "plis roidis" are the habitual patterns of the mind in the world, patterns of absence and presence, made according to the rhythm and the lacework-type design natural to us mortals. And does not "dentelles pures" also suggest dental consonants (dentales pures)? In any case, the suggestion of this poem as a whole, that language arises from a passionate death struggle -- and here, through the folds and gaps of a death shroud -- is consistent with Lacan's contention that language is a pocket into which the death drive can divert itself (Kristeva 47). And reversing the process, refashioning language in the manner of Mallarmé through breaking apart its syntax, necessarily brings this thanatic drive back to the surface.

    The fourth section continues,
Le vieil éclat voilé du vermeil insolite,
De la voix languissant, nulle, sans acolyte,
Jettera-t-il son or par dernières splendeurs,
Elle, encore, l'antienne aux versets demandeurs,
A l'heure d'agonie et de luttes funèbres! (ll.49-53)

Here the double nature of the "éclat" is made explicit -- it is the sun veiled by the vermilion "not sun" (insolite), and it is the voice of John without followers. Personified, the sun is the godking of the cosmos ("Jettera-t-il son or") to whom the Baptist's voice serves as an antiphon of petition. Or, following the suggestions of gender, it is the sun that is John, about to die and be elevated, while the voice is Hérodiade's, providing an antiphony to John's pleadings in sacred verse.

Amidst this confused pile of chilled monstrances ("confus amas d'ostensoirs refroidis", 1.43) it would perhaps be timely for me to introduce a thought concerning poetry's social "engagement". As Jean Starobinski, speaking for every reader, exegete and "re-writer" of avant-garde syntax, has observed:

Innovative originality drifts away from common speech to the point of freeing itself from all preexisting authority, at the risk of not exerting, in turn, any authority whatever. (495)

Mallarmé, wrestling at once with the diurnal sun cycle and legends of the dawn, the origins of Christianity, the story of John the Baptist, and the genesis of language and logic is to a point excused, given the richness of the evocation, and the correlative brevity of his presentation, for being "parfois incohérent" (1.58). But perhaps the voice that languishes "nulle, sans acolyte" is to some extent an autobiographical one. Has his chiaroscuro been too obscure? Will he himself be able to produce gold by his alchemy? And as if to cater to the reader's desire for clarity, for
emergence of the linear self from the multiplex a priori he, in the fifth section, offers us relatively straightforward history: Hérodias enjoys her (or John's) walks in the garden, she wanders into error (like Eve), neither Herod nor her soldier father (God?) is aware of her secret, everything is going to happen today...

The "Scène" at the centre of "Hérodiade" carries forward and perfects this slowly-developed empiric self-consciousness. Plainly, the dialogue back and forth between the Nurse, who wants to touch her mistress, kiss her hand and daub her with perfume, and Herodias, who resists physical expression, concentrating instead on her own mirror image, plays out the dialectic of primary cognition and engagement with the ego. Stylistically, the contrast with the "Ouverture" could scarcely be more marked, considering both parts are composed in alexandrine couplets. If the prologue is quite sibylline, the "Scène" is reminiscent of, and almost as unambiguous as, classical French theatre, and recalls for us its proud metallic princesses -- Phèdre, Andromaque, Bérénice... From a certain perspective, the evocation of the high passion of the classical past for a scene involving a girl in front of her vanity mirror is satiric comedy; on another view it may be considered the necessary interiorization of the great and the high as called for by democracy and, in a sense, by Christianity.

This new-sprung Aurora is a child of night who identifies with diamond stars, precious stone and gold. Completely separated from her physical body, even to be touched by her own lustrous hair gives her a delicious frisson of "horreur". She is arrogant anxiety-ridden ego:
[Nourrice]

... et pour qui, dévorée
D'angoisse, gardez-vous la splendeur ignorée?
Et le mystère vain de votre être?

[Hérodiade] Pour moi. (46)

From the beginning, however, she longs to escape ("rêv[e] aux exils") from her enclosure in the ego, "prison de pierres et de fer", and is tempted by the "sinistre" glance of the sky that Venus responds to -- but that she blocks out by having the Nurse close the shutters. At the end of the scene, as previously noted, confessing her self-deception, she prepares herself for a higher stage of knowledge -- analytic Spirit.

At the same time as we have considered the progression in "Hérodiade" as one from the a priori to the self-conscious/empirical to the "fully conscious"/spiritual, we have been considering it in terms of historical literary development, corresponding, in part, to the three categories outlined by Barthes: in the first stage, gnomic utterance, divinatory maxims, sibylline chants, etc.; in the second, "the humanist myth of the living phrase, at once closed and generating"; and in the third we have "modernism's exploding of the boundaries of the sentence" ("Style and its Image" 8). As Mallarmé -- and Hegelianism and Kristeva -- suggest, the ultimate stage is a combination and surpassing of the prior ones, as the "humanist myth" is introduced into a rawer animistic expression and vice versa. In this context the "Cantique de Saint Jean" can be seen to have all the sub- and super-rational appeal of a shamanic spell in its 6-6-6-4 metre and flat rhyme, as well as in its violent/transcendent subject matter: the equation of the sun's apogee -- whether diurnal or
solstitial -- with John the Baptist's beheading. But above all it is an analytic description of the sublime experience, whether in reading or elsewhere in life. For in the "soleil que sa halte / Surnaturelle exalte" is represented the mind's temporary access to the atemporality of Spirit (as in victory over an ambiguity) from which it "Aussitôt redescend / Incandescent". In the next stanza,

Je sens comme aux vertèbres
S'employant des ténèbres
Toutes dans un frisson
A l'unisson

is described the experience of finding oneself once again amidst the incomprehensible. But at the same time higher cognition carries us over the difficulty, and serves as lookout:

Et ma tête surgie
Solitaire vigie
Dans les vols triomphaux
De cette faux

Comme rupture franche
Plutôt refoule ou tranche
Les anciens désaccords
Avec le corps

The scythe ("faux") is the cutting and splicing of logic, reason or science, the flights of which are, once again, sublimely "triomphaux". The "rupture franche" is the analytic mind's break with self consciousness (or grammatical convention), and the resulting reunion with the body through a double negation: the mind cancels the former disagreements with the body. Perhaps the word "franche" can itself be considered as a rupture of the word "franchit" ("rupture franch... non, plutôt refoule"), for reason's syntactic breaks don't transcend, so much as they repress or cut short. And, while we're scrutinizing this phrase "rupture franche", perhaps it is worth pointing out that it
suggests the specifically French (Frankish/franche) separation of primary perception and analytic mind.

In the next two stanzas the mind, realigned and united with the body through mental and physical discipline, follows its own purified gaze.

Qu'elle de jeûnes ivre  
S'opiniâtre à suivre  
En quelque bond hagard  
Son pur regard

Là-haut où la froidure  
Eternelle n'endure  
Que vous le surpassez  
Tous ô glaciers

In the purer realm attained here, representation is no longer merely a continual investment of the ego in objects so that everything becomes a mirror of self. Rather, as the last stanza suggests, the whole self somehow, through a baptism in spirit, becomes one with the absolute Idea (or idea of the absolute). In terms of the poem this "somehow" is the aforementioned rhythmic chanting quality of the verse, and its captivating rhyme, that re-connects us to our physical origins like the water baptism (by immersion?) practised by Saint John.

Mais selon un baptême  
Illuminée au même  
Principe qui m'élu  
Penche un salut

Parallel to the writing of this fragmentary poem over a period of three decades, Mallarmé himself underwent, as Janine Langan has noted (97-98), a process of development, from phenomenological searching, through a period of full social self consciousness, to a stage of
concentration on an "absolute poetry" -- a process that mirrors, as "Hérodiade" finally does, the Hegelian birth of Spirit or Idea. His focus in the late 1860's on the beginning and middle of "Hérodiade", and on "L'Après-midi d'un faune" is indicative of his particular concern at this stage of his career with Hebrew and Greek origins of our Occidental habits of thought. Such projects as his "Toast Funèbre" to Théophile Gautier (1873), the "Tombeau d'Edgar Poe" (1876), and his stint as sole writer and editor on the fashion magazine La Dernière Mode from September to December of 1874, indicate the "empirical" tendency of his work of mid-career. Here he took stock of individual life and artistic will (including his own) in the social context, and moved, we could say, beyond the notion of art as a kingdom eternally separated from life, and toward the notion of its full integration in the transient and the ephemeral. In the 1860's he had rejected the externalized metaphysical absolute (the traditional Christian world-view) that had been the ground of his own early poems, in order, instead, to see the world entirely from within, phenomenologically. In the 1870's he begins to see the world from the outside as well, from which perspective art figures as the most important of social constructions, a creation of order by individuals in the world. While in a sense this involved the adoption of a kind of Parnassianism -- Gautier's divinization of the work of art itself -- it also presupposed a more profound, immanent relation with the world than the Parnassians (who essentially had no metaphysics) possessed. For Mallarmé's symbolist aesthetic fuses on the one hand Gautier's injunction to produce works of a fixed sculptural beauty ("Sculpte, lime, cisée; / Que ton rêve flottant / Se scelle / Dans le bloc résistant!" (1852)) with, on the other hand, Baudelaire's un-Parnassian appeal for a modern art
alert to the contingent: "La modernité, c'est le transitoire, le fugitif, le contingent, la moitié de l'art, dont l'autre moitié est l'éternel et l'immuuable" ("Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne" (1863), OC 695). It is largely from the deep internalization of this synthesis of the Parnassians' eternal a priori and the Baudelairean (or Romantic) attunement to ephemerality that his modernist ambiguity is born. In the "Petit Air I" (1894) we even have something of a retrospective exposition of the development of this aesthetic:

Quelconque une solitude  
Sans le cygne ni le quai  
Mire sa désuétude  
Au regard que j'abdiquai

Ici de la gloriole  
Haute à ne la pas toucher  
Dont maint ciel se bariole  
Avec les ors de coucher

Mais langoureusement longe  
Comme de blanc linge ôté  
Tel fugace oiseau si plonge  
Exultatrice à côté

Dans l'onde toi devenue  
Ta jubilation nue. (65-66)

The solitary glory, or vainglory ("gloriole"), of the Parnassian or Romantic poet is an obsolete thing, and abdicated by the poet in favour of a naked and fleeting experience that is shared. Baudelaire's renowned poem "Le Cygne", that, lamenting transience in the city, attaches the image of the exiled Andromaque to a swan flapping in the dust, is evoked in the line "Sans le cygne ni le quai". Here, however, that poem is quite inverted: the swan is not alone, and transience
is celebrated. Things are unified through ambiguity, as the swan metonymically represents a woman, her bed-linen, and perhaps a lover as well. Instead of the grandiose standard theme of a sunset, the glorious thing in the third person, we're offered the more intimate and social pleasure of love and friendship.

La Dernière Mode is the most obvious and thorough-going expression of Mallarmé's "socializing" tendency in the 1870's; in that magazine, writing under various pseudonyms (Marguérite de Ponty, Ix, Miss Satin, etc.), he succeeds in reversing, on a quite accessible level, the polarities of subject and object, the transient and the eternal. Is the essence of elegance, he asks, a matter of presenting it, or rather of recognizing it wherever it lies?

"Est-ce parce que tout le beau monde ne songe pas encore au retour définitif que nul incident élégant n'attire l'attention, ou rien de notable ne se passe-t-il, faute de regards aristocratiques pour le considérer?" Problème, problème : ... fait pour interloquer le subtil Hamlet, si Hamlet lui-même n'avait d'autres préoccupations." (785)

The humorous problematizing of this question notwithstanding, elegance, as Mallarmé demonstrates via his own style of thought, compels in the last analysis a fusion of the subject and object.

In this same column (written under the pen-name Ix) there is also consideration of whether and how duration affects the value of things. Traditional funeral customs, notes Ix, may change, clothing fashions change seasonally, and a bi-weekly magazine like La Dernière Mode becomes "inutile et défraîchie" in a fortnight. In a sense, however, the very ephemerality of the magazine articles makes them more precious than the fashions they describe -- at least in Kantian/symbolist
terms whereby uselessness ("l'inutile") is correlated with beauty. And yet even writing on fashion and temporal things strives to achieve at least the life-span of a fashionable article of clothing, or even -- via an ambiguity imitating the finest tulle fabric, and a paradoxicality analogous to artificial flowers -- to achieve the duration of a full work of art. Such, in any case, is lx's dream:

Une robe, étudiée et composée selon les principes appelés à régner un hiver, est moins vite inutile et défraîchie qu'une Chronique même de quinzaine : avoir la durée du tulle illusion ou des roses artificielles imitant les roses et la clématite, voilà vraiment le rêve que fait chaque phrase employée à écrire, au lieu d'un conte ou d'un sonnet, les nouvelles de l'heure. (785)

Jean-Pierre Lecercle, in Mallarmé et la mode (1989), the most complete study of La Dernière Mode to date, criticizes its failure to reach the aesthetic level of a work of poetry, particularly in the descriptions of clothing in the column signed "Marguerite de Ponty". Seemingly never having encountered Derrida's theory of difference (such unfamiliarity -- or studious avoidance -- is, curiously, more likely to occur in France than in North America), Lecercle writes of a continual "procrastination" of the poetic in La Dernière Mode's clothing descriptions -- as if this should be somehow remarkable for us who have long accepted that prose is virtually defined by its deferral of final ("poetic") signification, being the dominance of metonymy over metaphor. Lecercle's argument is essentially this:

Un problème reste entier : Mallarmé est employé comme journaliste de mode, et personne ne lui demande de réfléchir sur l'impossibilité d'assumer pleinement, dans la revue, une poésie élaborée selon ses principes. En la mettant dans une procrastination, il n'est parvenu qu'à une chose : nous en rappeler l'existence, nous la faire regretter, et nous rendre le costume odieux. Cet effet est-il secondaire et accidentel, ou au contraire, voulu dès le départ? (125)

What Lecercle fails to appreciate, because (like the majority of critics) he strictly separates
the categories of art and world, is that Mallarmé not only wants in this magazine to take hold of the world to refine it and turn it into art, but also to submit himself to the world to transform himself into a social artist in contact with its transient concerns and its phenomenal, existential ground -- with, if you will, its Dasein. In a Hegelian manner he objectifies the world at the same time as he is subjected to it -- and we might even call this a "postmodern" manner, since, as mentioned above, Mallarmé surpasses the world-encapturing modernism advocated by Baudelaire by annealing it in the subjectivist aesthetic purism of Gautier.

For Lecercle, Mallarmé's descriptions of women's outfits in the clothing columns (and Lecercle focuses particularly on the wedding dress presented in the fourth issue (O.C. 763)) begin by an admission of the inadequacy of language, and end by verifying this inadequacy in the blandness of the "bloc descriptif" proper, wherein the fashions are described by themselves, with minimal reference to a wearer: "malgré l'insuccès certain des mots, la description aura quand même lieu... : le désenchantement naît dès la mise en situation" (75). But this is a very "empirical" and narrative reading, and only one third of the full picture. On the "analytic" level, Mallarmé has instructed us through the artful "mises en situation" preceding the descriptive blocks to view the clothes as being virtually as insubstantial as the words describing them (i.e., phenomenal rather than real); and this attitude of mind we carry over to the detail-oriented description proper. And on the "a priori" level (the most important one here), we are indeed drowned in the mass of objective details, as Lecercle maintains, but we can interpret the concreteness of their presentation as a sort of primordial engagement with the physical. Our drunken symbolist boat suffers a
sepulchral shipwreck on the rocks of the physical world that counterbalance and "ground" an otherwise too subjective and ironic aesthetics. Thus, while it is possible along with J.-P. Lecercle to see these descriptive blocks as a rejection of the material and quotidien, it is no less easy to see them as an anticipation of Mallarmé's object poems of the following decade, particularly the "Triptyque" (73-74) with its furniture of fulgurant consoles, pure vases, and self-cancelling lace. So that the reader may judge for himself of the validity of the foregoing, I shall quote the wedding dress description in its entirety (and not from the Oeuvres Complètes, but from the facsimile edition of La Dernière Mode, for the Pléiade editors have rendered the original's "Cela ne crée pas, une Toilette de Mariée" as "Cela ne crie pas, une Toilette de Mariée"):

[Mise en situation:] Une vision délicieuse que je viens de considérer à l'église de la Trinité, m'invite à joindre à un croquis rapide de dentelles et de fleurs, quelques notes relatives à l'étiquette contemporaine qui règle notre présence à la cérémonie. Cela ne crée pas, une Toilette de Mariée : on la remarque, telle qu'elle apparaît, mystérieuse, suivant la mode et pas, ne hasardant le goût du jour que tempéré par des réminiscences vagues et éternelles, avec des détails très-neufs enveloppés de généralité comme par le voile. [Descriptive block:] C'était : Pardessous de satin blanc recouvert d'un jupon de tarlatane, chaque volant se terminant par une chicorée; or, il y en avait au moins vingt sur la traîne, tandis que sur le devant je n'en comptais que quatre. Tunique plissée en travers et fixée sur la jupe; dans le bas de la tunique, frange avec perles blanches. Large ceinture en satin prenant de côté, descendant contre la tunique et se nouant sur la traîne : ce noeud fixé lui-même sur la jupe par une couronne de fleurs d'oranger avec traîne. Le corsage était montant et à basque, doublé entièrement de satin ainsi que les manches; et toute la garniture de la basque consistait en chicorée bien fournie et en un bouquet de fleurs d'oranger, placé de côté vers l'épaule. Voile de tulle illusion et fleurs d'oranger habilement mélangées à la chevelure. [Summary:] Tout cela, mondain et virginal : et ne donnant pas du tout l'impression d'une Toilette de Bal, défaut grave : non, mais quelque chose de riche et de léger avec un recueillement. (4ème livraison)
La Dernière Mode is the first and most important of Mallarmé's lengthy prose exercises of the 1870's, and the one, in his autobiographical letter to Verlaine of November 1885 (sent to his fellow poet to aid him in putting together Les Hommes d'Aujourd'hui), that he remembers with the most pleasure (O.C. 663-664). But he also, as he mentions in that same letter, produced two primarily didactic works in that decade, Les Mots Anglais (1877), and Les Dieux Antiques (1880), the latter a translation of George Cox's Manual of Mythology. And these expository works likewise attest to the socializing impulse of our poet at this period.

In verse, too, Mallarmé was concentrating more on public expression, and his two most substantial poems of this phase are the elegies for Gautier and Poe. While in the "Toast Funèbre" for Gautier there is little consideration of the importance of transience within art (which might be an affront to Gautier's memory), there is considerable acceptance of Gautier's conception of the world and art as wedded and complete in their relationship -- art providing a perfect model for life without need of any external absolutes. According to Mallarmé here, everything in the world is for Gautier perfectly calm and clear and irradiated with full sun. At the end of the poem's second section (ll.26-31) it is suggested that for Gautier there is no Platonic realm of ideals; in the fourth section (ll.48-56) it is suggested that the realm of dream is also excluded from Gautier's interest, being "ennemi de sa charge". That master poet, possessed of a shadowless "splendide génie éternel", was instead concerned in this aesthetic earthly eden only to "éveille[r] / Pour la Rose et le Lys le mystère d'un nom".

Given the intellectual restraints involved in an elegy for Gautier (one recalls, for example,
Gide's famous mot that "Oui, Gautier occupe une place considérable; c'est seulement dommage qu'il l'occupe mal") it is unsurprising that there should be three, and perhaps more, different sensibilities discernable in this poem. Most prominent is the overt hommage to Gautier. But secondarily there is the Platonic voice of the crowd asking, "Souvenirs d'horizons, qu'est-ce, ô toi, que la Terre?". And there is also the somewhat humorous judgement of Mallarmé at work, which here organizes Gautier's opposition to Platonism, to skepticism, to dreams, etc., and ends the poem on a couplet that may be interpreted both in favour of Gautier's art or less courteously:

Le sépulcre solide où git tout ce qui nuit,
Et l'avare silence et la massive nuit.

Gautier's work combats night and silence -- this is the primary sense. But there is, too, a sense that Gautier's tomb is dominated precisely by those absences that he combatted -- because he didn't assimilate them into his work.

In "Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe", written for an American memorial volume for Poe that appeared at the end of 1876, there is but one unified voice. Again the role of the poet in society is considered; but here it is suggested that that function is not simply, as it was for Gautier, to name the world, but also, as it was for Poe, to understand it: "Donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu". Unlike Gautier, Poe has implicitly recognized that death and absence are intrinsic to language ("la mort triomphait dans cette voix étrange"). Drawing on a fundamental struggle of earth and sky, or with earth and sky ("Du sol et de la nue hostiles"), symbolizing body and mind, Mallarmé will attempt a bas-relief in verse worthy of Poe's tomb.

The phases of Mallarmé's career are marked by points of crisis or displacement. His
switchover from an externalized to an internalized ideal, and from a Baudelairean to a symbolist style, is largely the product of his spiritual crisis in Tournon between 1866 and 1869, when he freed himself from his transcendental theism. We recall his victory letter to Cazalis of May 14, 1867, too long to quote here in its edifying entirety, in which, his "horrible sensibilité" not yet being socially assimilated nor protected by a dandyish "indifférence extérieure", he observes,

Je viens de passer une année effrayante : ma Pensée s'est pensée, et est arrivée à une Conception Pure. Tout ce que, par contre-coup, mon être a souffert, pendant cette longue agonie, est inéparable, mais, heureusement, je suis parfaitement mort, et la région la plus impure où mon Esprit puisse s'aventurer est l'Eternité, mon Esprit, ce solitaire habituel de sa propre Pureté, que n'obscurcit plus même le reflet du Temps. (Corr. 342)

This crisis stage is evidently not yet complete early in 1869, for when Mallarmé writes to Cazalis on February 18 or 19 of that year, his wife, Marie, must serve as amanuensis, because "le simple acte d'écrire installe[] l'hystérie dans ma tête". Marie being German, she makes a few spelling mistakes in transcribing her husband's summing up of both his poetic crisis, and his desire to explore the origins of human thought (considered above in our analysis of Hérodiade): "La première phase de ma vie a été finie.... Cela dura quelques années pendant lesquelles j'ai à vivre la vie de l'humanité depuis son enfance et prenant conscience d'elle même" (Corr. 425).

What I have called Mallarmé's "socialization" phase begins, quite simply, with his move to Paris in 1871.

If we are to descry a final, "analytic", phase in Mallarmé's career, following on the stages of primary "a priori" consciousness, and socialized self consciousness, it would seem to begin with his more extreme experimentation in the 1880's when, having taken full and confident control of
all aspects of the art of poetry, having mastered all elements of self-presentation as well as of internal thought process, he can take aesthetic verbal play to a higher level. If there is one event that touches off this final stage, the stage of Spirit, it might be the death of Mallarmé's son Anatole in October, 1879, that grieved him so sharply that he was himself bed-ridden for months. The linguistic and phenomenal game of absence and presence may have found in that death its starkly simple objective correlative. J.-P. Richard has presented evidence, as well, that Mallarmé had intended his son to complete his own poetic projects, and the boy's untimely death made the child indeed "father to the man" in forcing Mallarmé to perform the next generation's work himself (cf. Pour un "Tombeau d'Anatole"). Publicly, however, it was the death of Victor Hugo in May, 1885, that Mallarmé adduces as the grounds for the emergent "crisis in verse". And privately the commencement of his intimate relationship with Méry Laurent in 1884 rounds out these biographical "catalysts" for his experimental "absolute" verse of the last phase.

Throughout Mallarmé's career there is an emphasis on the potential of art (the empirical domain between the mytho-libidinal a priori and philosophical analysis) to overcome the contingent through a struggle of opposites: presence/absence, beyond/within, future/memory, subject/object, summation/volatilization, etc. (antinomies which have been remarkably well discussed by J.-P. Richard). As we have seen, the syntactic ambiguity of all his "post-Baudelairean" poetry invites us to an "absolute" sublimity both logical and enthralling through its vivid demonstration of how contingency must be provisionally vanquished "mot par mot" (O.C. 367). But beginning in the 1880's, what I have called the background relation in Mallarmé's
poetry, the relation between sound and sense, assumes much greater prominence, as there is a sharper focus on the "technical" aspect of the process by which sound is transposed into idea. And as we shall see, the separating, transcendental character of the French language causes Mallarmé to be prejudiced in favour of the relatively more "objective" visual sense, while still, as a poet, recognizing the importance (or perhaps the "contingent necessity") of aural expression as a ground for subjectivity. The transcendental, specifying tendency of French also, presumably, causes Mallarmé to emphasize the existential relation of sound to silence in his poetry, since sound and silence are defined in terms of each other. Thematically this relation is to be observed, for example, in "Petit Air II" and the sonnet of the swan, where birds' cries are silenced by death, in "A la nue accablante tu" and "Un Coup de Dés", where silence is the result of shipwreck, and in "Mes bouquins refermés", where it is time that has silenced the culture of ancient Paphos. In neo-Platonic fashion Mallarmé considers silence to be the perfect outer limit of language, its absolute origin and ideal end, in the midst of which is speech. The syntactic breaks and spaces in his writing (that are, I would argue, an extension of the separating tendency of French) are thus a means of opening language up to the ideal beyond and within, affording the reader moments of reflection on the constructedness of the text, and on the silent Idea which it attempts to gather up.

Beyond the simple fact of sound's existence as expressive means, there is, of course, the more sophisticated problem of language: sound as phonic structure and its relation to the world, sound within an emotive/cognitive system, the essence of language. In addressing it Mallarmé goes a step beyond Hegel, not only by recognizing in language, in the medium of rational
exchange, a continual inadequacy relative to pure thought (thus his praise of silence), but also in recognizing in language the model for (and/or source of) the dialectical character of human consciousness. Of course, the whole notion of Dialektik, from the Greek dialektike (art of discussion by question and answer), already implies in Hegel an entrenchment of the universal Idea in the verbal, Man and Nature having been made Word. From this perspective it seems almost banal for Mallarmé to declare that "Au fond... le monde est fait pour aboutir à un beau livre" (OC 872). But, surpassing the old oxymoronic practice of "true poetry", our poet submits even this notion of a verbal universe to his skeptical critique, so that language everywhere is shown to be at once valid and invalid. Always the absolute is deferred or imperfectly defined ("Un livre ne commence ni ne finit : tout au plus fait-il semblant" (Le Livre 181)), so that the truth-seeking subject can only attempt to reach toward the absolute idea through imaginative creation of something new: " Le vers ... de plusieurs vocables refait un mot total, neuf, étranger à la langue" (OC 858). In view of this continual interrogation of language we may rank Mallarmé among the great skeptics of European letters (a skeptic who, like Montaigne or Nietzsche, ultimately accepts a unified humanist centralized ego, but only after turning it altogether inside-out in the examination of its validity). Listen, for example, to his argument for withholding judgement on whether English is primarily Germanic or Latinate:

Le point de vue où l'on se place, tout en dépend; or, il est multiple et c'est même une succession de points de vue, se reliant entre eux, qui peut, seule, vous faire une conviction à cette égard. OC 1047

That a continual ambiguity may still partake of a totality is due, as Jean-Pierre Richard
explains, to the dialectical balancing of presence and absence in consciousness:

Toujours, en cette structure idéale, un pourtour contingent devrait s'abstraire en un vide central, d'où divergerait inversement un principe universel de cohérence. Entre centre et pourtour, le rapport serait d'équilibre et d'échange; celui qui voudrait saisir l'exacte beauté de cette forme devrait sans cesse aller de l'un à l'autre, et les éclairer de l'un par l'autre. La loi de la compréhension, ce sera encore ici le va-et-vient. (421)

Mallarmé's vision remains very much a humanist one, because even if he recognizes at points the inadequacy of language in its current state to render the world for us as it truly is, if his perfect Livre cannot be finished in his own lifetime and the ideal is yet silence, still he is confident that human ingenuity can proceed toward that goal of full understanding, and be in the meantime delighted to possess such a sublime destination. This is one of the lessons of the first in his great tetralogy of hexameter sonnets:

Quand l'ombre menaça de sa fatale loi
Tel vieux Rêve, désir et mal de mes vertèbres,
Affligé de périr sous les plafonds funèbres
Il a ployé son aile indubitable en moi. (67)

The old dream of truth has perished as a transcendental aim that would associate it with the heavens ("plafonds funèbres"), but survives by being internalized. This more intimate relation to phenomenal (Kantian) dream-reality, to be a happy relation, requires faith in its own subjectivity and in its own self-undertaken presence. The entire external world of seductive materiality and transcendent systems of politics, philosophy or religion, even the easeful luxury of death as something beyond, is rejected by this faith in human capability.

Luxe, ô salle d'ébène où, pour séduire un roi
Se tordent dans leur mort des guirlandes célèbres
Vous n'êtes qu'un orgueil menti par les ténèbres
Aux yeux du solitaire ébloui de sa foi.

Oui, je sais qu'au lointain de cette nuit, la Terre
Jette d'un grand éclat l'insolite mystère,
Sous les siècles hideux qui l'obscurcissent moins.

L'espace à soi pareil qu'il s'accroisse ou se nie
Roule dans cet ennui des feux vils pour témoins
Que s'est d'un astre en fête allumé le génie. (67)

Through his own faith in the earth the poet can put behind ancient fears, "les siècles hideux" of external systems of control, and celebrate the genius of life here in ourselves. Though the background of space remains indifferent to human concerns, it is perhaps the source of the negativity that prompts by its opposition the forward-looking confidence of man in Nature. The ambiguity of the word "il" (which may be either "l'espace" or "le génie") in the third last line promotes such a dual engagement with the antinomies of positive and negative, without and within (the playing out of Mallarmé's "deux à deux"). And yet, while this poem presents new-born subjectivity, it falls short of recognizing that subjectivity itself may become an object. That is to say, in this poem, concerned with the a priori that is phenomenological faith in human consciousness, genius simply arises ("s'est allumé") without any explanation, but also without any sort of self-conscious sense of absurdity. It radiates, happy in itself.

While it has not normally been recognized (though the ever-cautious Lloyd Austin writes of "peut-être une suite" (Poésies 175)), the three sonnets of the "Plusieurs Sonnets" that follow this one actually complete in ascending order the stages of Hegelian psychology, and, in the last poem, Mallarmé's linguistic addition thereto, so that the tetralogy as a whole represents, in fact, a
The second sonnet, "Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui", presents the existentialist phase of consciousness (i.e., self consciousness) wherein existence is viewed as a problem. The third sonnet, "Victorieusement fui le suicide beau", treats socialized consciousness, as "nous" and "tu" are added to the "je" and "il" of the preceding sonnets. The fourth sonnet, "Ses purs ongles très haut dédiant leur onyx", considers language itself, that has been able to gather and present the three levels of consciousness in an abstract process, and that as process cannot be reduced to any fully objective status (the nonce word "ptyx" being here an example of language's entirely contextual character). The first sonnet, then, concerns the physical world; the second, the animal world; the third, society; the fourth, meaning. The first treats faith (line 8); the second, hope (line 6); the third, love; the fourth, the linguistic representation of these fundamental varieties of knowledge.

Seeing as "Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui" is probably the greatest existentialist poem in French, it is not surprising that Sartre's unfinished study, Mallarmé : la lucidité et sa face d'ombre (published in 1986), terminates with consideration of it along with "Un Coup de Dés". The figure of the swan, slowly freezing to death on a lake, but all the time denying the power of the environment, is a precise symbol of the futility of the Sartrean pour-soi's conflict with the en-soi. Indeed, the drive depicted here, of the ego attempting to free itself from "l'horreur du sol où le plumage est pris", is analogous to the celebrated scene of "La Nausée" wherein nausea is evoked in the contemplation of the rootedness of a tree. Sterile winter's "ennui", the swan's "mépris", and its "exil inutile" (reminiscent for us of Sartrean "passion inutile") are so many additional pieces of
existentialist furniture. And this poem fits perfectly, too, into Sartre's sociological explanation of
the symbolist school's decision to write in a scornfully difficult and concise style (a matter to which
we shall return in Chapter Three):

ils écrivirent parce que la poésie ne rapportait plus, parce que ses dédaïns
silencieux leur reflétaient leur docilité méprisante et muette; parce que la dignité
boudeuse du barde en chomage [a Mallarméan concept] et la dignité revêche de
l'employé subalterne pouvait se confondre; parce que leurs inavouables rancœurs
d'homme pouvaient se sublimer dans le juste ressentiment du poète. (40-41)

Is there in all of Mallarmé a better image of such a "docilité méprisante et muette", the poet on
strike, than this disdainful and half-frozen swan, that has imposed exile on itself by its inaction? In
a simultaneous absence and presence with respect to his environment, the symbolist poet no
longer finds himself flapping clumsily like Baudelaire's albatross "gauche et veule", but quite
frozen into a world of frigid ennui, and all the same denying his predicament by the extra-
mundanity of his revolutionized language.

Indeed, this sonnet as a whole may be read as a reflection on language and meaning that
surpasses Sartre and anticipates instead Jacques Lacan (and the fourth sonnet in the cycle), as
soon as we recognize that the "cygne", perfectly homophonous with the "signe sémantique",
represents here not simply the poet, but also poetry and language generally. In the first quatrain it
is asked whether unfled flights locked beneath the ice (and these may represent unacted desires,
unformed urges at the level of the semiotic chora) will be torn free by the force of some
intoxicated wing. This wing is the swan's, and also, given the sexual suggestiveness, that of the
Zeusian swan riving Leda, or another winged divinity -- perhaps Eros, or the angel that dislocated
Jacob's hip -- or, by metonymy, the poet's "plume". Such is the symbolic layering in these poems:

Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui  
Va-t-il nous déchirer avec un coup d'aile ivre  
Ce lac dur oublié que hante sous le givre  
Le transparent glacier des vols qui n'ont pas fui!

Un cygne d'autrefois se souvient que c'est lui  
Magnifique mais qui sans espoir se délivre  
Pour n'avoir pas chanté la région où vivre  
Quand du stérile hiver a resplendi l'ennui.

Tout son col secouera cette blanche agonie  
Par l'espace infligé à l'oiseau qui le nie,  
Mai son l'horreur du sol où le plumage est pris.

Fantôme qu'à ce lieu son pur éclat assigne,  
Il s'immobilise au songe froid de mépris  
Que vêt parmi l'exil inutile le Cygne.    (67-68)

The swan/sign, of an earlier, more fruitful, time, cannot now hope to accomplish anything, for it has failed to create in imagination ("chante[r] la région où vivre"). Language has become paralytic, and though, as the first tercet suggests, the phallic Lacanian sign, symbolized by the swan's neck, may well shake the white space around it (negating it by turning it into mere verbiage), it cannot ultimately free itself from the physical world. Is the material ground rejected by the swan frozen in it a symbol of the sign's entrenchment in sound-sense correspondence? Certainly, that is one possibility, given the astonishing pervasiveness of the [i] sound in this sonnet, where the physicality of that intense high front vowel enters into the swan's very denial of the physical: "l'oiseau qui le nie" -- the [i] sound being modified in this word "nie" only by affixation of the consonant of negation, [n]. Of course, linguistically, the ice-rigid "sol" could represent, rather
than entrenchment in sound-sense relations, simply the congealed stiffness of conventional diction and syntax.

Certainly, however, the sound-sense relations in this sonnet are rich -- and as their structuring is also in this poem plainer to view than in most of Mallarmé's work, let us at this point commence a much fuller consideration of this "mysterious" aspect of his art, the trembling of the master poet's voice that awakens "pour la Rose et le Lys le mystère [sic] d'un nom".

In his prose writings Mallarmé is reasonably precise on the question of sound-sense correspondence, and its existence as either a universal, a priori, onomatopoeia or as a merely conventional, empirical, link between phonetics and semantics. On the one hand there is his affirmation of the likelihood of some such correspondence across all languages, quoted above from Les Mots Anglais, and his quite extensive examination in that same book of the major English phonemes and the meanings they empirically tend to suggest. For example, under the letter "d" (which I have chosen altogether at random):

D, en tête de vocables très nombreux, s'unit à toutes les voyelles; pas à l, mais à r, enfin à w. Seul, il exprime une action suivie et sans éclat, profonde, comme plonger, creuser, ou tomber par goutte, ainsi que la stagnation, la lourdeur morale et l'obscurité; avec r, c'est l'effort prolongé dans un sens ou dans l'autre, ou pousser ou tirer. (O.C. 950)

On the other hand, in "Crise de vers" he expresses disappointment, not that French lacks such conventional relations as these (for it doesn't), but that it lacks a consistent and complete a priori onomatopoeia:

le discours défaille à exprimer les objets par les touches y répondant en coloris ou en allure, lesquellesexistent dans l'instrument de la voix, parmi les langages, et
Yet we must consider this regret concerning an incomplete onomatopoeia (Paul Valéry has noted that jour, at least, sounds warm, and nuit, cool) in the light of Mallarmé's conclusion, that it is the task of poetry to make up for such phono-semantic shortcomings. Were natural unimproved language materially to offer the truth, he writes, man could consider himself God, and verse would be unnecessary: "Seulement, sachons, n'existerait pas le vers : lui, philosophiquement rémunère le défaut des langues, complément supérieur" (364).

Hence our interest in how the sonnet of the swan compensates for quotidien language's onomatopoetic weakness: it does so via an extensive employment of every means of transcribed oral language to suggest and reinforce ideas by sound (assonance and alliteration, paronomasia, internal and end rhyme, metre versus lexical units, etc.) to which its remarkable surpassing of the sonnet's already strict formal requirements serves as a final proof, and guarantee of respectability. In no phonically sensitive poem, of course, where the author's goal has been to meld the phonic to the ideational, can these elements of sound and meaning be fully separated -- for there is a sort of hermeneutic circle in operation: to understand a verbalized idea we must examine its constituent sounds, but to understand the sounds we must consider what idea they produce for us. And beyond this, on the phrasal level, as Mallarmé recognized, the music of phonetics and the geometry of thought share the same psychological foundation:

l'acte poétique consiste à voir soudain qu'une idée se fractionne en un nombre de motifs égaux par valeur et à les grouper; ils riment : pour sceau extérieur, leur
commune mesure qu'apparente le coup final. ("Crise de vers" O.C. 365)

Remarkably, in the swan sonnet, the end rhymes are all on the sound [i], whether [ui], [ivr], [ni], [pri], or [inj], and that phoneme, occurring 37 times in the poem (i.e., over 2½ times per line on average), is prominent in other key positions as well: 3 times in each of the first and second lines, 4 times in the eighth line, and 5 times in each of the last two lines of the poem. The sensation connoted by [i], as the highest of the front vowels, is intensity and excitement, either positive or negative; and the change in its state, depending on its immediate context as it progresses through the poem's "plot", is a set of variations on that sound's core character. In the first quatrain's cheerful setting of scene or prologue, the glide up to the intense [i] in the diphthong [ui] of the end-rhymes ("aujourd'hui" and "fui") suggests active energy, both mental and physical, corroborated by the words "vierge" and "vivace". There's a certain sexual violence suggested, too, since these "v" words that slide so easily into French slang for the phallus, "verge" and "vit", are tied to a sundering of ice: "Va-t-il nous déchirer". In "lui" (line 5) this potential for action is located in a protagonist, the swan; but in "ennui" (line 8) action is reduced to mere contained, malcontent, mental energy, as the object world overpowers the swan-hero's vigour. Already, in fact, in the [ivr] of "ivre", "givre", délivre" and "vivre" there are proleptic shadows on the energy of the swan's [i] cry, as it assists at the union of the sharp labiodental [v] to the ambiguous fluttering rolled velar [r]. The climax arrives with the [ni] rhymes of the first tercet, where the [i]'s, and the swan's, hubris of intensity confronts the negating force of the tongue pushing against the alveolar ridge in the [n] stop -- and necessitating the final catastrophe, as the swan and its song go
down, honoured by the explosive, splendorous [pr] (compare "prince", "prestige", or "preuve") of "pris" and "mépris". Finally, in "assigne" and "Cygne" of the dénouement the [i] comes to a halt as it runs up against a nasal stop and a glide [nj], a stop and a little flourish or final bow. In the final couplet, we may observe a confirmation of the swan's rigidity in the fact that its associated [i] sound has even formally become bound to the negative [n] in the prefix of negation "in-" (or "im-") when assimilated to a bilabial):

Il s'immobilise au songe froid de mépris
Que vêt parmi l'exil inutile le Cygne.

The total exhaustion of the [i]'s energy by the end of the sonnet is implied, too, in the fact that the "vierge" and "vivace" of the first line have been lowered to "vêt".

Metricaly, also, the first and last lines of the sonnet reflect each other. For example, only in them and in line 13 is the caesura elided: attributable in line 1 to exuberance, and in line 14 to ...

lassitude? Line 2, it may be added, contains the sloppiest of the caesurae in the poem -- apposing an infinitive to a vowel ("déchirer avec") at the break is, classically speaking, nearly as undesirable as spanning the break with a prepositional phrase as in line 13 ("au songe"). Thus the opening and closing couplets provide a sort of frame to the sonnet, leading the reader into and out of classical metre.

The first and last lines are also the only ones with a triple structure. In line 1 the triplicity involves three words ("Le vierge, le vivace et le bel") while in line 14 it concerns a triple rhyme ("parmi l'exil inutile") so that we are again confronted with the question of whether this poem, like all Mallarmé's poems, is a matter of language as objective meaning or as subjective sound (of
course, it's a complete fusion of these). And I hope it will not be counted philosophical excess on my part to observe that the first element in these trinities is the a priori virginal, or consciousness that is phenomenologically "amidst" ("parmi"); the second element is the lively separation of self consciousness ("l'exil"); and the third element is the useless and the beautiful, redolent of Kantian aesthetics -- though not of Hegel's analytic Spirit, for that is the basis of the third and fourth sonnets of the cycle.

Before proceeding to those, I concede there is significantly more to be said about the sound-meaning relations in this sonnet of the swan (or "Sonnet en "i"")), but rather than critically oversaturating it, I'll conserve comments in this vein for other poems. -- Except for this one observation, of a sort too infrequently proffered, regarding a matter teetering, like most things linguistic, between sound and sense, rhyme and reason: the balance of gender among the nouns. The swan sonnet is, as we might expect in so existential a poem, extraordinarily masculine in substantives -- only two are feminine, and these, suitably, are the desired "région où vivre" and the "blanche agonie" that the swan will shake with his phallic neck. The third sonnet of the cycle, "Victorieusement fui le suicide beau" (13 syllables!) completely blends, by contrast, the masculine and the feminine.

The first line alone informs us that we have left behind the severe and suicidal intensity of self consciousness of the swan sonnet; to its "vols qui n'ont pas fui" is opposed here a successful escape. The abandoned "suicide beau" is the swan's Kantian separation of mind and world, that confines reality to a scornful, and ultimately solipsistic, "songe froid", and limits aesthetics to
uselessness. Here instead the mind perceives its intimate containment in the world, particularly on
the sexual level. In the second line, for example, that suggests at once cataclysmic nature, sunset,
and sexuality, there is a triple sequence of male and female gender pairs: "Tison de gloire, sang par
écume, or, tempête". The poet escapes the cosmic deluge by loading two of each species, "deux à
deux", on his verbal ark. In lines 3 and 4,

O rire si là-bas une pourpre s'apprête
A ne tendre royal que mon absent tombeau

the setting sun's purple of death elicits laughter, because the poet has, in accepting death,
overcome it -- or vice versa, death has overcome him, and acceptance is natural. And on the
sexual level he rejoices that below his mistress' waist ("là-bas") his purple tomb awaits.

We may speak very correctly of "the poet" in this sonnet, because, like the first poem in
the cycle, it is in the first person. But whereas that sonnet concerns only genial consciousness's
birth, this one represents the poet's full birth into society via sexuality and the communion of the
first person plural:

Quoi! de tout cet éclat pas même le lambeau
S'attarde, il est minuit, à l'ombre qui nous fête
Excepté qu'un trésor présomptueux de tête
Verse son caressé nonchaloir sans flambeau.

After twilight has faded the only light is the gleam of the lady's extra-sumptuous head of
hair, "un trésor présomptueux de tête" aurally splendid in its syllable-initial contrast of the plosive
[p] and incisive [t], especially in the [trez/prez] rhyme. The corresponding (4th to 12th) syllables of
the next line, "caressé nonchaloir sans flambeau", establish the tress's flow by the absence of such
fully-stopped consonants, apart from the initial [k], and the [b] of the last syllable, formed easily
after the bilabial [m].

The sonnet concludes with direct address to the lady:

La tienne si toujours le délice! la tienne  
Oui seule qui du ciel évanoui retienne  
Un peu de puéril triomphe en t'en coiffant

Avec clarté quand sur les coussins tu la poses  
Comme un casque guerrier d'impératrice enfant  
Dont pour te figurer il tomberait des roses.

With the "si" and "Oui" of the first tercet, the energetic [i] sound of the swan sonnet becomes unreservedly affirmative, as the Zeusian swan's, or the poet's, [i] energy has been transferred to the lady's halo of hair. Her hair, "la tienne", retains in its diphthong the force, the "puéril triomphe", of that clear [i] we hear in the masculine "ciel". In this sestet as a whole, then, the lady's hair is a sort of intermediary, at once masculine and feminine, like language, or the symbolic phallus of Lacan. Her hair is a sort of supplement, at once part of and not part of her body, for while she offers it up to her lover's delectation, he has in a sense created its meaning for her by his admiration -- so it is a kind of shared bond. And indeed this hair bond would seem to be, from a Lacanian perspective, somewhat of a substitution for a more literally phallic bond -- for the "treasure with the presumptuous head" of line 7 already contains a certain phallic suggestiveness, offering the reader considerable scope for psychoanalytic free-play.

The fourth and last sonnet of the sequence, "Ses purs ongles très haut dédiant leur onyx", in focusing on language, considers the intellectual rather than the social aspect of Spirit. The word "ptyx", from the Greek "ptux", meaning both "fold" and "writing tablet", is the felicitous object-
symbol for the folding of Hegelianism into linguistics (and vice versa) that Mallarmé performs here. For though Hegel's Idealist phenomenology had charted the pattern of sublimation and synthesis that the mind works on its own perceptions, it is only with symbolist poetry that the potential for producing the pattern of Aufhebung linguistically is made fully evident. Indeed, from a certain angle, the language in this sonnet is so abstracted from reference that its beauty may seem to lie entirely in its form -- in its construction on just two rhymes (the exotically ancient [iks] and Mallarmé's cherished [or]), its artful alliterations within a customary cadence, etc.-- but in this case the poem still is "self-aware" enough to point to its own artificiality, with the reference to the window and mirror in the sestet, and to sonorous inanity in line 6:

Ses purs ongles très haut dédiant leur onyx,
L'Angoisse, ce minuit, soutient, lampadophore,
Maint rêve vespéral brûlé par le Phénix
Que ne recueille pas de cinéraire amphore

Sur les crédences, au salon vide : nul ptyx,
Aboli bibelot d'inanité sonore,
(Car le Maître est allé puiser des pleurs au Styx
Avec ce seul objet dont le Néant s'honore).

Mais proche la croisée au nord vacante, un or
Agonise selon peut-être le décor
Des licornes ruant du feu contre une nixe,

Elle, défunte nue en le miroir, encor
Que, dans l'oubli fermé par le cadre, se fixe
De scintillations sitôt le septuor. (68-69)

But lexical language, as the surrealists were later to demonstrate (and the opening quatrain here is proto-surrealist), is never perfectly inane: reference continually intrudes itself. Furthermore,
the mention of the Master and Nothingness in lines 7 and 8 introduces an absolute ground that forces us to consider this sonnet philosophically. Nonetheless, Mallarmé has with this poem added one more level of ambiguity to his art of composition; beyond the ambiguity of meanings striving to be born out of a primal cry in such poems as "Hérodiade" or the sonnet of the swan, beyond the ambiguity that is the registering of multiple levels of perception as in "L'Après-midi d'un Faune" or "Victorieusement fui le suicide beau", there is another ambiguity that involves making a choice between conscious semantic abstractions and a musically sonorous syllabification that speaks to the unconscious. Curiously, however, this is the only Mallarmé poem that contains this degree of "pure musicality", with virtuoso rhymes and emptied sense. Mallarmé wrote the first version of it in 1868, it being the first poem he composed in the wake of his "Hérodiade" crisis, and his explanation of it to Cazalis fully recognizes its inanity:

J'exraits ce sonnet, auquel j'avais une fois songé cet été, d'une étude projetée sur la Parole : il est inverse, je veux dire que le sens, s'il en a un, (mais je me consolerais du contraire grâce à la dose de poësie qu'il renferme, ce me semble) est évoqué par un mirage interne des mots mêmes. En se laissant aller à le murmurer plusieurs fois on éprouve une sensation assez cabalistique....
-- J'ai pris ce sujet d'un sonnet nul et se réfléchissant de toutes les façons, parce que mon oeuvre est si bien préparé et hiérarchisé, représentant comme il le peut l'Univers, que je n'aurais su, sans endommager quelqu'une de mes impressions étagées, rien en enlever, -- et aucun sonnet ne s'y rencontre. (July 18, 1868, Corr. 392-93)

In the ambiguous "if it has a meaning (but I'd console myself of the contrary due to its poetry)", the parenthesis gives us a hint of the semantic "emptiness" of the sonnet itself, elaborated in the remainder of the paragraph as a cabalistic fusion of "mirage" and "murmuring".

Indisputably, however, there is a remarkable thematic/intellectual level to the poem,
involving, as Mallarmé implies, the mirror quality of language itself. The time, midnight, remains the same as in the third sonnet, but instead of erotic celebration we have here a religious celebration. Anguish -- perhaps arrived from the second sonnet? -- is an assistant at this Greek rite, and serves as a lantern-bearer or "lampadophore" holding dreams burned by the phoenix, dreams that are therefore, like language and consciousness, eternally reborn (and therefore indestructible) abstractions.

On the credence-table for this midnight ceremony, however, there is no cruet, no symbolic vessel, no "ptyx", because the poet-priest has gone to draw tears from the Styx with this curio that does honour to, gives distinction to, the Void. This curio, "Aboli bibelot d'inanité sonore", would seem to be language itself, the sacred Word, that through its separation from the physical can both create and annihilate. Derived, as mentioned above, from the Greek "ptux", meaning both "fold" and "writing sheet", "ptyx" is the perfect symbol for Mallarmé's linguistic supplement to Hegelianism. Why is the Master using this fold or writing tablet to draw tears from the Styx? Is he thereby, like a priest, a philosopher, or a poet (Jesus, Hegel, Mallarmé ...), reducing the soul's suffering by his concepts, or simply giving mortal life fuller expression? It is paradoxical, naturally, that this most meaningful of Mallarméan couplets is in parentheses at the centre of his most "meaningless" sonnet.

The sestet, taking us beyond the midnight mass to art and stars, offers two analogies for perception: the window and the mirror. Is language like both of these? As a mirror it shows us ourselves in symbolic art (a water nymph has succumbed to fierce unicorns), and as a window it
reveals our position amidst the firmament (observing the seven stars of the Great Bear). In fact, since descriptively the mirror and window are combined, there is an implicit fusion of these language functions. And in that the gold colour that both mirror and window reflect or reveal ("un or / Agonise selon...") is blended phonetically into the material objects originally presenting that "or" -- the "décors" and the "septuors" -- there is implicit phonosemantic immanence as well. And as "or" here is not only a colour, but also the precious metal (ultimate matter), and the "now" (hac hora) that marks the transition into the sestet, linguistic symbolism may also involve struggle in time and matter.

Does this fourth sonnet of the cycle, finally, represent a form of knowledge that surpasses the other three, or simply the process of creation and negation which indwells the Hegelian triad? It would seem to be both, i.e., the variety of knowledge/writing that Julia Kristeva calls "text practice", at once a recognition of the genuine and energetic (by turns positive and negative) basis of all other forms of knowledge, and a skeptically absolute, absolutely sceptical, anti-school of its own. As Kristeva observes, the semiotic drive subtending and upholding the reified semantic sphere, continually combining parts in new combinations, can effect in linguistically revolutionary texts

une destruction du signe, de la représentation, et, en conséquence, du récit, de la métalangue et du sérieux dérivé [i.e., of the empirical, analytic and a priori]. Mais pour ce faire, le texte les parcourt, ne les ignore pas, s'insinue en eux et les fait sauter dans son rythme violent, en alternant le rejet et l'imposition. (98)

Kristeva reminds us that for Hegel, too, (as he states in his Science of Logic) negativity really constitutes the fourth term of the dialectic, and in relation to it the objective triad itself is
only appearance ("une appareance relevant de l'entendement" (Kristeva 105)). From this standpoint we may consider the temporary absence of Mallarmé's "ptyx / Aboli bibelot d'imanité sonore" to be a provisional rejection of the objectified character of the "enfolding" Hegelian dialectic -- insofar as the surrounding poem's pure musicality succeeds in destroying the requirement that language be understood in some objective way.

There is, to be sure, a certain amount of national linguistic bias in such experiments in meaning construction and destruction, a bias that will become much more clear as we compare Mallarmé's art to that of G.M. Hopkins in the next chapter. In the meantime we may observe that, because of the French language's proclivity for separation from the object world (its Cartesian prejudice) -- due to grammatical factors such as its rather rigid lexicon, its description by progressive discrete division, its abstract prepositions, lack of a tonic accent, etc. -- French poetry is of a, relatively, "rational" character, and ultimately oriented towards the ideational rather than the phonic. No matter how hard the French poet tries to eliminate meaning in his poetry, as in the attempts of Nerval, Mallarmé, or Eluard, meaning inevitably comes back to haunt it like a persistent revenant, because the French language, in a grammar attuned to apperception, is relentlessly defining and specifying. Mallarmé's statement on the relation of music to thought and writing in "Crise de Vers" is illuminating as an example of the French position (or "bias") generally, in its conception of the primary direction of movement in aural art as being from sound to thought. In that essay he admits, first of all, that concert music presents great poems that inform humanity, and that each of these poems is all the more easily understood for being, in music,
unexplained and thus, paradoxically, "silenced": "d'autant plus compréhensible que tu et que pour en déterminer la vaste ligne le compositeur éprouva cette facilité de suspendre jusqu'à la tentation de s'expliquer" (367). But in the following sentence he contends, while confessing his writer's prejudice, that this unintellectual, unexplaining quality of music is unsatisfactory, and that only in verbal ideas does music come fully into its proper existence:

Je me figure par un indéracinable sans doute préjugé d'écrivain, que rien ne demeurera sans être proféré; que nous en somme là, précisément à rechercher, devant une brisure des grands rythmes littéraires (il en a été question plus haut) et leur éparpillement en frissons articulés proches de l'instrumentation, un art d'achever la transposition, au Livre, de la symphonie ou uniment de reprendre notre bien : car, ce n'est pas de sonorités élémentaires par les cuivres, les cordes, les bois, indéniablement mais de l'intellectuelle parole à son apogée que doit avec plénitude et évidence, résulter, en tant que l'ensemble des rapports existant dans tout, la Musique. (368)

Mallarmé's supposed "préjugé d'écrivain" is really, I would argue, the prejudice of the French language against pure musicality. For proof of this language-motivated bias one need only consider the extent to which the most prominent French art music is visually- or poetically-focused program music: Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique", Debussy's "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune" and his suite of "Nocturnes", Ravel's dance score "Daphnis et Chloé", etc. César Franck, the mystic "Pater Seraphicus" concentrating on a connection to the ineffable divine (and to Beethoven), is the exception who proves the rule. German music, predictably, is far less frequently of the program type.

The principal reason for this then is: because French grammar forces French thought to strive for an immediate ordering of all sense impressions in the mind, and a reduction of these to
discrete rational categories, the musical-sensual world seems from its perspective to be "outside" and foreign, and only has value if it can be brought within apperception. German grammar-thought, by contrast, is relatively content to allow sense impressions simply to be perceived, passively and without rational analysis. Because it sets up less of a boundary between inside and outside, between the physical and the mental, such a system accepts the musical-sensuous as valid in itself. Indeed, from a German standpoint, there is even a tendency to see the sensuous, since it is the ground of all Germanic understanding, as more valuable than the rational (cf. Heidegger), and Germanic poetry consequently more often attempts to "get back in touch with" the sounds that a given idea evokes.

A musicality-obsessed French poet can, of course, do as Verlaine does: concentrate on cadence, and pare down the thematic content to a relatively intangible wispiness:

Car nous voulons la Nuance encor,
Pas la Couleur, rien que la nuance!
Oh! la nuance seule fâche
Le rêve au rêve et la flûte au cor!

But even so there is a persistent removal from the world of pure sound, and a constant enmeshment in the apperceptual level of "rêve".

André Gide, in a brief article on the essence of French poetry, "Sur une définition de la poésie"\textsuperscript{8}, meditates on a more-or-less forgotten text of Théodore de Banville that describes poetry thus:

... cette magie, qui consiste à éveiller des sensations à l'aide d'une combinaison de sons... cette sorcellerie grâce à laquelle des idées nous sont nécessairement communiquées, d'une manière certaine, par des mots qui cependant ne les
For Banville this process of turning sound into idea is magic and sorcery, just as for Mallarmé it is mystery, because in French there is always a threshold between separate worlds to be crossed in moving from the physical to the mental. How, from the standpoint of French reason, for which the only immediate, unmediated reality is, via the cogito, one's own mind, can there be any primary reality derived from brute and "alien" sound? Yet the poet recognizes this preposterous derivation to be somehow, mysteriously, legitimate.

We observe that for Banville, as for French poets generally, the final product in verse is "des idées". That these ideas should be communicated "necessarily" and "with certainty" is the natural consequence of the predominant French semantic drive for order and precision, and reflects the French language's desire for transcendental control rather than (Germanic) passive immanence. This transcendent/immanent relation of language to/in the world is, of course, what we have been considering in Mallarmé all along, in the synthesis of a priori elements within and empirical elements that transcend. But let us for the remainder of this chapter consider how, in the 1880's and '90's, Mallarmé puts greater emphasis on transcendence and immanence in their relation to certitude and chance. Or how, if you like, he allows French's native orientation toward the certitude of an objectifying transcendence to express itself ever more freely -- in accordance with his famous declaration that words must be allowed to have the initiative:

L'œuvre pure implique la disparition élocutoire du poète, qui cède l'initiative aux mots, par le heurt de leur inégalité mobilisés; ils s'allument de reflets réciproques comme une virtuelle traînée de feux sur des pierrières, remplaçant la respiration perceptible en l'ancien souffle lyrique ou la direction personnelle de la
phrase. ("Crise de Vers" O.C. 366)

One notices here, in the description of development from an ancient a priori lyricism, to an "empirical", individually governed, rational sentence, to a new sort of "analytic" domination by language (cf. Barthes' history of the sentence), that the visual element is metaphorically emphasized in the last stage. It is not my intention to explore in depth with McLuhan and Derrida and Father Ong the cognitive effect of the visualized written word. But I wish to point out here that the visual is normally preferred over the auditory in French because it allows for a separated and transcendant position with respect to the world more easily than does hearing, which combines rather than separates, and is relatively omnidirectional (making it more difficult to establish one's relation to the sound-making object). And consequently as the French language achieves continually fuller self-expression in Mallarmé's poetry, the visual element becomes more and more pronounced, whether the eye is directed at living Nature and people, as in "Prose (pour des Esseintes)" (1884), at still-life, or "nature morte", as in the "Triptyque" (1887), or at written language itself, in "Un Coup de Dés" (1897), where the words break apart from the conventional four-square alignment to create their own constellated patterns across the opened pages of the book. However, as we shall see, the transcendence of the visual is only one element in these poems, and related, on the one hand, to our ongoing struggle for transcendence amidst confusing syntax, and, on the other hand, to the struggle of the immanent phono-semantic "background" to present and impose itself.

"Prose" has been submitted to dozens of studies, and is rich enough to reward
interpretation from numerous angles -- Kristeva's psycho-phonetic analysis, Janine Langan's indication of its parallels to Hegel, Lloyd Austin's biographical commentary, etc. Like all Mallarmé poems from after the "Hérodidae crisis" period, "Prose" is a conscious fusion of the objective and subjective, transcendence and immanence, but more than any of the poems previous to it, it examines the development of these relations to the world critically and quasi-scientifically. (In the "Ouverture Ancienne d'Hérodidae" the genesis of language is, as we observed, considered primarily subjectively as an "éclat" seeking better-defined configurations.)

The two introductory stanzas and two closing stanzas of "Prose" provide a metalinguistic frame for the "narrative" of the middle ten strophes. The introduction is dynamically Hegelian from the first word, "Hyperbole!", that suggests a breaking of semantic boundaries with a hyper-word, a hyper-parabole, or poem. And the magic book of the second stanza gathers together the Hegelian triadic sequence both vertically and horizontally: "patience"-"science"-"spirituels" as well as "Atlas, herbiers et rituels". The final two stanzas, in contrast, offer us for the first time in the poem spoken language, language that is an integral part of a living moment in the real world. And the central stanzas are chiefly a meditation on the relation of the visual and the aural within mind and language as these develop in individuals. "Nous promenions notre visage" indicates from the start the dominance of the visual in early childhood experience, and "notre double / Inconscience" points to the children's lack of full awareness so long as they remain unable to encapsulate experience in language:

    on dit...
Que, sol des cent iris, son site,
Ils savent s'il a bien été,
Ne porte pas de nom que cite
L'or de la trompette d'Été.

Even the rhymes emphasize this visual/aural contrast, here "site" and "cite", and in the next stanza "visions" and "devisions" (meaning "discussed"). The children's world remains predominantly a real world of sight, and their truth consequently is silent and unspoken, smiles rather than words, for the grandeur of that sublime place is beyond their rational/linguistic comprehension: "Grandissait trop pour nos raisons".

The last two stanzas of the central section present the inadequacy of nature's language in summing up youthful experience. Here Mallarmé seems to be drawing upon Romantic treatments -- such as Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and Lamartine's "Le Lac" -- of this scene of a poet reflecting abstractly on language and transience, with a female companion, beside a river or lake. As in those poems, it is not for Mallarmé Nature by itself that provides adequate expression, but human reason and Nature (and the visual and aural) in tandem. Wordsworth, for example, had sung,

Therefore am I still
A lover...
... of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear, -- both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts...("Tintern Abbey" ll.102-3, 105-9)

The post-Romantic, post-Parnassian, post-structuralist Mallarmé diverges from his predecessors only in the psychological precision of his presentation. His denunciation of nature's falsehood with
respect to the aural is, for example, not unlike Keats' dismissal of the nightingale as a "deceiving elf", but he sets the whole history of youth's aural unfulfillment within a double negative -- "Et non comme pleure la rive... Que ce pays n'exista pas" -- that mirrors language's necessary difference from its objective referent, and its possible difference from subjective truth. The external and objective world of transcendence, suggests Mallarmé, is a visual world; but the original dwelling place of full aural truth is the internal, subjective world of immanence, not the flowing stream, because language is essentially a human creation:

Oh! sache l'Esprit de litige,
A cette heure où nous nous taisons,
Que de lis multiples la tige
Grandissait trop pour nos raisons

Et non comme pleure la rive,
Quand son jeu monotone ment
A vouloir que l'amplitude arrive
Parmi mon jeune étonnement

D'ouïr tout le ciel et la carte
Sans fin attestés sur mes pas,
Par le flot même qui s'écarte,
Que ce pays n'exista pas.

The astonishment of youth in the face of natural grandeur is genuine, but, as we saw with "L'Azur", an individual is deceiving himself if he believes he can immediately and fully identify with that external immensity. There may indeed be a Dionysian sublimity of self-abandonment on the visual level as youth's flowers "grow too large for our reason", but there will be no corresponding Apollonian sublimity (the arrival of "l'amplitude") unless we can fashion our own aural and cognitive correlative for the absolute. This is accomplished when the poet's sister, who had been on the
point of speaking at the end of the ninth stanza, finally "abdicates her ecstasy", i.e., rejects her Dionysian "standing outside herself" (exstasis), and says the word "Anastase" ("arise"). The absolute, worthy of eternal parchments, is thus demonstrated to be not an exultation in the external visual, but a communion of the a priori visual absolute with the soul's own acquired, fundamentally aural, subjective, and empirical understanding (it being "docte... par chemins").

Clearly, however, notwithstanding Mallarmé's ultimate recognition here of the subjective immanence of language, his Gallic visual bias appears throughout in

--- "exultation" in the visual versus "astonishment" in the aural,

--- the denunciation of the purely phonic language of the stream (and its containment in a purely "rational" syntactic structure of double negation),

--- the immediate birth of speech onto parchment,

--- the final (Lacanian) obscuring of the word "Pulchérie" ("beauty") by a too tall gladiolus.

On one level this "Pulchérie" may be interpreted as a book of poems, ultimate repository, for Mallarmé, of the departed visual, "l'absente de tous bouquets".

The triptych ("three fold") of octosyllabic sonnets, "Tout Orgueil fume-t-il du soir", "Surgi de la croupe et du bond", and "Une dentelle s'abolit" (73-74), is a phenomenological, rather than empirical, examination of the same basic topic, the linguistic synthesis of objective visuality and subjective aurality. Obviously, though, these poems are susceptible to considerable interpretation
within that Hegelian armature. In the opening sonnet Pride is an a priori constant, like a smoking half-smothered torch (or soul) which gusts (perhaps gusts of human breath) cannot extinguish. The perspective on the world is in this poem cold, and life-denying ("Le sépulcre de désaveu"), and the only source of light is a physical object, "la fulgurante console" -- that is perhaps the table for the vase in sonnet II, and points etymologically towards the second sonnet via its suggestion of social intercourse, "consoling" or even "consulting".

In the first sonnet there is no Aufhebung, no "surseoir". Neither is there in sonnet II, but there is at least a break: "Le col ignoré s'interrompt". The second sonnet, therefore, breaks the continuity of a priori pride and throws us into the social world with an acknowledgement of the "Je". It offers us the full subjectivity of personal imagination. Like Chamfort's description of love as the contact of two epidermises surrounding two souls with very different ideas, Mallarmé's classical sylph of the ceiling fresco says,

Je crois bien que deux bouches n'ont
Bu, ni son amant ni ma mère,
Jamais à la même Chimère...

If in the first sonnet one's mouth is for breathing, here it is for kissing, and announces no rose in the shadows, no fully realized aesthetics.

The third sonnet immediately combines the object and subject worlds of the other two sonnets with the Aufhebung implicit in the phrase "Une dentelle s'abolit". The objective reality of sonnet I is temporarily cancelled by "Je" become "Jeu", and, contrariwise, the subjective relations of sonnet II are immersed in the objective world. Out of this synthesis emerges a dream-like
perception in the sestet that, insofar as it is mere visuality, is sad, but that, as music, as sound born of the soul's own absences, can lead one to a window looking beyond this elegant décor. Again, as in "Prose", the visual, here "fenêtre", is the ultimate goal, but this transcendent ideal can only be attained by assimilating in the spirit's process the recognition of the aural as the ultimate basis for creative intersubjectivity -- and particularly the recognition of language as this ground, language as simultaneous "absence éternelle" and présence éternelle "de lit".

"Un Coup de Dés", while continuing in this line of thought on absence and presence (linguistic or otherwise) with its conundrum "RIEN N'aura EU LIEU QUE LE LIEU", breaks quite away from the necessity of an aural ground for language and subjectivity. Instead, the main emphasis is on necessity itself in its relation to chance -- and emphasis (from Gk. phainein "to show") is the right word here, because Mallarmé emphasizes indeed in the size of the typeface: "UN COUP DE DÉS JAMAIS N'ABOLIRA LE HASARD". The hunger of the French language for visuality-favouring certitude impels the words here to break from each other on the page and realign themselves, and shrink or expand, according to their own lights. At the same time these words have, under Mallarmé's beneficent supervision, fallen into not altogether aleatory patterns. Language may be that which, precisely at the middle of the poem, is described as insinuating its ironic self into silence, or as a mystery shouted into a hilarious, horrific whirlpool. But in either case it does not scatter, rather flutters around the abyss: "voltige autour du gouffre / sans le joncher" (466-67).

Although, indeed, one throw of the dice will not abolish chance, a large number of throws
will establish probabilities. And on one level this is a poem about a transition from a theistic world view wherein everything is definite and determined (where "LE MAÎTRE ... jadis... empoignait la barre") to a scientific probabilistic view. God, central in the a priori mythic relation to the world, is locked in combat with a Mephistophelian empiricism born of the reason's power to negate:

l'ultérieur démon immémorial

ayant
de contrées nulles

induit

le veillard vers cette conjonction suprême avec la probabilité (464)

And though God, as master of the wrecked ship, is swallowed up by the ocean of chance, seemingly having refused to throw the dice, there is all the same, after his annihilation, a recognition of the Absolute's dice throw in the constellations; and the throw of the dice is thus also an act of the gods, "un coup de dei".

At the same time, the action of throwing dice is performed by an individual, the poet Mallarmé, "le Maître", with his bewildered pen ("plume solitaire éperdue"(468)), whose normally traditional metre, "LE NOMBRE" (473), has been abandoned in this exercise that highlights language's visual aspect. But even without the benefit of sound's grounding counterbalancing immanence, there is still, for transcendent visual mind on its own, a kind of absolute in the limitations of space, whether interstellar space or space on the page. This is a revolutionary poem, then, not just in the degree of compositorial licence, but thematically, as well, in its suggestion that the aural aspect of poetry and mind has been supplanted by the visual. Did metrics ("LE NOMBRE"), Mallarmé asks, exist other than as a mere "scattered hallucination of agony"; did it
perhaps illuminate or encode "evidence of a totality that really was not total" (473)? Was it merely "some inferior lapping of waves to disperse the empty act", an empty act which otherwise would have "founded utter ruin in these vague regions [the world] where all reality dissolves" (475)? This whole physical/oral aspect of the sign is shipwrecked amidst sea and rock, while the ethereal/visual aspect of the sign is installed on the surface of heaven, in transcendence, i.e., "à l'altitude" and "sur quelque surface vacante et supérieure" (476-77). Thus this poem, as a defence of "vers libre", is also an expression and justification of the visual bias of the certitude- and apperception-focused French language, anticipating, one could say, Derrida's De la grammaatologie.

The degree of visual/transcendental dominance in "Un Coup de Dés" is, of course, exceptional for Mallarmé. Presumably he was working at approximately the same time on the "Cantique de Saint Jean" with its, by contrast, very tight, entrancing, aural structure. And that poem, as we saw, comes to rest not in the transcendent-visual sky ("Là-haut où la froidure / Eternelle n'endure / Que vous le surpassez / Tous ô glaciers"), but in a more physical, immanent and oral water baptism: "Mais selon un baptême / Illuminée au même / Principe qui m'élut / Penche un salut".

Even in "Un Coup de Dés" we should, on one level, interpret number's "hallucination éparse d'agonie" (473, my emphasis) as a disparagement of French's visual spirit of division, but in this poem visuality, rather than finding salvation in the aural, adopts a more subjective character itself. From this angle, the rock which sinks the ship represents the principle of separation and hard analysis that is ultimately, from a subjective position, false:
After all, the whole reason for symbolism's development was a desire to bring a fuller subjectivity into French, in other words, to strengthen the second element in each of the pairs transcendence/immanence, reason/soul, empirical/a priori, and semantic/semiotic. Mallarmé's main project having been to dissolve authorial transcendence and allow the language to express itself, we find that in all his metrical (and therefore primarily oral) verse, language is ultimately aurally focused, and brings the immanent, a priori background of perception into consciousness through syntactic breaks and a focus on phonosemantics, much as the Impressionist school of French painters brings perceptivity to the fore by breaking apart preconceived visual forms. But insofar as the French language favours the definiteness and separation of conventional visuality, Mallarmé is inclined, too, towards treatment of visual objects in a poetry of space. In "Un Coup de Dés" that poetry of space is translated into the layout of the poem itself, language becomes subjectively visual rather than aural, and, in a sense, French literature finds an alternative path to fulfilment, explored subsequently by Apollinaire in the calligramme.

As Mallarmé's bipartite aesthetics of difference develops through his career, as he gives the language itself more and more rein, the backgrounded coordination of semantic and semiotic levels asserts itself with more force. As the line lengths become shorter to concentrate the rhyme
and cadence, the thematic content becomes more precisely focused on psychological relations of sound and meaning -- though without sacrificing the complexity of the foregrounded syntactic and lexical ambiguities. Enthrallment in a contingent semantic multiplicity is blent with enthrallment in a necessary rhythmic and rhymed substratum to create verses of intimate magical effect. And because French maintains a clear meaning for each word, and employs no tonic accent that would tyrannically subordinate "non-elect" words, it allows these subjective poems to maintain precise distinctions of meaning -- nuance --, not only on the rational semantic level where French is most at home, but even, at least in Mallarmé's later career, on the phonosemantic level, thanks to his meticulous craftsmanship.
CHAPTER II

Hopkins

For later 19th century French writers wanting to bring a fuller subjectivity into their, and their nation's, "language-thought" (and this desire was as pronounced among the premier non-fiction writers of that period, such as Michelet and Taine, as it was among the more philosophically-inclined poets, such as Mallarmé and Villiers de l'Isle-Adam) Hegel was a model, and ideal, theoretician. For while the Hegelian dialectic is ultimately oriented, like Cartesian philosophy, towards a rational absolute Idea (that makes it easily assimilable in France), it at the same time includes in its process the a priori level of consciousness which French thought had been more or less oblivious to. That is to say, the Hegelian acknowledgement of pure perception (of sounds and appearances before they are arranged and categorized by the mind) offered a deeper ground for subjectivity than French rationalism had previously conceived. However, for Germanic thinkers, Hegel's orientation towards idea seemed, on the contrary, in one way or another insufficiently grounded in the a priori, and was therefore supplemented by Schopenhauer with "will", by Kierkegaard with "existence", and transposed by Feuerbach and Marx into an orientation towards "materiality". From the linguistic relativity perspective we might say that German thought did not find adequate expression in Hegel because his system continued to justify Romance philosophy's apperceptual cogito rather than basing itself on German's native phenomenological mode of perception. Indeed, for a fully systematic description of its a priori way of viewing the world -- that is, for a description liberated from Romance philosophy -- German thought would have to await the researches of Husserl; and for a metaphysics derived therefrom,
Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*.

Gerard Manley Hopkins is interesting in this context as a Germanic poet-thinker seeking an alternative to orthodox idealistic Christian/Hegelian systems of thought (or rather "language-thought") in his poetry. His sprung rhythm arguably has the effect of making time the dominant element in prosody, where, since the Renaissance, the dominant element had been phonological, lexical and intellectual content -- and this rhythmic focus is entirely the result of emphasizing English's Germanic core, recognizing the power of the emphatic accent to blend together various (and even contradictory) meanings. This shift towards a more rhythmically driven poetry is, on a deep level, an aspect of the same shift in focus from being to time that Heidegger observes in contrasting his own thought to Hegel's. In his lectures on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, for example, Heidegger is perfectly explicit: for Hegel, "Being is the essence of time -- being, that is, as infinity", while, conversely, Heidegger's own thesis is "that the essence of being is time" (145 -- Heidegger's emphasis). Hopkins' terms are considerably less elaborated than Heidegger's, but like the German existentialist he steps out of the dialectical and rational project of Western science in order to find inspiration in the more unitary pre-Socratics. If Hegel, and the symbolist poets that Hegelian philosophy underlies, are continually in the grip of the force of double negation, cancelling and preserving the past in order to achieve the future ideal, Hopkins and Heidegger are fundamentally imbued with full (phenomenological) positivity, glorifying more natural earth origins tied to time.

Of course, while the thought of Hopkins and Heidegger is similar on a basic perceptual
level, Hopkins' thought patterns differ from the German philosopher's at various points not only because Hopkins' Christianity necessarily links him to the idealist tradition, but also because English, as a partially Gallic (rather than entirely Germanic) language, is inherently somewhat idealist. Thus Hopkins' verse, while striving towards a more elementary sort of Christian pantheism (inspired by Parmenides and Duns Scotus), and towards a more Germanic grammar, continually engages in a contrastive counterpoint of idealist and phenomenological elements on every level (thematic, grammatical, and metrical).

To a certain extent all idealisms -- religious, philosophical, or linguistic -- may be linked together as forms of "covering up", to use Heidegger's expression (*Basic Writings* 80). Or, less courteously, we could describe all such idealisms -- Christianity, Plato, Hegel, the French language, etc. -- as "beautiful falsifications", since they all involve sublimations of the will and of the sexual drive in particular. Thus Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Freud's cogent explication of the operation of the libido underlying idealist mentalism has been perceptively extended by Jacques Lacan to an association of the linguistic sign with the phallic -- an association that is perfectly accurate in French, which recreates the world of primary perception according to mental desire. In Germanic languages, however, where the world is engaged on a more primordial, sexually undifferentiated, level of being (hence Freud's later recognition of libido as "life force", hence the German neuter gender, etc.) Lacan's theory is less applicable. Carried through to Hopkins' poetry, the relation of idealism and libido is evident in the eroticism that surfaces in his de-idealized and phenomenological Christianity, his Christ of "lovely limbs", etc. Insofar as Hopkins' perception of
the world is pure, the volitional and sexual drives propping up his religiosity become partially uncovered. Coventry Patmore relates, "I threw the manuscript of a little work -- a sort of "Religio Poetae" -- into the fire, simply because, when [Hopkins] had read it, he said with a grave look, "That's telling secrets". The work, that had also been read by Edmund Gosse before being consigned to the flames, was apparently "an interpretation of the love between the soul and God by an analogy of the love between a woman and a man" (Storey 94-96).

Those of us preferring a more philosophically legitimate poetry (like that of Goethe or Whitman), while recognizing Hopkins' religious fervour as an outlet for his apparent homosexuality, and possibly even respecting it as an instinctive reaction to Positivist vulgarity, may never, perhaps, be entirely reconciled to it. But ultimately we must, like Robert Bridges, Hopkins' friend and original editor, admire philosophic renewal wherever we find it in poetry, and lend our imaginations to the great Christian mysteries linked with English from the language's infancy. From the psychologist's standpoint it may be regrettable that Hopkins' exceptional phenomenological sensitivity was not carried over to a greater degree into analysis of the institution of the Church in which he was so uncomfortable. But while we examine his sacerdotal vocation as an instructive case of repressed eros, we may applaud his revolutionary innovations in style, that have revitalized language and perception for his readers, and concede that the mythic framework of the poetry is loaded with as much phenomenological insight as it can be made to bear.

After all, it is the semiotic rather than the semantic level that is dominant in Hopkins.
Comparing him to Mallarmé, we may say that like his French contemporary he gives the rein to language, and consequently extends both its "primary-emphatic" and "analytic-intellectual" levels -- but in Hopkins, in line with the grain of the English language, the relative importance of those poles is reversed. In Hopkins' verse it is rhythm and sound-sense correspondence rather than logical meanings (or syntactical and lexical ambiguities) that are in the foreground. As he himself defines it in his lecture notes,

Poetry is... speech framed to be heard for its own shape and interest even over and above its interest of meaning. Some matter and meaning is essential to it but only as an element necessary to support and employ the shape which is contemplated for its own sake. (Poetry is in fact speech only employed to carry the inscape of speech for the inscape's sake -- and therefore the inscape must be dwelt on.) (Note-books and Papers 249)

The idea of "inscape", and its complement, "instress", are radically Germanic, and may perhaps be considered a much more phenomenologically-oriented expression of Hegel's "in sich" and "für sich". "Inscape" denotes inner "design, pattern" (Selected Letters 117), while "instress", that is always already present in inscape, is inscape's dynamic energy, both in the object and its perceiver. Significantly, Hopkins' first use of these two terms occurs in notes he made on Parmenides, probably in February 1868. "Instress" is mentioned first, and "inscape" is introduced further on in the same paragraph:

"His [Parmenides'] great text, which he repeats with religious conviction, is that Being is and Not-being is not -- which perhaps one can say, a little overdefining his meaning, means that all things are upheld by instress and are meaningless without it. An undetermined Pantheist idealism runs through the fragments which makes it hard to translate them satisfactorily in a subjective or in a wholly outward sense. His feeling for instress, for the flush and foredrawn, and for inscape / is most striking and from this one can understand Plato's reverence for him as the
father of Realism... (Note-books and Papers 98)

Presumably it is via a mode of understanding comparable to Parmenides' that Hopkins' Christianity posits divine energy indwelling all things, and that his poetry of inscape is always supercharged with rhythmic stress. With respect to the dominance of rhythmic stress in Hopkins' verse, there has been a certain amount of tacit disagreement -- in large part, no doubt, because the Catholic scholarship that has been so forceful in Hopkins studies has tended to steer discussion towards Hopkins' religious inheritance; and more generally, as Harold Whitehall remarked when he first proposed the rhythmic dominance thesis in the Kenyon Review (1937), because

When a poet like Hopkins... echoes the poetic procedures of [verse's] earliest stages, he is bound to be judged by canons of taste not strictly applicable to his work; inevitably, his sound-pattern poetry is appraised as though it were sense-pattern poetry. Critics of our own time and his are necessarily accustomed to a type of verse which, whatever its intellectual or emotional subtleties, is at least rhythmically straightforward. What critical standards can their contemporary experience suggest for verse written by a metrical virtuoso for virtuosic performance aloud?... Old habit dies hard. The generations of easy-to-read poets have taken their toll. The virtuosity that demands aural and oral bravura from both poet and performer is pre-judged, and often misjudged, by the criticism of the eye alone. (31)

Whitehall is quite correct; our Romanic, Apollonian, reason-oriented prejudices as critics are often too strong to allow us to acknowledge the degree of force, the stress, of cadence and tone-quality in forming our response to Hopkins' verse. Granted, to a certain degree language is, in Hopkins, separated from sound (this is his continuous counterpoint), and the Anglo-Germanic ground of Scotist haecceitas ("thisness") is always complemented in his poetry by the Latin analogical tradition (that Marshall McLuhan so luminously discusses in his article on Hopkins entitled "The Analogical Mirrors"). But the attention Hopkins bestows on rhythm and phonetics in
the manuscript copies of the poems, in his letters to Bridges, Dixon and Patmore, and in his notebooks, might almost by itself be considered sufficient evidence that the "concrete" side of language was what mattered to him most. And, indeed, Hopkins himself remarks on the importance of reading his poetry in a radically different way from conventional verse, and on the necessity of concentrating on its sound-sense rather than its visual-rational aspect:

   Everybody cannot be expected to like my pieces. Moreover the oddness may make them repulsive at first sight... Indeed, when, on somebody returning to me my Eurydice, I opened and read some lines, reading, as one commonly reads whether prose or verse, with the eyes, so to say, only, it struck me aghast with a kind of raw nakedness and unmitigated violence I was unprepared for; but take breath and read it with the ears, as I always wish to be read, and my verse becomes right. (cited in Whitehall 32)

   I have for the most part been speaking of rhythm in Hopkins' verse-music rather than of morphophonemics, because rhythm is the centre of poetry's time element, and is the force that tends to eliminate ambiguity in English, tying consciousness to primary perception and not allowing it to be troubled by multiple signification as French is. But clearly morphophonemics is intimately bound to rhythm (unstressed vowels normally having the schwa sound; quantity and alliteration creating stress patterns). Whitehall argues that Hopkins himself was largely unconscious of this real connection of rhythm and "lettering", declaring that "although [Hopkins'] manuscript contains whirls and loops, colons, accent marks, and brackets designed to show the minutiae of the stress system, he never mentions the far more effective marking of the time-units that his constant alliteration, assonance, internal rhyme, and word repetition provide" (36). Whitehall is here unfortunately only partly correct, as he seems to fall into the same error he
upbraided other critics for, that is, expecting verse to be rhythmically straightforward. For all his interest in prosody, Hopkins, far from being a verse technician, never reduces his verse practice to strict rule; he never, in Heideggerian phrase, brings it into the House of Science. He does, in a sentence on Piers Plowman that Whitehall seems to have overlooked, recognize that in Middle English verse "it almost seems as if the rhythm were disappearing and repetition of figure given only by alliteration" (Note-books 235); and correspondingly in the same essay on "Rhythm and Other Structural Parts" he observes that rhyme (which he understands in a wide sense as including alliteration and assonance) "tends to arise in any accentual language" (247). Whitehall, in his attempt to make Hopkins' rhythms more metrically regular, even violates his own precept that rhyme-alliteration is the chief guide to rhythm. Thus in his reading of the phrase "Fire-featuring heaven", "featuring" is given only secondary stress (47), while Hopkins himself, in the manuscript, gives it equal stress with "fire" and "heaven"! Hopkins' verse, rather than being neatly divisible into "standard pulse" and rhyme and thought, is rooted in the unity of all three, and all members of that trinity determine a given syllable's degree of accent.

Again, one can consider Hopkins to be working the same field-row as Heidegger, oriented toward a poetry/philosophy of unitary Being-in-Time rather than focused on categorizations and divisions. Since, for Heidegger, "Every thinking that is on the trail of something is a poetizing, and all poetry a thinking" (Basic Writings 425), we might even substitute the word "poetry" for "philosophy" in Heidegger's critique of modernity, and see in that critique a parallel with Hopkins' unifying project in language-thought (and, in contrast to it, the weakness of his critics of the
formalist variety. Take, for example, Heidegger's assertion that

This urge toward classification and such like always begins at a time when the lack of power to do philosophy [read "poetry"] gets the upper hand, so that sophistry comes to dominate. But sophistry provides itself and its own barrenness with some respectability by first catching whatever ventures to emerge in philosophy in the net of standpoints, and then, having given each type a label, by leaving it with the people. This label sees to it that, regarding the philosophy in question, one will be interested in its label only so as to compare it with another label. Subsequently, the literary discussions about the label give rise to a literature which in its kind may be quite considerable... Philosophy becomes a managerial concern -- a diabolical condition to which the younger scientific minds, rare enough as they are nowadays, fall prey in their prime. (Hegel's Phenomenology 29)

Have I myself been guilty of such a classifying tendency in the preceding chapter? Only, I would argue, insofar as understanding Mallarmé necessitates adopting the specifying, classifying (and visualizing) mode of conceiving the world that is natural to French. A sensitive reading of Hopkins, on the other hand, requires us to set aside our categorizing propensities and concentrate on active a priori Being, on his principle that "What I do is me: for that I came" (129). It will be instructive, therefore, to compare Hopkins and Heidegger in more detail, and consider their shared ground of inscape and instress, orality and primary perception, to see how the German philosopher illuminates the English poet. That ontological basso continuo established, we can safely move on to consider how the a priori element is gradually merged in Hopkins' later verse with his idealist counterpoint to create a kind of "deep structuralism", a development that parallels to a great extent Heidegger's own progress towards an elementary symbolism, and that parallels, as well, the historical grafting of French onto English to create a language oriented to the centre of being lying at the crossways of subject and object -- the self.
Heidegger asks:

What if propiation [Ereignis/event/language] -- when and how no one knows -- were to become a penetrating gaze [Ein-Blick], whose clearing lightning strikes what is and what the being is held to be? What if propiation by its entry withdrew every present being that is subject to sheer orderability and brought that being back into its own? (Basic Writings 422)

For a rationalist Mallarmé (or Derrida) there is never such a strike of lightning revealing full selfhood; such a desired goal is forever deferred to a future time, and the great book remains a fragment. For the more expressionist Rimbaud, meanwhile, such an ideal is almost tangible as "Christmas on Earth". For Hopkins, however, this full presentation of self is here and now in all nature; and it exists in all mankind as well through the self's physical and conscious completion in Christian revelation, because for Hopkins "Christ" is not simply a notion or idea, but the name for full being indwelling all reality. The moment of the penetrating lightning-like gaze in Hopkins is the famous moment of the "Buckle!" in "The Windhover" ("AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion / Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier"); it is also the moment of the lightning flash in "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" ("In a flash, at a trumpet crash, / I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am") when the cosmic nature of the self as immortal diamond is revealed. It is a moment of "Ereignis" when the soul recognizes its belonging in the world that in turn belongs to the soul. Perhaps the poem of Hopkins that best demonstrates this dynamic expression of the selfhood of nature and man, and moreover reveals the inseparability of language from this selfhood, is "As kingfishers catch fire", that I quote in its entirety:

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same;
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves -- goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying What I do is me: for that I came.

I say more: the just man justices;
Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is --
Christ -- for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces. (129)

Linguistically everything presents its own inner self, speaks its essential being, including man, whose "Word" is Christ; and as things' selfhood carries through to language, what each thing does is already partially reflected in its name. Thus the [k] and [f] sounds in "kingfisher" provide the initial consonants for that bird's action ("catch fire"), and likewise in the [d] and [f] of "dragonflies draw flame". Hopkins' employment of such alliterative chiming, called *cynghanedd* in Welsh prosody, is never purely ornamental, but suggests a union of sound and meaning. This chiming, indeed, becomes quite literal in the ringing of stones, and the telling and tolling of strings and bells, in the subsequent lines.

Adding to this poem's charm are its somewhat rebellious peculiarities that parallel the theme of selving. Coined and dialect words such as "roundy" and "tucked" root language in the requirements and practice of a popular ear for beauty, free from and superior to standardized codes. (The same may be said for the agrammatical use of "like" as a conjunction.) In the sentence "What I do is me: for that I came" such rebellious selving -- ontological and linguistic baring of the
inner nature -- is, as Paul Mariani has pointed out, intellectually linked to Jesus's confrontation with Pilate:

"You are a king then?" said Pilate. Jesus answered, ""King" is your word. My task is to bear witness to the truth. For this was I born; for this I came into the world [sic], and all who are not deaf to truth listen to my voice." Pilate said, "What is truth?" (John 18:37-38)

Christ in the sestet of the poem represents not just the union of Platonically separated body and spirit, of separated thing and name, but also a pre-Socratic union of the one and the many as he "plays" on life's infinite stage the just man in all just men, and as all just men in turn "act" Christ. Christ is here and in most of Hopkins' verse the ultimate metaphor for the confluence of self and world where all is brought together into an infinity; the positive god of a Parmenidean universe where all is indwelt by the infinite.

Heidegger's thoughts on language in his essay "The Way to Language" are markedly similar to Hopkins' view of language as presented in this poem. For Heidegger too, saying is a sort of showing, a "Deal[ing] out that being indoors each one dwells", and he considers the German equivalents to saying and showing, i.e., Sagen and Zeigen, to be etymologically related. The section of Heidegger's essay dealing with the history of language is interesting enough to merit quoting from it at length:

The braces and supports of the construction [of language] are shaped and borne aloft by showing. In manifold ways, by unveiling or veiling, showing brings something to appear, lets what appears be apprehended, and enables what is apprehended to be thoroughly discussed (so that we can act on it). However, the kinship of the showing with what it shows never unfolds purely in terms of the kinship itself and its provenance. In subsequent periods, the kinship is transformed into the conventional relationship between a sign and its signified. Greek
civilization at its acme experiences the sign on the basis of showing, the sign having been coined by showing for showing. From the Hellenistic (and Stoic) period onward, as the convention becomes sheer stipulation, the sign comes to be an instrument for designating; by means of such designation, representation is coordinated and directed from one object to another. Designation is no longer a showing in the sense that it lets something appear. The alteration of the sign -- from that which shows to that which designates -- is based on a transformation in the essence of truth. (Basic Writings 402)

One might cavil at this Germanic thinker's seeming visual orientation in his emphasizing the "showing" character of language, but it is a natural consequence of the a priori mode of thinking's relative lack of sensual divisions. (Later in the same essay he asserts that "speech is simultaneously hearing" (410), and that we are capable of speaking "only because... we have already listened to language" (411).) In Hopkins too, as to that, there is an easy enough transition from language as a rather subjective visual concept in fiery kingfishers to language as more concrete objective sound in a stone's "ring", because he really makes no distinction between subjective and objective. For him as for Heidegger the foundation is pre-Socratic "presence". Heidegger, however, philosophically outdoes Hopkins in that he analyzes the history of language, enframes it, and declares that "the kinship of the showing with what it shows never unfolds purely in terms of the kinship itself and its provenance". One wonders what factors contribute to make the showing/saying impure. Surely writing is one significant factor, in that it transmutes a connotative sound into silent graphemes, and language as becoming in time into language as fixed being. But there are other factors as well: power and property pervert a language in countless ways, and art, religion and philosophy's attempts to repurify it are inevitably makeshift, since they must contend with still more pervasive human weaknesses (limited memory, limited time and
energy for active observation, etc.). But when we go all the way back to the Heraclitean fire at the source, these idealist impurities evaporate like so much puddle-water, because phenomenological perception does not concern itself with what is not.

This is the strength of Hopkins' verse, as well, that it is a form of philosophico-religious art that speaks from out of a level of being that is continuous rhythmic and morphophonemic becoming in time rather than ideal separation of sign and signified in stasis. As in Heraclitus and the Archaic school generally, Hopkins' connection of thought is more verbal and intuitive than logical. Thus, no matter what his reader's initial relation to Christianity, it is bound to be transformed in so revolutionary a presentation of doctrine driven by the pulse and chime of language more than by dogma: the non-Christian must recognize the force of the story of Christ as a symbol of human and cosmic unity (Heraclitus: "Out of all things one thing, and out of one thing all things" (frag. 10)) and the tradition-minded Christian is obliged to acknowledge the instress of language and world in the construction of reality. Hopkins' "Christ", we could say, is metaphorically the equivalent of "inscape", and comparable to Heraclitus's logos, the design principle of the cosmos; and similarly the Heraclitean fire may be compared to Hopkins' "instress". In Heidegger both these come together to some extent in the verbal noun "Aufriß" (rift-design) derived from the verb "aufreissen" meaning to rive or rend or, colloquially, "to plough a field". Heraclitus and Hopkins envisage a union of opposites -- subject and object, fire and water, immortal and mortal, etc. -- but Heidegger surpasses them by reaching entirely behind the difference of noun and verb, subject and object, that is the basis of the antinomies, and
demonstrating how everything is apprehension, and truth is perception. For Heidegger there is no secondary separation of energy from form, as there is at times even in Heraclitus's fire and Hopkins' Christ since, in Heidegger's Aristotelian-derived view, the logos as apophansis (showing) is itself both activated and activating. The Heideggerian logos is, as Ereignis, both event in time and proprietorship in space. From a Heideggerian perspective then, Heraclitus's metaphorical theory of the elements, and, even more so, Hopkins' anthropomorphic theology, must be considered partial concealments of the truth, and a transgression of Heraclitus's precept: "Whatsoever things are objects of sight, hearing, and experience -- these things I hold in higher esteem" (frag.55). From a Heideggerian perspective, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, such systematic metaphorical divergences as Hopkins' from the known world are a kind of "covering up" of the truth. The pertinent passage from the Introduction to Being and Time runs as follows:

What no longer takes the form of a pure letting be seen, but rather in its indicating always has recourse to something else and so always lets something be seen as something, acquires a structure of synthesis and therewith the possibility of covering up. However, "truth of judgement" is only the opposite of this covering up; it is a multiply-founded phenomenon of truth. Realism and idealism alike thoroughly miss the meaning of the Greek concept of truth from which alone the possibility of something like a "theory of Ideas" can be understood at all as philosophical knowledge. (Basic Writings 80)

This, applied to Hopkins' poetry, takes us back to the ancient question of art versus life. Should all metaphorical, fanciful and allegorical art, that lets something be seen as something else, be banned from the commonwealth as concealment of truth, or does metaphor enrich and illuminate life? Heidegger himself became increasingly metaphorical after Being and Time with his
notions of the "path" [Weg] to language, the "clearing" [Lichtung] of being, etc., but these metaphors are quite the opposite of art in the sense of "artificial". Rather they recognize the rootedness of human understanding and imagination in nature.

Of course, Hopkins' Christian metaphors we can also root in nature, that is, in human nature, where the propitiation of the gods through human blood sacrifice is altogether primeval. From this point of view, his poems, being a sort of up-dating of ancient hymns to the immortals through a monotheistic self-consciousness, are more powerful than they would be without the religious note, in that they supplement a phenomenological and linguistic connection to the absolute with a primitive irrational one. Their religious "art" speaks to those profound sublimations of fear, will to power and sexual libido that serve to fashion a community. Moreover, Hopkins is sensitive to this a priori psychological ground of religious sentiment, and, while virtually every other major English religious poet from Donne to Eliot (leaving aside William Blake) conceives God as a logical "Metaphysical" entity, Hopkins fashions the Son into an almost erotically physical being, noting in one of his sermons, for example, that "for myself I make no secret I look forward with eager desire to seeing the matchless beauty of Christ's body in the heavenly light" (Note-books and Papers 263). This eroticism is particularly understandable in the nineteenth-century context where, in the decline of Christian rationalism, it was primarily through sentiment and intuition, parallel to spontaneous physicality, that religious belief was maintained. Hopkins being quite sincere with himself, the sublimating transition from sexuality to theology is sometimes presented in his verse fairly straightforwardly. In "To What Serves Mortal Beauty", for
example, he considers the beauty of "lovely lads" "dangerous; does set dancing blood", and transforms his admiration of it into divine worship:

What do then? how meet beauty? Merely meet it; own,
Home at heart, heaven's sweet gift; then leave, let that
alone.
Yea, wish you though, wish all, God's better beauty, grace.

(167)

In meeting physical beauty there is full acknowledgement or "owning" of it, and a displacement of the associated feeling to a "better" but by no means unrelated beauty. And this "better beauty" is perhaps at the same time largely a condensation of libidinal desire, for the final word of the poem can be interpreted both as idealist displacement, i.e., "grace" in the orthodox religious sense of mercy and favour, or "grace" as beauty of form and movement -- an aesthetic formalization of desire (such as we encounter again in the "Churlsgrace" of the well-muscled "Harry Ploughman").

Perhaps even Heidegger would not object overmuch to the dual senses of this word "grace" in Hopkins' poem, though in Heidegger the sense of cosmic granting and of physical beauty would already be united, and no attempt would need to be made to disjoin them. Certainly, at least, Hopkins' idea of "meeting" beauty, "owning" it, recognizing it as a "gift", is perfectly consistent with Heidegger's notion of Ereignis as an owning or "propriation" that is multi-sided:

Propriation gathers the rift-design of the saying and unfolds it in such a way that it becomes the well-joined structure of a manifold showing. Propriation is the most inconspicuous of inconspicuous things, the simplest of simple things, the nearest of near things and most remote of things remote, among which we mortals reside all our lives. (Basic Writings 415)

In Hopkins' poem on mortal beauty similarly, the meeting of near and more distant beauty
in the word "grace" is the propiation of beauty by the self both in individual instances and more generally. It is a "manifold showing". And for both Hopkins and Heidegger the centre of owning or propiation is human being -- the Jesuit poet's religion, like the existentialist's philosophy, is basically humanist. In the first tercet of the same poem, for example, Hopkins writes,

To man, that needs would worship block or barren stone,
Our law says: Love what are love's worthiest were
all known;
World's loveliest -- men's selves. Self flashes off frame
and face. (167)

And comparably Heidegger writes,

Propriation is the law, inasmuch as it gathers mortals in such a way that they own up to their own essence. It gathers them and holds them there...Propriation propriates the mortals by envisaging the essence of man. (Basic Writings 416-17).

Heidegger is too dispassionate to write of "love" in relation to man and the world as Hopkins does, although he earlier writes that the "showing" on which propiation draws "stirs and excites" like daybreak (414). For that matter, Hopkins himself is frequently less focused on a particular eros or agape in relation to man than he is on a more general propiation of self's showing. The best example of this is the second quatrain of his sonnet on the great English Baroque composer, Henry Purcell, and his music:

Not mood in him nor meaning, proud fire or sacred fear,
Or love, or pity, or all that sweet notes not his might
nurse:
It is the forged feature finds me; it is the rehearsal
Of own, of abrupt self there so thrusts on, so throngs
the ear. (143)
It is not any particular tune or mood in Purcell that enchants the poet, rather the more general unconcealment of the self's being effected by his music. Rhythmically the first two lines here are a simple listing of items in separated pulses, while the third and fourth lines bring pulses together in a group ("forgèd feature finds"), enjambs them ("rehearsal of own"), and even comments on them ("so thrusts on, so throngs the ear") in a "self-aware" way. In the first two lines the emphasis is on nouns; in the following two it is on noun, verb and adjective indiscriminately, as grammatical elements are fused. The associated freeing of stress from substance, and its transfer to psychological or phenomenological relation in the world, is emphasized by the use of the adjective "own" as an abstract noun.

According to Heidegger in his lectures on "The Origin of the Work of Art", art's relation in the world (inseparable from the artist's relation in the world) is the product of creative "strife" between culture and nature. More specifically, in the work of art "Truth essentially occurs only as the strife between clearing and concealing in the opposition of world and earth. Truth wills to be established in the work as this strife of world and earth" (Basic Writings 187). Is this clash of world versus earth in contradiction to Heidegger's general unitary version of truth as a priori perception? Seemingly not, since he confines such "strife" to artistic creation, and does not extend it to philosophical activity (which explains rather than creates). And in the "Epilogue" to the lectures on art he, correspondingly, quotes rather sympathetically Hegel's judgement that art is relatively inferior to philosophy: "One may well hope that art will continue to advance and perfect itself, but its form has ceased to be the highest need of spirit," etc. (204-05). This sticky point in
the lectures on art, which date from 1936, is resolved in his "Letter on Humanism" of 1947 when he essentially becomes a structuralist of the "depth" variety (a phenomenological structuralist), and declares that language is "the house of Being" (Basic Writings 217). From that point forward language could be for Heidegger the expression of truth in poetry and philosophy equally. His earlier notion of "strife" is basically what literary theorists might call earth-based, psychologically-grounded metaphor -- as we may infer from "strife"'s definition:

Strife is not a rift [Riss], as a mere cleft is ripped open; rather, it is the intimacy with which opponents belong to each other. This rift carries the opponents into the provenance of their unity by virtue of their common ground. It is a basic design, an outline sketch, that draws the basic features of the upsurge of the clearing of beings. This rift does not let the opponents break apart; it brings what opposes measure and boundary into its common outline. (Basic Writings 188)

Heidegger's later more structuralist world view is already here in embryo in the idea of world and earth united in a common ground by a rift that provides an "outline sketch" of being. But in his later philosophy the "rift" becomes more formalized into abiding principles of mind, and particularly into semiotic principles such as the validity of poetic metaphor -- though Heidegger himself would, of course, reject the word "metaphor" as too abstract.

Hopkins, we can say, similarly works toward a structuralist position. His earlier poems can for the most part very profitably be read in the light of Heidegger's earlier statements on art as the strife of earth and world (the two elements flowing together in language, Christianity and the self), while his late poems, beginning with "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" (begun, according to Mariani in 1884, though not finished until 1886) are more sensitive to psychological principles subtending
reality. In the poem on Henry Purcell (1879), composed in the "earlier" manner, the metaphor that crosses nature and culture is not overtly religious, and perhaps could not be since Purcell was a non-Catholic; instead, the composer is represented by a "great stormfowl" in the midst of supercharged nature. As in other "mid-career" Hopkins poems, this is a symbol that is the product of an unformalized, relatively naive "rift" between nature and the world, the rift being comparable, as mentioned previously, to a combination of Hopkins' instress and inscape. The great bird's inscape grandly symbolizes the inscapes of Purcell's music, and the inscapes of the self which that music evokes or calls forth. Or, in Heidegger's terms, the earth, as stormfowl, thrusts into the world's symbol-producing openness of cultural being, while the world, in its turn, becomes intimate with earth's latent force. As in other Hopkins poems featuring birds (cf. "The Caged Skylark" and "The Windhover") the bird is at the conjunction of earth's containment and mind's openness, in this case a very concrete fowl revealing "quaint moonmarks" under his wing and a spiritual entity off which a "colossal smile" is scattered.

Beginning with "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", however, Hopkins' poetry is perhaps less advantageously examined through the lens of Heidegger's early thoughts on art, than it is from his later "deep structuralist" viewpoint. Or, more precisely, that poem seems to work through the basic thesis of "The Origin of the Work of Art", and then move on to a structuralist position of its own, which subsequent poems maintain:

- Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable, vaulty, voluminous,...
- stupendous
- Evening strains to be time's vast, womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night
Her fond yellow hornlight wound to the west, her wild
hollow hoarlight hung to the height
Waste; her earliest stars, earl-stars, stars principal,
overbend us,
Fire-featuring heaven. For earth her being has unbound, her
dapple is at an end, as-
stray or aswarm, all throughther, in throngs; self in self
steepèd and pushed -- quite
Disremembering, dismembering all now. Heart, you round me
right
With: Our evening is over us; our night whelms, whelms, and
will end us.
Only the beak-leaved boughs dragonish damask the tool-smooth
bleak light; black,
Ever so black on it. Our tale, O our oracle! Let life, waned,
ah let life wind
Off her once skeined stained veined variety upon, all on two
spools; part, pen, pack
Now her all in two flocks, two folds -- black, white; right,
wrong; reckon but, reck but, mind
But these two; ware of a world where but these two tell, each
off the other; of a rack
Where, selfwrunng, selfstrung, sheathe- and shelterless,
thoughts against thoughts in groans grind. (175)

On one level this is a poem that regrets, as Heidegger does, the termination of a
continuously positive unitary Parmenidean world view and its supplanting by a dualistic
categorizing and designating one. Night has the character of a void, an absence in the face of
which earth, "her being...unbound", is "Disremembering, dismembering all now". Earth's genuine
being, that is to say, is forgotten as it is divided and its wholeness is lost. Life wanes as mortality
and morality come to dominate in a world of binary pairs. It is a world of mental domination and
the supremacy of science where thoughts grind against thoughts. In the strife of earth and world,
the earth has lost, the world won.
On another level, however, the night is itself an aspect of the larger earth, Nature, whose stupendous force prevails over the world of man that has become unbound and parcelled. From this perspective the void is only apparent rather than real, though it frightens man, whelms him into a merely chthonian "dragonish" or equipmental "tool-smooth" connection to the truth, by which he divides the world into mental opposites.

The view of world versus earth is thus complicated in this poem. Earth's vast power of night has completely restructured the world (and this is what Heidegger calls the towering of earth in the world's opening). On the other hand, from the world's point of view the earth is at an end and powerless, and only the opening out of mental cogitation, the winding of reality onto spools of thought, exists.

By thus so thoroughly outlining the strife of world and earth, and showing how they are like two spools that wind off each other (rather like Yeats' interlocking gyres), Hopkins, we may say, surpasses the notion of a simple opposition of man and nature, and moves toward a structuralist view of the cosmos founded in a primary immanent relation among all things. In earlier poems, to be sure, Christ, language, and the self present an immanent unity, but that unity is nowhere considered in relation to an abstract philosophical and psychological binary relation as here. Hopkins has, as it were, peeked into the dwelling of the Sibyl behind the curtain of mental and mythic concepts to see how on the semantic level all meaning is founded in contraries. And even the semantic level itself is in opposition to the more primary semiotic level of the natural context that is womb, home and hearse of all. Thus in the last lines beginning "Let life, waned, ah
let life wind / Off her once skeined stained veined variety upon, all on two spools" there are, according to the three different senses of the word "let", a command to allow categories, a warning of the drawbacks that ensue, and a patient acceptance of the system.

This immanent relation of opposites in life is necessarily linguistic as well, since language, as vehicle of meaning, grammatically and phonically reveals reality's contrasts. Hopkins' poetry utilizes these linguistic contrasts to demonstrate the oppositional system, and at the same time transcends them to demonstrate a deeper unity behind the strife. Thus in the words "skeined stained veined variety", that refer to precisely this co-presence of difference and connectedness, we hear the unitary grammatical sound-sense relation of "modification" in the [d] inflection at the end of each adjective, an induced unitary sound-sense relation of meaning (here the sense of "visual pattern") in the "eh" sound of "skeined stained veined", and we hear specification of meaning in the variation of initial consonants ("sk", "st", and "v"). Recognition of such organic linguistic pattern, Hopkins implies, is a corrective for a world overcome with dualistic rational division between black and white, right and wrong. And yet at the same time it is apparent dualistic division, as between night and day (a division that, from a different perspective, disappears), that is the basis of the world's intellectuality, of its logic of "part, pen, pack". However, rather than getting caught up in multiplicity where thought grinds against thought, one must realize that all being, and potentially all thought, is united in natural processes. Those who insist on isolating binary pairs from each other (pairs such as Christ and man, sound and meaning, or self and world) are like those whom Heraclitus castigated for following the teaching of Hesiod -
Hesiod "who continually failed to recognize even day and night for what they are! For they are one" (frag. 57).

Having become a phenomenological-structuralist poet recognizing (rather than simply intuiting) the interconnectedness of all reality in language and thought, Hopkins correspondingly seems to hold his Christianity in a freer grasp, and his poetic practice becomes markedly smoother, more self-revelatory, and more philosophical. There is a sort of "negative capability" that gradually enters into his verse, a "being in uncertainty... without any irritable reaching after fact and reason", such as Keats ascribed to Shakespeare. And indeed, stylistically the sequence of sonnets written in the same period as "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", the so-called "desolation sonnets" of 1885, have frequently been compared to Shakespeare's for their consistent verbal and emotional force. The sensitive melding of English's French and Germanic elements, and the merging of their accompanying world views (symbolic and a priori respectively), would seem to be the chief reason for this poetic assurance. All that remains for Hopkins to understand, as we shall see, is the troublesome centre of these world views, the self that must coordinate them.

"Why wouldst thou rude on me / Thy wring-world right foot rock?" By such interrogations of God as this, Hopkins makes it clear in "Carrion Comfort", the first of the desolation sonnets, that his own self demands assertion and chafes at being reduced in abnegation. As in the rest of these sonnets he adopts the querulous independence of an Old Testament hero, fighting hand to hand with the Lord and his own soul, rather than pretending to accept self-sacrifice painlessly. The double negation that is the basis of the poem ("not feast on [Despair]",
"not choose not to be") is a novelty in Hopkins, a defiant break from the normal full positivity. Indeed, God himself is associated with despair in this sonnet, for Despair is a curious avatar of God here -- its sadistic action of treading the poet underfoot in the octave is identical to the action of Christ in the sestet -- though in the second instance it becomes a kind of masochistic pleasure: "the hero whose heaven-handling flung me, foot trod / Me". Presumably, on second reading the poem can be interpreted as a psychological probing of Christian mysteries, beginning, in the first line, with the Eucharist: "Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee." The Despair the poet refuses to eat is the dying Christ of the "lamma sabacthani". He wants to resist the abject Christian condition and is uncertain who, if anyone, has been cheered by his humility and devotion.

Likewise, in the sonnet beginning "Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend / With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just", Hopkins expresses dissatisfaction with his Christian lot and envies the successes of the "sots and thralls of lust". The Christian life is leading nowhere:

    birds build -- but not I build; no, but strain,
    Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
    Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain. (183)

These poems are not necessarily altogether autobiographical. It would seem, however, that Hopkins, through soul-searching, put as much or more of himself in them than in any other of his poems. If they are, to an extent, a pastiche of Shakespeare and biblical psalms, Hopkins' aiming at stylistic richness must have wrung out their emotional frankness at the same time. Form and content, are, after all, difficult to distinguish in so phenomenological a writer⁹. Indisputably, in any case, the sonnet beginning "To seem the stranger lies my lot" is an entirely autobiographical lament
at his religious, familial, and geographical isolation:

To seem the stranger lies my lot, my life
Among strangers. Father and mother dear,
Brothers and sisters are in Christ not near
And he my peace/my parting, sword and strife.

England, whose honour all my heart woos, wife
To my creating thought, would neither hear
Me, were I pleading, plead nor do I: I weary of idle a being but by where wars are rife.

I am in Ireland now; now I am at a third
Remove. Not but in all removes I can
Kind love both give and get. Only what word
Wisest my heart breeds dark heaven's baffling ban
Bars or hell's spell thwarts. This to hoard unheard,
Heard unheeded, leaves me a lonely began. (166)

Again the poet complains he is unfulfilled, and points not only to his three-fold removal from others, but also at his removal from true communication -- whether with others or with himself. If the thwarted word is his misunderstood poetry, then "lonely began" refers to his solitary status as a revolutionary in grammar-thought who has taken language back to where verb and noun have the same expressive pulse. If the word is unheard or misunderstood even by himself, however, if it be the cry of his suppressed independence in a religious order, and of his suppressed sexuality (as the word "breeds" suggests), the frustration is surely still sharper. The conventional religious reading of these lines, meanwhile, as provided by Paul Mariani (217), is that the "word /Wisest" is Christ, and Hopkins mourns his own unsucceess in forwarding the Christian and Roman Catholic message. Plainly, the interrogative or partitive adjective "what" bends "word" into all these and every other possible interpretation -- as much as to say, into whatever heart's truth we
each pursue, and which vexatiously eludes our grasp.

One is tempted to compare this multiplex of meanings and difficulty in expression to Mallarméan verse that likewise treats the matter of linguistic elusiveness. There are, however, significant differences. Mallarmé's French view that language by itself cannot present the truth, because then man could consider himself God (O.C. 364), is fully countered by Hopkins' view that (Germanic) unitary language-thought is supposed materially to offer up the truth, that language by itself is poetry, and that he is himself Christ. In French verse the elusive sought-for word-idea is the shrouded perceptual, largely sexual, a priori neglected by French rationalism; but for Hopkins the elusive is simply irksome because the cosmos is everywhere (apart from his own communication problem) shouting out its name. The most crucial difference on the sound and structure level lying behind and causing this difference of approach between the poets and their languages is probably, as previously noted, the emphatic accent (or lack thereof). When Hopkins' sonnet shifts in its final tercet from the measured four beats to the line to, suddenly, an insistent, obsessive seven hard beats, each one a rebuke for not hearing or expressing the desired wisest word properly, there is a focus on action (Am Beginn war die Tat) that would, in French, be quite unnatural if not impossible. Parallel to this is the lexical contrast between the first 10½ lines, relatively rich in words of Romance origin ("stranger", "peace", "parting", "honour", "creating", "pleading", "remove"), and the final 3½ lines, that, besides being heavily accented and highly alliterative, contain but one word, "Bars", with Latin connections (and that word, cognate with the Germanic "ban", is also partly Celtic):
Only what word
Wisest my heart breeds dark heaven's baffling ban
Bars or hell's spell thwarts. This to hoard unheard,
Heard unheeded, leaves me a lonely began.

The French language proceeds by intellectual finesse, every word in cognitive equilibrium with every other word in its vicinity, cognitive meaning being the only guide to syllable stress. French style is primarily, as Riffaterre has outlined, a matter of words' salience of meaning in a given context. English proceeds instead by a kind of raw power, driven by emphatic accents that are only partially tied to meaning. Dispensing with articles and relative pronouns that keep French separated from the referent, English can engage with the word-thing by itself; and thus engaged it reproduces in language the leap and pulse of initial response, the primitive energy within phenomena. It proceeds more directly from the life force than French, and is consequently less analytic.

Of course, insofar as Hopkins' draws upon both Romance and Germanic language-thought patterns, his communication difficulties are manifold, and his polytonal combination of world views leads him into contradictions. The very desire for a "word / Wisest" is the result of his wanderings in the rational categorizing world of Romance thought, for from an a priori perspective every word is already in itself sufficiently wise. It is, in fact, the striving for a cognitive superlative "wisest" that necessitates the sublimation of the id's energy of will, and entrains the triple "remove" from the popular English background of home, Church and country. And yet, paradoxically, the only way to contact that superlative knowledge of "higher being" outside of time is through the Germanic foundation of pulse and sound pattern in time. The rational mind,
having eaten of the tree of knowledge, envies the body its "true" Eden of vitality. The Germanic word cannot be transmitted outside of the Germanic context; and the civilized and aestheticized Romance word is removed by definition from the depths of things that it refers to merely. English is a conflicted, dynamic hybrid of these two; or, as Mallarmé observes in Les Mots Anglais, "pour nous ou nos soeurs [néo-Latines], la corruption et la mort du Latin, et chez l'Anglais la vitalité issue d'un croisement classique" (O.C. 1049).

The Hopkins poem that most directly deals with this opposition of a priori and rational modes of language-thought is "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection". The title very aptly opposes the existential "is" of primary being to the secondariness of the preposition of modification "of". And likewise the sonnet itself presents a sharp contrast in thought modes within and around the sonnet form, in that the octet concerns Nature's powerful a priori flow, the sestet introduces a rational, Romance-derived sense of man's inferiority to Nature, and the Hopkinsian English-Catholic fusion of these two modes is consigned to three codas that supplement and "modify" the sonnet, being at once in it and not in it (rather like the "what word / Wisest" that is at once in and not in the poet's consciousness). The poem's fusion draws upon the whole range of being, from absolute material (diamond) to absolute Spirit (Christ), treats being, as Hegel does, in its "onto-theo-ego-logical" wholeness (Heidegger Hegel's Phenomenology 126), and, like Christianity and Hegelianism, is an expression of the Western desire to overcome duality:

Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows flaunt
forth, then chevy on an air-
built thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers, in gay gangs they throng; they glitter in marches.
Down roughcast, down dazzling whitewash, wherever an elm arches,
Shivelights and shadowtackle in long lashes lace lance and pair.
Delightfully the bright wind boisterous ropes, wrestles, beats earth bare
Of yestertempests creases; in pool and rutpeel parches
Squandering ooze to squeezed dough, crust, dust; stanches, starches
Squadroned masks and manmarks treadmire toil there
Footfretted in it. Million-fuelèd, nature's bonfire burns on.
But quench her bonniest, dearest to her, her clearest selvèd spark
Man, how fast his firedint, his mark on mind is gone!
Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark Drowned. O pity and indignation! Manshape, that shone
Sheer off, disseveral, a star, death blots black out; nor mark
Is any of him at all so stark
But vastness blurs and time beats level. Enough! The Resurrection,
A heart's clarion! Away grief's gasping, joyless days, dejection.
Across my foundering deck shone
A beacon, an eternal beam. Flesh fade, and mortal trash
Fall to the residuary worm; world's wildfire, leave but ash:
In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am, and
This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond,
Is immortal diamond. (180-81)

Certainly this poem can be read in Hegelian perspective as the genesis of higher consciousness. The octet is the world's primary being, the sestet is self consciousness, and the
codas are Spirit. What then remains of the dominance of Heraclitean-Heideggerian temporal flux after this glorification of "immortal diamond" in the midst of an "eternal beam"? There are at least two arguments for the persistence of phenomenological flow:

1) The octet and sestet of the poem concern the general truth of nature and man, while the codas are in the first person and an essentially personal rather than universal response to mortality. Hopkins does not write "across man's foundering deck shone a beacon" or "man is what Christ is".

2) The sonnet proper (octet and sestet) establishes so strongly phenomenological a relation with the world through its Germanic rhythm, alliteration, sound-sense correspondences and theme that when we arrive at the "Resurrection" and its Christian-Latinate allies ("clarion", "dejection", "eternal", "mortal", "residuary", etc.) these are subsumed in the poem's phenomenological ground. The poem's Christianity becomes, in this context, a primitive myth, capturing the lineaments of inner being just as Heraclitus's fire myth captures the nature of outer being. Indeed, "nature's bonfire" is entirely carried over to inner experience, since Christ seems to arise from the "world's wildfire".

It is by no means in Christianity alone, incidentally, that Hopkins combines the life and death drives in irrational bardic fashion. In perhaps the first poem written subsequent to "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" he throws himself into a patriotic fervour in a martial hymn that begins by asking "What shall I do for the land that bred me...?", the final verse of which is:

Where is the field I must play the man on?
O welcome there their steel or cannon.
Immortal beauty is death with duty,
If under her banner I fall for her honour.
CH. Under her banner we fall for her honour. (182)

Of course, "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" is a much more thoughtful poem than this, and its relations of life and death are set up quasi-philosophically in accordance with Heraclitus's theory of the progress of the four primary elements -- or, at least, Heraclitus's theory as interpreted by Stoics such as Marcus Aurelius, who wrote, "We must always remember Heraclitus, to the effect that death for earth is to become water, and death for water to become air, and for air to become fire, and so on in backward sequence" (frag. 76c). In the poem we see that the wind and sun do indeed revitalize the earth by drying it out ("Squandering ooze to squeezed dough, crust, dust"), and man too needs to be "dried out" by the God of fire and air, "world's wildfire", whose secondary effects are fire's light and air's sound ("In a flash, at a trumpet crash").

This caudated sonnet is also Heraclitean in its concern for order or logos, which we earlier translated into Hopkins' term "inscape", and which here is partly reflected in the word "mark". In line eleven Hopkins regrets "how fast [man's] firedint, his mark on mind, is gone!", "firedint" suggesting active stress, "mark" suggesting the corresponding order or scape. In line eight he notes how the wind "stanches, starches / Squadroned masks and manmarks treadmire toil", "manmarks" being here the trace of order that man has imposed on the soil. In the statement "nor mark / Is any of him at all so stark / But vastness blurs and time beats level" beginning at line fourteen, "mark" is most easily read as a verb meaning "perceive" with the corollary sense of "instress", but may also be read as a noun in the sense that none of man is of an order sufficiently strong to withstand nature. "Stark" in modern German, we recall, means strong, and "Mark"
means marrow or pith.

Mark or order is not, however, exclusive to man, and the clouds in the second line that "glitter in marches" can be interpreted as stepping in squadoned formation like him. And "Marches" can also be interpreted as edges or borders, and thus as another definer of order. (This sense of "march" derives, in fact, from the same Old English word "mearc", meaning boundary or dividing line, that is the root of "mark".) At the end of the poem man recovers his mark or order by, apparently, recognizing his realest self in the natural structure, and specifically in diamond, that shines with a clear fire in its own crystalline structure that is harder than (and can mark) all others.

Such a literary-philosophical approach to this poem, however, itself probably offers too much of squadoned manmarks and treadmire intellectual toil footfretted in philosophy, when this poem should be considered more as vibrant oratory, the charismatic utterance of a priest who sought to ignite faith with a primitive energy. Serving to connect the Church with the dynamic shamanism of the pre-Socratics, and itself a sort of charged kerygma, a shamanistic chant of revelation, the poem is only secondarily rational (if we can call it rational at all). We may say that it branches, indeed, from the same stock as Hopkins' sermons, with their dozens of figures and rhetorical devices, but is more concentrated and more multiplex than they are; for while the sermons are a priest's thoughts and advice on details of the faith for the benefit of the faithful, the poems often reflect, as this one does, his own grappling with the world, and the justification of his conversion. The poems are more in the manner, one could say, of an evangelical pastor's passionately non-rational preaching of born-again faith than in the manner of a born-into-the-faith
Catholic. A Baptist Minister of the Negro Conference, then, could probably deliver this particular poem more effectively than could, say, an Anglican or Catholic bishop.

Certainly the sequence of topics in this poem conforms to a standard sermon sequence, from reflections on nature's force and beauty, to reflections on mortality ("O pity and indignation!"), to knowledge of Christ and the Resurrection as personal experience. The long periods and word repetitions enhance this sense of pulpit poetry, and the constant alliteration is a feature to be found especially in more a priori, freely-shouted evangelical (especially negro) sermonizing. Examining the poem's language more closely we may, in the first two lines, detect a preacher's humorous opening gambit in the description of clouds as "puffballs", "tossed pillows", and "heaven-roysterers, in gay-gangs", etc; though already in the two "down"s of line three there is perhaps a proleptic suggestion of mortality (enhanced by its phonic likeness to the word "Drowned" beginning line thirteen). Similarly, "roughcast" and "shadowtackle" are a contrast to the clouds' levity, a maintaining of balance in a cosmos where opposites "lace, lance, and pair", like the intersecting of God and man, or of joy and fear.

Semantic contrasts, of course, are everywhere melded with phonic contrasts, as between the first two lines and lines three and four: the first eight words in the poem (counting "cloud" and "puffball" as two) all begin with unvoiced consonants that express the airiness of clouds -- "Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows flaunt forth" --, while the first six words of line three (that begin the second sentence) all begin with more physical voiced consonants -- "Down roughcast, down dazzling whitewash, wherever...". Line five is even more "physical" in that all ten of its words
begin with voiced phonemes (nine voiced consonants and one vowel) -- "Delightfully the bright wind boisterous ropes, wrestles, beats earth bare"-- and within these ten words there is some contrast between the "light" and "bright" high front diphthongs and vowels (including the [i] of "beats") and the other vowels articulated further back, hence darker, especially the [U] of "earth". In lines seven and eight the poem's only three-consonant blend [skw] is heard three times in "Squandering", "squeezed", and "squadroned", Hopkins taking advantage of the sense of controlled liquid pressure in that sound in "squeezed" and "squadroned", or uncontrolled pressure in "squandering ooze".

Sound-sense correspondence such as this applies in every word of the sonnet, but rather than tediously investigating every nuance of sound that each reader might better interpret himself, I shall simply jump to the end of the poem, to point out, as one more example, the very meaningfully musical phrase "world's wildfire, leave but ash: / In a flash, at a trumpet crash". Here the feeling of movement lent by the repetition of the "w"s (voiced glides), leads into dissolution and formless presence in the thrice-repeated "sh" sounds that are somehow "less" than a fully-formed stop (just as "flash" and "crash" are but secondary emanations of a greater presence). And this "lesser" quality of the unvoiced palatal fricative ("sh") would seem to apply to the affricates "j" and "ch" as well in the sequence "Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond", where every word with a fricative or affricate is of negligible value in comparison to "immortal diamond" with its exclusively stopped and liquid consonants. Does the same contrast apply as well in the human name of Jesus, versus the divine name of Christ?
No less important than the sound-sense correspondence in creating this poem's primitive energy and kerygmatic weight are its morphological and syntactic sensitivity and invention. By breaking with grammatical conventions Hopkins' language can more effectively reveal the Being behind the rigidifying rational tradition. Of course, the exposure of Being through innovative language has always been the function of poetry and makes it equivalent to philosophy; or, as Heidegger observes in his Letter on Humanism, "The liberation of language from grammar into a more original essential framework is reserved for thought and poetic creation" (B.W. 218). Such liberation from grammar is, from the world's perspective, anarchistic; but from being's perspective it simply aligns language with the natural order, since, as Hopkins notes: "Nature herself has no grammar. Fancy picking up a man and telling him that he is a noun, a dead thing..." (Storey 75).

An appropriately radical reading of "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire", one illumined by Heideggerian thought, must consider how language is, in a way, itself the subject of the poem, how the "bright wind" that "beats earth bare of yestertempests creases" is, to a certain extent, the breath of Hopkins' poetry showing forth the earth in a new way. The octet is language in its most creative mode, with coinings like "Shivelights", "shadowtackle", "treadmire" and "Footfretted", hyphenations like "heaven-roysterers", and looseness with respect to parts of speech -- does boisterous modify "wind" or "ropes", is "manmarks" a noun or an adjective? Nature does not care. The sestet is language that is less energetic, of shorter lines, as the "clearest-selved" individual creation of man and language is blurred by "vastness" (that is, in part, the rational mind's un-seling universals). The codas, meanwhile, contain virtually no coinings or grammatical surprise,
apart, that is, from the sudden prominence of Latinate language with such words as "Resurrection" (and of Greek, in the word "Christ"), suggesting that renewal, linguistic or otherwise, is to be achieved by openness to foreign influence. Or that the Romance language of the Vulgate, Scotus, Aquinas et al., has been petrified to a purity, an adamas immortalis, by sublimating such raw fluxuous energy as still subsists in a barbarian tongue's "Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood." Such is Hopkins' Catholic prejudice; from the linguistic standpoint we might say he recognizes the creative temporal a priori ground of language but longs to make it absolute and eternal.

And perhaps -- who can say? -- this desire for an absolute is altogether more legitimate than my existentialist and Freudian prejudices in this chapter have allowed. Why should not Being, in Hegelian fashion, be time's essence (rather than the Heideggerian reverse of this proposition)? Are Goethe, and Carl Jung, and Northrop Frye not, in a way, perfectly justified in considering everything transient to be a symbol? Rather than considering symbol a kind of "covering up", may it not equally well be considered a pre-existing disposition of the mind that simply elicits and maintains a sustaining allocation of energy from the libido -- like the philosopher's identification of "truth" born of his fundamental desire to control thinking by establishing general principles? After wrestling with Nietzsche's idea that art may be "worth more than 'the truth"' (Nietzsche 75), Heidegger, in fact, as mentioned above, moves away from his early notion of symbol as "covering up", and towards an acknowledgement of the equality of poetry and philosophy in thought. Indeed, in the same essay of 1946 that he opens by declaring language to be the house of Being,
he remarks, "Aristotle's words in the Poetics, although they have scarcely been pondered [?!, are still valid -- that poetic composition is truer than exploration of beings" (B.W. 264). That is to say, more precisely, that poetic composition is a true exploration of the "Being of beings".

Given their somewhat stiffer lexicons and grammar and their apperceptual bias, Romance languages are relatively better adapted for the expression of human archetypes and eternal forms. Certainly Mariology, the Lives of the Saints, and the mysteries of the Sacred Heart, Mary without spot, transubstantiation, etc. flourish more freely in Catholic lands than in Protestant Germanic countries where the emphasis is on individual perception; and no doubt Hopkins was a convert to the Roman Church in large part because of its symbolic richness. A whole segment of his consciousness apparently required such Latin "eternal verities" to balance the concrete truths of earth expressible in English's Germanic aspect. While for Mallarmé, and in French generally, the concrete phono-semantic aspect of language is "mystery"; and while for Heidegger, in contrast, the symbolic, metaphorical level of understanding he gradually approaches through his career is the mystery to be uncovered; for Hopkins, with a foot in each stream, there is no mystery left in ideas (Christianity organizes them), nor in things (each one shouts out what it is), but there is yet mystery in the self that lies at the centre attempting to harmonize these two streams. Not ontology (where the Germanic is superior) nor theology (where French spirit triumphs), but ego-logy is the ground of his poetry, and arguably of English language poetry generally.

Walter J. Ong's book, Hopkins, the Self, and God, is the finest study of this ego ground in Hopkins (that is, in the terms employed in my first chapter, knowledge on the empirical level of
self-consciousness, between a priori ontology and analytic spirit). Ong does not, it is true, examine
the mythic nature of Hopkins' Christian symbolism with the same rigor with which he considers
the onto-phenomenological aspect of his work (rather, being himself a Jesuit, he takes the value of
Hopkins' Christian symbols essentially for granted), but his analysis of Hopkins' sense of self in the
world culminates in the perception that Hopkins sidesteps the faith-reason question (symbol versus
sense) to focus instead on the self in time:

In effect, the faith-reason question grew so acute in nineteenth-century Roman Catholic circles that many other major problems plaguing theology besides these of faith and reason were given short shrift or pretty much shelved. Roman Catholic theology responded very little to the growing awareness of the historical setting of all human thought and of Christian revelation itself. With few exceptions, it did not attend in any depth to the new discovery of biological and cosmic evolution or to the evidence of synchronic and diachronic variations in human social structures which was anthropologizing philosophy and theology elsewhere, or to the incipient existentialist and personalist currents which would psychologize the deepest accounts of existence and bring history, together with anthropology and linguistics, and the humanities generally, to focus ultimately on the history of consciousness. Being, Heidegger was to explain later, was revealing itself more and more through time, but Roman Catholic theology for the moment was too preoccupied with faith-reason problems to attend to any "soft-sift / In an hourglass" (P 28). Hopkins, however, shows himself sensitive to the new developments and indeed in many ways ahead of them, truly a protoexistentialist and protopersonalist thinker. (94)

Ong's analysis of Hopkins is particularly enhanced by his recognition of the effect of
Ignatius Loyola's series of meditations, the Spiritual Exercises, (undertaken by all Jesuit novices
for thirty days, and every year thereafter for one week) in the development of his
phenomenological and personalist focus. In notes made on retreat while studying the "First
Principle and Foundation" of the Exercises, Hopkins writes,
Within a certain bounding line all will be self, outside of it nothing: with it self begins from one side and ends from the other. I look through my eye and the window and the air; the eye is my eye and of me and me, the windowpane is my windowpane but not of me nor me. A self then will consist of a centre and a surrounding area of circumference, of a point of reference and a belonging field, the latter set out, as surveyors etc say, from the former, of two elements, which we may call the inset and the outsetting of the display. (Ong 40)

This ordering of reality strikes one as being essentially empirical in the English manner, at once inside and outside. A self, Hopkins writes, consists of a centre (this is French's dominant "je") and a surrounding area (that is Germanic a priori perception).

While Hopkins' focus on being and the self in time is indeed, as Ong suggests, a great strength, his avoidance of the faith-reason debate is, pace Ong, a major weakness. As I have suggested, Hopkins does seem, however, to move towards a more "reasonable faith" in his later poems after "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" when, as in the terrible sonnets, God is interrogated. At the time of his death he was even planning a paper on the Eleusinian mysteries honouring Demeter and Persephone (Cotter 170). Such reasonable comparative religious study was precisely the corrective required to free Hopkins from Christianity's institutionalized vicious cycle of holy suffering and self-denial that paradoxically runs quite counter to his alleged advocacy of "selving". We could say to Ong that Hopkins perhaps emphasized the phenomenological and the personal in his writing not because the Exercises concentrate on "free decision making" (5), but because focusing on the a priori and the self allowed for genuine discovery without directly challenging Church dogma, as inquiry into faith in symbols surely would have. Hopkins thus gives us a rich yet incomplete art, "institutional art" versus art as individual life. In Kantian terms, he fails to provide
the imagination with entirely free play in its relation to the understanding; he attempts rather to pull the imagination through the strait gate of a creed.

It is interesting all the same to see how precisely Hopkins can be explained in terms of Kant's aesthetics of the sublime -- or, at least, how well the pre-"Sibyl's Leaves" Hopkins, like the pre-Hérodiade Mallarmé, can be thus explained -- for both poets begin with an externalized ideal that gradually becomes more internalized and more structuralist throughout their careers. In Hopkins, to be sure, the ideal is always largely within the self, but "ecstasy" in the earlier of his "mature" poems is always achieved in relation to nature, whether as storm in "The Wreck of the Deutschland", as kestrel in "The Windhover", as all dappled things in "Pied Beauty", etc. The most straightforward expression of sublime ecstatic experience, however, is the sonnet "Hurrahing in Harvest" of 1877:

Summer ends now; now, barbarous in beauty, the stooks rise
Around; up above, what wind-walks! what lovely behaviour
Of silk-sack clouds! has wilder, wilful wavier
Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies?

I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes,
Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our saviour;
And, eyes, heart, what looks, what lips yet gave you a
Rapturous love's greeting of realer, of rounder replies?

And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder Majestic -- as a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet! --
These things, these things were here and but the beholder
Wanting; which two when they once meet,
The heart rears wings bold and bolder
And hurl's for him, O half curls earth for him off under
his feet. (134)
In Hopkins' Christian experience, when the individual self is ecstatically hypertrophied into the universal self of Christ, the "bounding line" of the self that he writes of in his notes on the *Spiritual Exercises* is altogether exploded or expanded to infinity. As Kant has explained it, there is induced a feeling of sublimity as the mind, overwhelmed by external grandiosity, enthusiastically identifies with it, and at the same time, even enframes that grandeur intellectually and admires it as beautiful from the standpoint of an equal. If we pay attention to the pronouns and possessives we see that the "his" of line 9 ("his world-wielding shoulder") refers to the shoulder of "our Saviour" in the octet, who here in the sestet meets the " beholder", so that in the last line the "for him", while denoting primarily the poet-beholder, also hints of "him" and "his" as standing for Christ, experiencing more joy in heaven for having been acknowledged, and for having become man. In Christianity the enthralling transference of self into grandiose nature is accomplished by making nature the Son of God. At the same time reason's enframing movement (secondary here to thrall) is conveyed in man's necessary presence as "the beholder", in the repeated "I"s of the octet, and particularly in the metaphor of the stallion, which, even though superior to man in power, is his servant.

In his late poetry Hopkins, rather like Mallarmé in his maturer verse, internalizes the ideal. In his last sonnet, "The fine delight that fathers thought", written six weeks before his death in April 1889, and dedicated to Robert Bridges, he partially recognizes this internalization: his own delight is the sire of his creation, and his own care and craftsmanship ("hand at work now never wrong") are the mother carrying the conceived and growing idea within the womb of his mind:
Nine months she then, nay years, nine years she long
Within her wears, bears, cares and combs the same:
The widow of an insight lost she lives, with aim
Now known and hand at work now never wrong. (184)

Hopkins, however, regrets that the delight of inspiration has been infrequent.

Similarly in Hopkins' second last sonnet (also finished in the spring of 1889), "The shepherd's brow", we observe the same internalization of the ideal, and even a secular socialized and self-deprecating humour reminiscent for us of Laforgue and Eliot. One can hear in this critically neglected poem the middle-aged clergyman's sad ironic realization that religion is a human product, and that his professional obligations and truest interest lie with his fellow men and women rather than with any abstract ideal:

The shepherd's brow, fronting forked lightning, owns
The horror and the havoc and the glory
Of it. Angels fall, they are towers, from heaven -- a story
Of just, majestical, and giant groans.
But man -- we, scaffold of score brittle bones;
Who breathe, from groundlong babyhood to hoary Age gasp; whose breath is our momento mori --
What bass is our viol for tragic tones?
He! Hand to mouth he lives, and voids with shame;
And, blazoned in however bold the name,
Man Jack the man is, just; his mate a hussy.
And I that die these deaths, that feed this flame,
That... in smooth spoons spy life's masque mirrored: tame
My tempests there, my fire and fever fussy. (183)

Not heaven's lightning, but the light reflected in teaspoons is now the poet's concern.

Perhaps he is himself an angel who has fallen, and groaned, and come to realize that he is himself just a breathing man Jack. More than in such poems as "To What Serves Mortal Beauty" that
attempt to transmute the simply mortal into something transcendent ("God's better beauty, grace"). Hopkins here quite accepts the mortal, and makes his closest approach to Heidegger's idea (above, p.85) that "Propriation is the law, inasmuch as it gathers mortals in such a way that they own up to their own essence." He employs the word "owns", with its dual meaning of "admits" and "possesses" in the first line, and that word operates through all the poem's "deaths", nature's primitive a priori fire-death in the first two lines, the medieval platonic angel death, that is somewhat dismissed as "a story", in the next two lines, and the mortality of the self in the remainder of the poem. Man is treated here as he had never been previously in Hopkins, as his unimproved self, perhaps integrating nature and symbol, but coming to terms with himself finally as existent: "Man Jack the man is". One wonders, in this context, to what extent the line "He! Hand to mouth he lives, and voids with shame" may be interpreted, beyond the sense of "barely scraping by, eating, and defecating", as "holding back communication" ("hand to mouth") and "negating" ("voids with shame"). No doubt we may thus interpret it, abstractly, to the extent that man integrates symbol within his breadth of Being, for this is how Germanic thinking operates -- as fields encompassing fields, matrices of perception, rather than as, in the French manner, mutually limiting and mutually cancelling apperception. In the final couplet Hopkins does engage in civilized Gallic separation in his metaphor of life's masque mirrored in spoons; but he concludes with a more Germanic and nature-oriented "I... tame / My tempests there [in man], my fire and fever fussy." Generally, as I have said, Hopkins' contrast and/or melding of Germanic and Romance aspects of English becomes more subtle after "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", as does his
melding of the accompanying world views. Here, for example, the primitively word-fashioning Germanic "groundlong babyhood" contrasts with the "momento mori" of the next line. And perhaps it is this assured control of language that is pointed to by the poem's scornful final rhyme, at once vulgar and aesthetic, of "hussy" and "fussy". Here is Germanic communion via the colloquial, and, at the same time, Gallic intellectual independence.

Arguably, as the Gallic element becomes lexically merged with the Germanic, the force of the emphatic sprung accent diminishes slightly, partly because the more civilized Latinate language involves less raw energy, as in "What bass is our viol for tragic tones?" But the frame of this particular poem -- the first and last lines, the first line of the sestet, etc. -- is fully Germanic and maintains the hegemony of rhythm. Hopkins' "fire and fever fussy" is not intellect so much as will or life force in time. As always in Hopkins, the semiotic a priori element dominates the symbolic spirit element. But in such late poems as this these contrary aspects of being are, all the same, quite merged in the self that must balance them, as the English language etymologically balances Romantic and Germanic languages -- though the foundation remains Germanic.
CHAPTER III

Apollinaire

In Mallarmé and Hopkins the metaphysical ground of poetry approaches its limits, the former translating the Hegelian dialectic into perfected linguistic abstraction, the latter reviving a pre-Socratic rootedness in a priori Being. Taken together, in fact, these poets may be considered essentially to represent the poetic consummation of metaphysics, in that their work embodies the same theoretical ne plus ultra that has been apparent in the Vedantic and Buddhist tradition for centuries, and that has been closely approached in the West by various heirs of Hegel, most notably by Nietzsche. The task for 20th century writers, consequently, has been to make use of this completed metaphysics in a new philosophy-poetics of experiment, to bring thought out of the realm of pure contemplation and into the realm of practice (thus Marx is succeeded by Lenin), and to multiply the effectiveness of matured thought by psychologizing and popularizing it (thus, for example, symbolism is succeeded by a more pragmatic and scientifically-oriented surrealism). Oscar Wilde helps establish the new course in "The Artist as Critic" of 1891: "Let us go out into the night. Thought is wonderful, but adventure is more wonderful still" (11).

Of course, Wilde is still a man of the late 19th century, a Hegelian decadent guided by both intelligence and instinct, but especially by the former (we read, for example, at the end of the same essay-dialogue, "The Artist as Critic", that "The Critical Spirit and the World-Spirit are one" (64)), and the doctrine he espouses is one of non-action or idleness: "the scientific principle of Heredity has become, as it were, the warrant for the contemplative life. It has shown us that we are never less free than when we try to act" (42). His attitude is comparable to that of Mallarmé,
Huysmans, or Villiers, none of those gentlemen having quite been able to recognize, as Nietzsche does (and as Heidegger, supplementing Nietzsche, does forty years later), that non-action is itself a form of action, and that being and doing are inseparable. Or perhaps we should say that Wilde and his French counterparts recognize this, but are too preoccupied with its paradoxicality (from their rationalist's viewpoint) to be able to do more than contemplate it.

That so many 19th century writers should have submitted themselves to this quasi-religious conflict of action in the world and hereditary knowledge (human will versus original sin) is no doubt tied to the conflict in that era between the high culture's Romantic organic conception of the world and the well-established, relatively mechanistic, bourgeois industrial reality. The aristocrats of sensibility from Wordsworth to Wilde scorned to participate in an environment seemingly controlled by purely physical laws. (This was entirely the reverse of the 18th century situation in France and England where, before the democratic and industrial revolutions, the mechanistic world view of the Enlightenment clashed with a basically organic "hereditary" society.) It was only in the early years of our own century that a more balanced perspective, overcoming this "dissociation of sensibility", and able to accommodate both organically conceived nationhood and mechanical industrial statehood, evolved -- the fruit largely of the more sophisticated psychology of Nietzsche and Freud that recognized the persistence of a primitive impulse at every stage of historical process, an impulse that cannot be divided between "organic" and "mechanical" except insofar as these represent universal and mutually penetrating heuristic models of consciousness.
Thus, for example, while Bergson's 19th-century theory of comedy would explain the humour in Oscar Wilde as lying primarily in the "mechanicalness" of his resistance to the community ethic, we see in the light of a deeper psychology than Bergson's that that mechanicalness is perfectly reasonable in its intellectual context, being the manifestation of the greater mechanics of instinct -- which Wilde, of course, extols alongside the intellect: "[Conscience] must be merged in instinct before we become fine. Self-denial is simply a method by which man arrests his progress, and self-sacrifice a survival of the mutilation of the savage..." (21). In the 20th century, then, incorporating instinct on the level of practice and not just on the level of theory, works of literary imagination could be considered, as they had not been since the late Renaissance, at once fully practical "mechanical" instruments of civic instruction (like the work of the writers of the Enlightenment), and "organic" providers of spiritual sustenance (like that of the Romantics and Symbolists) -- at once social and personal. Of course, we may identify as cause of this rediscovered equilibrium (where the Marxist model had predicted only increased alienation of the self from the state), not only collective education and introspective psychology, but also the expansion of mass media, and especially the development of the electronic media, that have been important in the merging of the individual and the socius to create a "global village".

Probably the writer most influential in the practical and democratic reform of poetics, and of art generally, within the frame of this wider balancing of the popular and the aristocratic, life and thought, nature and industry, etc., has been Guillaume Apollinaire, whose work has scarcely been matched for its psychological breadth, formal invention, or lyrical power. More than any
previous French writer, with the possible exception of Nerval, he was influenced by the Dionysian manner of the Germanic lied, his first fully accomplished poems being the product of his year in the Rhineland. But he later adds to that a priori ground of intoxicating unitary presence a degree of Gallic analysis and irony that is rare if not impossible in Germany itself -- as, for example, in his deconstruction of religion in such short stories as "L'Hérésiarch" and "La Femme Assise". Evidently strongly influenced by Nietzsche (cf. the chapter "Le rêve apollinaire" in Marie-Louise Lentengre's Apollinaire : le nouveau lyrisme), Apollinaire views life itself as poetry in the sense of poiesis, "creation". But Apollinaire, more democratic and grammatically liberated than the grandiloquent prophet of the Superman, urges all people to awaken to their own poetic, imaginative potential -- and is himself self-deprecating enough to bid others to improve upon his poetic sketchings. Language, after all, so he would suggest, is everywhere suitable for aesthetic transfiguration -- it is simply a matter of bringing it, like the visual artist's "ready-made", within the right transformative perspective -- which ultimately means, for Apollinaire, within the embrace of an energetic love, at once erotic and intellectual (the synthesis of a relatively Germanic sense of love as joy in possession, and the more Gallic sense of love as desire to overcome a separation or lack).

The poem that best demonstrates Apollinaire's awareness of himself as both transcendent individual (in the aristocratic fashion of Nietzsche and the decadents) and the creation of his environment (in accordance with a "mechanistic" social determinism) is "Cortège", in which he, suitably, colloquially, speaks of himself both as "je" and "tu":

Un jour
Un jour je m'attendais moi-même
Je me disais Guillaume il est temps que tu viennes
Pour que je sache enfin celui-là que je suis
Moi qui connais les autres
Je les connais par les cinq sens et quelques autres
Il me suffit de voir leurs pieds pour pouvoir refaire
ces gens à milliers
De voir leur pieds paniques un seul de leurs cheveux
Ou leur langue quand il me plaît de faire le médecin
Ou leurs enfants quand il me plaît de faire le prophète
[etc.]

This is the poem's superb movement of transcendence. The other movement presents the
reverse posture, the recognition of the author's purely social constructedness, beginning with the
same refrain of "je" and "tu":

Un jour je m'attendais moi-même
Je me disais Guillaume il est temps que tu viennes
Et d'un lyrique pas s'avancait ceux que j'aime
Parmi lesquelles je n'étais pas
Les géants couverts d'algues passaient dans leurs villes
Sous-marines où les tours seuls étaient des îles
Et cette mer avec les clartés de ses profondeurs
Coulait sang de mes veines et fait battre mon cœur
Puis sur terre il venait mille peuplades blanches
Dont chaque homme tenait une rose à la main
Et le langage qu'ils inventaient en chemin
Je l'appris de leur bouche et je le parle encore
Le cortège passait et j'y cherchais mon corps
Tous ceux qui survenaient et n'étaient pas moi-même
Amenait un à un les morceaux de moi-même
On me bâtit peu à peu comme on élève une tour
Les peuples s'entassaient et je parus moi-même
Qu'ont formé tous les corps et les choses humaines

In symbolic and multiply-signifying images the poet seems to chart the growth of his own
consciousness, from the great "marine" world of the autonomic internal organs, to language, to the transcendent vision from the tower. He is like Hobbes' Leviathan, formed of all the components of the state, and thereby a legislator and prophet. The intriguing image of algaecovered undersea giants may also represent here the subconscious mind, that surfaces in separated islands; and it may stand, as well, for literary figures (or themes) from the intertextual world of collective consciousness.

Apollinaire developed this progressive self-transforming style that is both active and passive by continually grounding it in the social life-world that "built" him. Whereas the Mallarméan symbolist poem is fixated on language as an abstract absolute, Apollinaire always hears language with an ear to its performative value in society, as the voice of one person, normally his dramatized self, addressing another. Of course, as J.L. Austin (the philosopher, not to be confused with L.J. Austin the Mallarmé scholar) has noted, there is no perfect criterion for distinguishing constative language (like Mallarmé's) from performative language (like Apollinaire's) (67). Clearly, however, a poet as syntactically ambiguous as Mallarmé is in rebellion against the concept of language as action in the world, and he strives like his decadent associates for a language that is quite un-performative. In Austin's terms Mallarmé's language is altogether phatic and "illocutionary", but not at all rhetoric or "perlocutionary" (i.e., it is a language act without being tied to action in the real world); and it must necessarily be so since it presupposes uselessness to be essential to the beauty that it aims for. Only in its totality (the absolute forever just out of Mallarmé's reach) could we perhaps consider such language performative, rhetoric and
perlocutionary, in that it does, after all, guide us to perceive the beauty of language-in-itself, to see the world as aesthetic abstract experience.

Apollinaire's poetry, in contrast, is rhetoric and perlocutionary throughout, constructed as it is of syntactically conventional (if ambivalent) sentences guided by the self-dramatizing presence of the author. We might say that Apollinaire translates the symbolist ambiguity of lexemes into an ambiguity of phrase, as the reader tries to establish for himself a poem's levels of active engagement with the world. Both Mallarmé and Apollinaire write with self-conscious illocutionary force (i.e., perform an act in saying something), but Mallarmé's multiple negations undercut the potential for extra-contemplative results. Apollinaire, on the other hand, in his constant lauding of human creation and procreation, past, present and future, offers a poetry of active participation. His emphasis on the performance of projects in the world is reflected, for example, in the last stanza of the poem we have just been looking at ("Cortège"):  

Rien n'est mort que ce qui n'existe pas encore  
Près du passé luisant demain est incolore  
Il est informe aussi près de ce qui parfait  
Présente tout ensemble et l'effort et l'effet.  

(76)  

Apollinaire is a sort of hermeneutician who recognizes that the present moment is the perfected one, and we need not hide the self behind a pretense of symbolist nonchalance (or anonymity or absoluteness), because the effort of making art, or making anything, is part of that perfection. Thus there is a pleasant roughness or "in progress" quality in Apollinaire's work, and often some inconsistency that is not enigma so much as spontaneous thought, or unconcern with
Euclidean logic. Here at the end of "Cortège", for example, the future is "incolore", although at the beginning of the poem it was predicted the future will be lit by a growing "feu oblong".

Certainly, the lack of punctuation also contributes to the unfinalized character of Apollinaire's verses, as if they have simply been plucked out of the relatively disorganized flow of living speech. (Is "parfait" in the above stanza, for example an adjective or a verb? Presumably it is both.) One of his later styles involved, in fact, precisely such a recording of active language, as he would jot down snatches from a café conversation and set them together in a scattered patchwork. Before we look at those "poèmes-conversations", or his picture-poems (which break even more with prosodic convention), we should, however, examine his early Rhenish poems of 1901 and 1902, in which he found his primary poet's voice through his love for Annie Playden (the English governess with whom he worked), and through communion with the people and poetic traditions of the Rhineland.

Pierre Orecchioni wrote the principal theoretical study to date of these poems, Le Thème du Rhin dans l'Inspiration de Guillaume Apollinaire, over forty years ago. Without entering into speculations concerning linguistic relativity or the grounds for philosophical differences between France and Germany, he very justly observes that Apollinaire, like Nerval before him, found in the Rheinlied a model of a poetry that is better rooted in sub-conscious primary reality than French poetry normally is:

ils [Nerval and Apollinaire] nous conviaient à une sorte de libération de la poésie française, encombrée et étouffée par un appareil logique et rhétorique trop important, poésie trop intellectuelle pour n'être pas coupée des véritables sources d'inspiration. Chez eux, le poème n'est pas fête de l'intellect, mais du sentiment,
flux de poésie directement jailli des profondeurs mystérieuses de la conscience : qu'il s'agisse de l'âme individuelle ou de l'âme collective, c'est au plus secret de la mémoire, à la source des rêves qu'il faut puiser. (134)

In the French consciousness the Rhine is at the frontier, and Apollinaire, in incorporating the Rhineland tradition, embraces and surpasses, so Orecchioni suggests, the limits of French mind (40). His orientation may be compared to that of Herder and the Heidelberg romantics who brought the popular lieder to the high culture's attention, for, like them, he was tired of the elitist, intellectual verse generally in favour (60). And yet, says Orecchioni, one wonders to what extent Apollinaire adopts the genuine Rhine tradition, since he filters it to such an extent through his own personal German experience (48). An idle question, perhaps, since in any case he picks up its most essential features: simple, even banal, diction musically evoking a collective soul, with intimations of mortal transience (Vergänglichkeit).

The best of his "Rhénanes" are the nine poems Apollinaire chose to include in his first major collection of poems, Alcools (1913). The first of these, "Nuit Rhénane", in the form of an English sonnet minus the last line, expresses the rapturous, enchanting quality of the Rhine country, a blend of nature and sexuality that the poet both submits to and, like Heine, ironically transcends:

Mon verre est plein d'un vin trembleur comme une flamme
Ecoutez la chanson lente d'un batelier
Qui raconte avoir vu sous la lune sept femmes
Tordre leurs cheveux verts et longs jusqu'à leurs pieds

Debout chantez plus haut en dansant une ronde
Que je n'entende plus le chant du batelier
Et mettez près de moi toutes les filles blondes
Au regard immobile aux nattes repliées
Le Rhin le Rhin est ivre où les vignes se mirent
Tout l'or des nuits tombe en tremblant s'y refléte
La voix chante toujours à en râlemourir
Ces fées aux cheveux verts qui incantent l'été

Mon verre s'est brisé comme un éclat de rire

There is a strong tension in this poem between the primitive natural world of the Siebengebirge (the seven hills south of Bonn supposed to have been the seven sisters who mocked the mage Schönberg) and the polite culture of patterned dance, coiled and braided coifs, and the "regard immobile". We may even consider this tension to be an aspect of the contrast between German and French world views, which has its metonymic symbol in the trembling of the Rhine in a stiff glass. Ultimately, though, in the last five lines of the poem, the intoxication of the Rhine overpowers the (French) poet's individual will, the trembling chant of death-passion and supernatural beauty is submitted to, and the wineglass breaks like laughter.

"Why laughter?", one asks. As Kristeva has observed in her analysis of Lautréamont, laughter is the normal accompaniment to the breaking of prohibitions in the symbolic sphere -- being "[u]n moment inévitable dans le mouvement de la reconnaissance et de la dialectisation de l'interdiction symbolique" (194). Laughter is even, therefore, an accompaniment to truth, since truth, as outlined by Lautréamont and elaborated by Kristeva, is not hard and fast rules, but rather the dialectical movement of correction:

Le vrai n'est pas l'affirmation fixée, il n'est que le trajet de la correction, la transformation, l'un et l'autre (nous dirons : le symbolique et le sémiotique, la
In "Nuit Rhénane" the laughter is partly the result of the acknowledgement of a desire to drown in the atmosphere of the lovely drunken river, partly the result of the recognition of logical self-control -- this bi-polar conflict's momentary intensity producing a dynamic sensation of cognitive levity.

Clearly, then, there is some similarity between laughter and the sublime, but where the sublime involves a struggle for comprehension of quantity (in which either the self or the object may predominate), laughter is connected with the struggle over meaning's quality, a product of the conflict of semiotic drive and symbolic status quo. Laughter, that is to say, emerges from the confrontation of transgressive will and the rational thetic ordering principle (that ultimately allows even the transgressive to find utterance). It belongs, as Hegel recognized, especially to democratic societies, which recognize every voice; and it is moreover, as Kristeva implies, intrinsic to the maintenance of the democracy, as life becomes a work of art, and every citizen becomes an "artist" aligning the transgressive urges of the unconscious in new acceptable (comic) combinations. For Kristeva, indeed, all truly creative innovation is tied to the energy of laughter:

Toute pratique qui produit du nouveau (dispositif signifiant) est du rire : elle obéit à sa logique et comporte sa bénéfice pour le sujet. (197)

Apollinaire, with his theory of a dynamic "esprit nouveau" focused on creating surprise (as outlined in his "L'Esprit nouveau et la Poésie"), would seem to be consistent with Kristeva in this. In "Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon", indeed, Apollinaire's learning to laugh is central to his development as a poet, and, as in "Nuit Rhénane", it is associated with the breaking of
wineglasses:

Epris épris des mêmes paroles dont il faut changer le sens
Trompés trompés pauvres petits et ne sachant pas encore rire
La table et les deux verres devinrent un mourant qui nous jeta
le dernier regard d'Orphée
Les verres tombèrent se brisèrent
Et nous apprîmes à rire

(83)

Here laughter is tied not only to sentiment, but also to language, and, in a sense, laughter even becomes a rebellious, unformalized variety of speech (and initiates a new energetic variety of prosody, if we allow that "verres" are also "vers"). And one can hardly stress enough that there is here an active perlocutionary voice, the laughter marking the breaking with all merely formal artificial speech, and a world-engagement that is as real as the language of André Salmon's wedding contract.

In "Nuit Rhénane" the wineglass breaking like laughter marks a comparable breakthrough to active and effective language, to the beautiful and frightening boatman's song, that is the song of the Rhine itself. Most of the Rhenish poems in Alcools, in fact, are rooted in some way in the active language of the world -- even the firs in "Les Sapins" sing Christmas carols -- though "Mai", it is true, is purely picturesque in the vision-oriented Parnassian tradition. "La Synagogue", certainly, throws us into the world of speech acts, with the foul names and curses sung back and forth, presumably in Yiddish, between two Rhineland Jews, Ottomar and Abraham. Here, as in "Nuit Rhénane", the language is profoundly connected with the landscape, whether the Rhine turns to smile at their "exotic" imprecations, or whether it moans along with their synagogue
chants. Marie-Jeanne Durry (251) and Leroy Breunig have suggested that the last line in Hebrew, "Hanoten ne Kamoth bagoim tholahoth baleoumim", (meaning "He gives vengeance to the nations, punishments to the peoples") is the key to the whole poem. In their opinion it indicates that the vengeful dream of suffering Jewry is what allows the quarrellers to forget their differences. I would argue, however, that for most readers not fluent in Hebrew the line simply emphasizes the importance of language in promoting national fraternity. And even translated it suggests, in this diaspora context, not so much resentment against the goyim (although such ressentiment does factor in too, in the maintaining of difference) as simply the final authority of community: the nation takes "vengeance" on quarrellers by obligating them to agree; if they don't reconcile, the community may "punish" (or be punished by) their strife. For civilized national community is understood here to be self-contained and moveable, connected to the national language and its holy books, and able to put down roots anywhere. Certainly the Slav-Italian Apollinaire, writing in French, but inspired here by the more nature-oriented German tradition, understood this attraction of belonging to a community, and, always a man of praxis, himself ended up soldiering and writing love poems for his beloved France.

A different, more pleasure-oriented, "outsider" community is examined in "Schinderhannes" -- an outsider community that represents at the same time the barbarian forest-dwelling soul of Germany, diametrically opposed to the civilized book-worshipping Jews of "Synagogue". The Bible has, it is true, penetrated the brigand community to the extent that one of them is, in a squatting position, reading it; but the main life of the little band, apart from robbery, is
revelling in sensuality and its side effects (burping, farting, laughing). That Hannes' next target should be a rich Jew suggests that Apollinaire is, to a degree, identifying this legendary character with the German nation, and pointing up the contrast between primitive xenophobic German consciousness that directs aggression outwards, and the more cultivated Jewish attitude that, though still tinted with xenophobia, channels it more effectively into religious and communitarian sublimation. The shocking "Avant d'aller assassiner" at the end of "Schinderhannes" is comparable to the Hebrew last line of "Synagogue", but where the Hebrew vengeance is a community-grounding metaphor or fiction, the "assassiner" of the robbers is entirely real. And we, from our position of appreciating the active language of both poems, get a lesson in comparative socio-linguistics.

"Les Femmes" (123-24), the last of the Rhénanes in Alcools, examines the respectable Christian community, and puts the Rhine world into a domestic female perspective. It is also, in a sense, the first of Apollinaire's conversation poems, and extremely successful, I think, in that it completely merges active real conversation (switching from topic to topic) with metre and rhyme. Poetry becomes in this piece completely dialogic, a communion of minds -- and, conversely, conversation becomes living poetry. Christianity itself, being referred to by the women in various indirect ways throughout the poem, is sewn into community life just as the thread they sew with holds together their fabric-work: "Ce cyprès là-bas a l'air du pape en voyage / Sous la neige", "Le sacristan sourd et boiteux est moribond", "La fille du vieux bourgmestre brode une étole pour la fête du curé", "On dirait que le vent dit des phrases latines", "À présent grand-mère dit son
chapelet", and the last stanza,

Il est mort écoutez La cloche de l'église
Sonnait tout doucement la mort du sacristain
Lise il faut attiser le poêle qui s'éteint
Les femmes se signaient dans la nuit indécise

One even has here, following on the Jewish "Synagogue" and the essentially pagan "Schinderhannes", the sense that Christianity, the religion of love, is largely a woman-centred faith, more passive and unitary, less focused on the dualism of "otherness", and proceeds in hermeneutic fashion through dialogue. It is not a religion of objects to be possessed, of one nation or people, but is rather a religion of abstract translatable signs, hence: "Les femmes se signaient" (crossed themselves).

In his openness to the feminine, to the concept of love, and to the value of dialogue, Apollinaire, we may say, moves beyond the rather aggressive masculinist posturing of Nietzsche (and of barbarianism and Judaism), without sacrificing the self-interrogating dynamism of Nietzschean (or Judaic) existential anxiety. Indeed, in Apollinaire's provocative short story "Le Juif Latin" it is suggested (via the mad Latin Jew Gabriel Femisoun) that the Nietzschean dream of the Superman, and the Jewish messianism it resembles, have both been surpassed in Catholicism:

En somme, qu'est-ce qui a fait la différence des juifs et des chrétiens? C'est que les juifs espéraient un Messie, tandis que les chrétiens s'en souvenaient. Nietzsche s'étaient approprié l'idée juive. Combien de Latins se sont imprégnés de l'idée de Nietzsche et espèrent ce surhumain peu messianique, duquel proclame la venue le Zarathoustra, emprunté au Vendidad... Nous, juifs latins, nous n'avons plus [un tel] espoir... Donc, j'ignore la religion juive, elle est abolie comme le paganisme, ou plutôt, non, de même que le paganisme, elle survit dans le catholicisme qui m'attire par ses théophanies surtout... (OpR I, 102-03)

Of course, in Apollinaire's continual process of interrogation and creation, Catholicism too
is entirely surpassed in Voltairean laughter, for in this particular story the absolution the Church grants Fernisoun after his horrific and gratuitous crimes (notwithstanding that he has intentionally delayed baptism till his moment of death) is as ludicrous as the question whether the baptismal rite, having perhaps been performed with horse piss rather than puddle water, was in fact valid. Catholicism represents for Apollinaire a hopelessly static agglomeration of false tenets, but the potential it provides for dialogue (founded as it is on interpretations) is comically attractive.

Free dialogism would seem to be, indeed, combined with a recognition of human needs on every level, the true basis of the love that the Church long ago lost touch with, and which Apollinaire seeks to re-introduce to life via his writing. In "L'Hérésiarch", for example, the heretic theologian Orphei's radically different interpretation of the crucifixion story (his revelation is that the two thieves crucified beside Jesus were in fact the hypostatized Father and Holy Spirit) is merged with the heresiarch's own love of self and love of sincerity, that are the necessary basis of community happiness. Apollinaire even warmly describes him at the end of the story as an Everyman: "La vérité est que l'hérésiarch était pareil à tous les hommes, car tous sont à la fois pécheurs et saints, quand ils ne sont pas criminels et martyrs" (OPr I, 118). Since Orphei remains a dogmatist of sorts, however, Apollinaire makes it clear that his love is of a "lower" type, not directed to other people so much as towards Italian culinary delicacies. The heresiarch's amusing gourmandise is thus but a stage in Apollinaire's broader survey of the universal comedy, divina e humana.

In the ninth chapter of "Le Poète assassiné" the love theme is more explicitly presented,
and on a nobler level, through the instructions of the scholarly Dutchman Janssen, who, explaining that love is all nature's guide, confides to the hero, Croniamantal, "J'ai toujours vécu [en nature], mais mal vécu en somme, car on ne doit pas vivre sans amour humain, sans compagne. N'oubliez pas que tout est preuve d'amour dans la nature" (OPr I, 249).

But Apollinaire's love doctrine is most explicit of all in the poetry, especially in the multi-sectioned poems placed fore and aft of the Rhénanes in Alcools, and which Marie-Jeanne Durry has suitably called "poèmes du feu" (III, 153), that is, "Le Brasier" and "Les Fiançailles" (both published in 1908). In the fifth section of "Les Fiançailles" we read:

Pardonnez-moi mon ignorance
Pardonnez-moi de ne plus connaître l'ancien jeu des vers
Je ne sais plus rien et j'aime uniquement
Les fleurs à mes yeux redeviennent des flammes
Je médite divinement
Et je souris des êtres que je n'ai pas créés
Mais si le temps venait où l'ombre enfin solide
Se multipliait en réalisant la diversité formelle de mon amour
J'admirerais mon ouvrage

(132)

In these philosophic lines (but with all the emphasis on "philo-", in the context of a Socratic "Je ne sais plus rien"), addressing the reader directly, Apollinaire admits that love has, for him, entirely superseded knowledge, and that his work, ideally, is simply the realization of that love. Written with a psalmic honesty and intensity, they would consequently seem to demand a brief exegesis:

In the first two lines the reader is directly engaged via the perlocutionary imperative mode.
The poet is to a certain extent ironic in his apology for his ignorance, because it is apparent that love is more potent than the rational knowledge it replaces. But to a certain extent the "Pardonnez-moi" is also sincere, since in instituting the reign of love, the poet is obligated to eclipse the poetic forms people have come to expect. Apollinaire is normally, in this way, rather self-effacing in his implementation of a poetics of active participation, and is consequently, through such sensitivity to the reader, more effective.

Lines three through six establish the poet's entirely affective, non-rational, and essentially a priori relation to the world, that, more profoundly than a conventional Socratic or Christian worldview, sees the ground of reality as flame or energy. The attitude in these lines is passive pleasure before the cosmos as is.

The final three lines, beginning with the conjunction "Mais", distinguish diversity (though no real separation) within the works of love. This diversity is produced by a solid shadow, that is presumably the negative critical power of self consciousness, which informs the Platonic and Hegelian worlds of individual forms, and acts as motivator of the initial "Pardonnez-moi". No doubt, a significant portion of our pleasure in this short poem derives from precisely this self-reflexive character of the last lines, wherein the time has arrived when the critical consciousness, or shadow, imposes itself. Following this critical spirit we are even, I think, inclined here to consider the words in an analytic fashion, so that we perceive "earth" in the "sol" of "solide", "many-folded" in "multipliait", "making real" in "réalisant" and perhaps "mirer" (reflect) in "J'admirerais" -- although the root mirari, of course, means "to marvel", and all "mirroring"
supplementing that meaning is a secondary accretion.

Although Apollinaire considered "Les fiancailles", from which this section is taken, to be "le plus nouveau et le plus lyrique, le plus profond" of the poems of Alcools, it has not received nearly as much critical attention as "La Chanson du Mal-Aimé" or "Zone", presumably because it is (as Apollinaire himself noted) one of the less "immédiatement accessible" of the poems in that collection (cited in Heitmann 62). But its establishment of primary meanings, and its determination of the basis for poetic belief and action in love, make it a central work, at least for us investigating Apollinaire's philosophic grounding.

There have, all the same, been several studies of "Les fiancailles" -- for example, such psychological analyses as Scott Bates' outline of its "Christian progression of innocence-sin-renunciation-confession-hope-salvation" (88), Klaus Heitmann's Jungian treatment concentrating on the male poet's assimilation of the dark female anima (hence the "Fiancailles" of the title), and Susan Harrow's interpretation of the poem as regeneration through a process of rupture, interior emptiness, and projection of the self in creation. As the last of these authors observes, the poem, due to its complexity, offers us "une infinité de lectures qui restent, pour la plupart, autant de chemins inexplorés" (119). These psychological readings being so numerous, they must be organized by balancing them, or fusing them, with more formal analysis, such as the aesthetics-oriented investigation of Leroy Breunig, or Laurie Edson's study comparing the poem to Picasso's "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" (the poem being dedicated to the painter). For the poem is aimed, ultimately, at "réaliser la diversité formelle (sic) de [l'] amour".
Thus, when Apollinaire writes in Part 3 of the poem, "Et porteur de soleils je brûle au centre de deux nébuleuses" (130), he is presumably referring to any and all possible formal dialectical oppositions -- animus and anima, of course, if we wish to organize the universe in these categories, but also Apollonian and Dionysian, form and content, symbol and meaning, etc. Indeed, even the time and space co-ordinates in this particular line are completely amenable to dialectical interpretation: the "soleils" and "nébuleuses" may be the sun and clouds of daytime, or the night's stars and nebulae; "au centre" may mean "between the two clouds" or "in the centre of each cloud". The suns may, moreover, be inside the poet's body (since he has "buv[é] à pleins verres les étoiles" in the preceding section) or outside him.

"Les Fiançailles" begins with an imperfectly stanzaic section devoted to springtime, adapted from Apollinaire's own poem "Le Printemps" (OP 560) of 1902. Apparently Apollinaire wished to surpass that earlier poem's phatic symbolist style and decadent atmosphere dissociated from truth or reality, oriented more to abstract ideas. Thus the fiancés wandering in the springtime are forsworn, a pigeon merely seemed to be the Holy Spirit, and the "latest" women on the scene, like "us" ("nous"), love not other people, but only their notion of love:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Au petit bois de citronniers s'énamourèrent} \\
\text{D'amour que nous aimons les dernières venues (128)}
\end{align*}
\]

These decadent "dernières venues" (and "nous") may be compared, then, to Zarathustra's "letzte Mensch", who, while believing himself to hold the key to happiness in his static order, in fact represents the most contemptible stage of human development (Also Sprach Zarathustra 10).

Apparently even writing poetry within this decadent perspective is contemptible -- or so
the first line of the next section suggests: "Mes amis m'ont enfin avoué leur mépris". And while the second section that this line introduces is in no way pretty like the first (quite the opposite, in fact), it does at least offer an escape from the saccharine trappings of Romantic idealism. In terms of poetic history, we have moved on in this second section from a Romantic to a Baudelairean universe, or from a symbolist to a more grounded Rimbaudian one (Frank Carmody has pointed out the affinities between "Les Fiançailles" and various of Rimbaud's Illuminations, especially "L'Alchimie du verbe"). Obviously, we have also moved here from day to night, from a controlled world of propriety to a rather chaotic, inverted nightmare:

Mes amis m'ont enfin avoué leur mépris
Je buvais à pleins verres les étoiles
Un ange a exterminé pendant que je dormais
Les agneaux les pasteurs des tristes bergeries
De faux centurions emportaient le vinaigre
Et les gueux mal blessés par l'épuration dansaient
Etoiles de l'éveil je n'en connais aucune
Les becs de gaz pissaien leur flamme au clair de lune
Des croques-morts avec des bocks tintaient des glas
À la clarté des bougies tombaient vaille que vaille
Des faux cols sur des flots de jupes mal brossées
Des accouchées masquées n'avaient leurs relevailles
La ville cette nuit semblait un archipel
Des femmes demandaient l'amour et la dulie
Et sombre sombre fleuve je me rappelle
Les ombres qui passaient n'étaient jamais jolies

In Zarathustra's terms, of course, the movement towards chaos is a movement towards health — for as he preaches in his brief sermon against the last Man, "man muss noch Chaos in sich haben, um einen tanzenden Stern gebären zu können. Ich sage euch: ihr habt noch Chaos in euch" (10).
The first part of section 2 is a strange reversal of the Judeo-Christian record (for example, the exterminating angel of God kills not first-born infants, but lambs, and perhaps shepherds); and with such an introduction to the vulgarity of the city at night, Apollinaire seems to tie the urban life-mode created by the industrial revolution to a shift in spiritual consciousness. With the introduction of gas lights, nature's division of day and night loses its absolute authority. And the fixed order of signifié and signifiant (and of stanza and verse) has also lost some of its authority, as the poet engages here in plentiful free-association in lines that are not always rhyming or alexandrines. Thus the /ok/ sound in "croque-morts" combined with the English meaning of "glas[es]" presumably suggested "bocks". Similarly, the theme of falseness developed through "fiancés parjures" (of section 1) and "fauz centurions" is humorously carried over to "fauz cols" (which in its turn phonically suggests "flots de jupes") -- and the metonymic focus on clothing is itself somewhat "fauz", since what really interests us is their wearers. And in the last two lines the repeated "sombre sombre" is a meditation on both senses of that word ("sink" and "somber"), that gives rise in the next line to "Les ombres".

The main body of the poem really begins, however, in the third section when, after the polite poetry of the garden, and the damned poetry of the city, the poet is brought up to the late nineteenth century crisis of communication induced by the disappearance of external absolutes. We have seen that Mallarmé's "Hérodiade crisis", and even Hopkins' desolation sonnets, are manifestations of the late 19th century's spiritual predicament. Apollinaire, however, aiming toward the active phase of being attained in the final three sections of the poem (7 to 9), and able
to summarize the results of his symbolist forbears, proceeds quite briskly over this crisis phase, without becoming bogged down in pathos. In Apollinaire's biography there was, indeed, a period of relative unproductivity between 1904 and 1908, but Orpheus had already quite replaced Christ as the dominant religious figure in his verse before 1904, and the principal crisis in his life through these years was his slow withdrawal from obsession with Annie Playden and eventual renewal of love after meeting Marie Laurencin. For while in Apollinaire the religious and the erotic are quite consciously, and inextricably, intertwined, the erotic is the stronger and more problematic of the pair, he being closer to Mallarmé's sensual Faun (who opens his mouth to "l'astre efficace des vins") than to the spiritually conflicted Hérodiade.

Thus in section 3 Apollinaire sees that the traditional system of God-directed virtues (the "bêtes théologales" of faith, hope and charity) has been supplanted by a more secular concern for his own independent a priori consciousness -- the only remaining absolute. But even before remarking upon this change in outlook, he realizes that the grandiose itself has been transferred within, and that he has himself become a sun god through his own power of sight. In the scheme of the entire poem, therefore, this third stage represents the poet's assimilation of raw mortal experience, and his conversion of it into a primary energy or fire, before directing that energy back towards the world as creation.

The fourth section of the poem looks backward to the past as a place of death, of defunct love or divinity, but also as the birthplace of poetic invention and growth. Italian churches and lemon groves here recall the first section's Madonna and lovers, while the taverns recall the urban
scene of section 2. The lines concerning flaming bouquets turning before the eyes of a mulatto woman (who has invented poetry) are, meanwhile, more enigmatic. Since they seem to refer to the Baudelairean atmosphere of section 2, one may be put in mind of Jeanne Duval (and "rouait" then has more of its standard meaning of "tortured on the rack"). Klaus Heitmann's suggestion here is that the mulatto woman represents the unification of animus and anima, light and shadow -- and hence the union of sections 1 and 2 (76). Beyond these interpretations I think we may say, too, that Apollinaire is here pointing to poetry's dialectical transnational, cross-cultural character, drawing freely from everywhere, from gardens and new technology, Africa and Europe (like Picasso in "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon").

Section 5, treating love, we have examined already. The poet has here entirely abandoned all merely formal and artificial literary games -- unless form can somehow be made a manifestation of the force of love. That is to say, he recognizes that the primary union of desire and belonging may find order and logic through the "shadow" of differentiation. (And perhaps love is made multiple as well through its actualization in the beloved Other, who is the shadow of one's own desire and the basis of a sense of belonging -- "l'ombre enfin solide").

The sixth section takes the same unitary love-driven view of the cosmos, and tries to describe it as a unified totality of all rational and extra-rational knowledge:

Observe le repos du dimanche
Et je loue la paresse
Comment comment réduire
L'infiniment petite science
Que m'impose mes sens
L'un est pareille aux montagnes au ciel
Aux villes à mon amour
Il ressemble aux saisons
Il vit décapité sa tête est le soleil
Et la lune son cou tranché
Je voudrais éprouver une ardeur infinie
Monstre de mon ouïe tu rugis et tu pleures
Le tonnerre te sert de chevelure
Et tes griffes répètent le chant des oiseaux
Le toucher monstrueux m'a pénétré m'empoisonne
Mes yeux nagent loin de moi
Et les astres intacts sont mes maîtres sans épreuve
La bête des fumées a la tête fleurie
Et le monstre le plus beau
Ayant la saveur du laurier se désole

As in the previous sections there is a good deal of ambiguity. I would argue, for example, that Apollinaire here considers knowledge ("science") gained through individual senses to be negligible in comparison to the great sympathetic flow of synaesthetic feeling (i.e., thunder-hair, bird-song claws, swimming eyes, etc.), but Heitmann has plausibly interpreted the lines about "petite science" as the poet's genuine desire to master his own senses' limited record of the universe, and to bring this sense world of knowledge into the order of poetry (79).

The psychoanalytic Heitmann also sees lines six through eleven in this section as an expression of the sexual drive evoked as a towering phallus (79). No doubt there is a sexual sublimation in the standard Apollinairean image of the sun as a decapitated head, (which may represent an imagined triumph over Oedipal fear); but perhaps it is a bit simplistic to reduce these lines entirely to a sexual sublimation alone, after the manner of psychoanalysis' own "petite science" -- for an a priori phenomenological identification with the landscape clearly obtains here as well.
The sixth and subsequent sections of the poem may all be considered to be set on Sunday, dies dominicus, because in the new reign of love every day is a holy day, and the necessary reconstruction of the world will take place in holy imagination (just as Amphion in "Le Brasier" builds the city of Thebes with the music of his lyre alone (108)). For while the fifth section anticipated the realisation of the works of love, the sixth section conclusively establishes their field of operation (the energized unity of nature and self ("l'un")), and the seventh section begins that projected work of imagination-in-the-world, opening with,

A la fin les mensonges ne me font plus peur
C'est la lune qui cuit comme un œuf sur le plat

On one view the poet, in these lines, no longer fears the "falseness" of mere similes which keep categories of meaning distinct, and to demonstrate his new acceptance of rational category he even uses the word "comme" for the first time since the opening section.

From another angle, we might say that "mensonges" is only the rationalist's pejorative term for metaphorical thought in general, which Apollinaire has come to accept without reservation -- because for him, as for Lautréamont, lies, whether incomplete logic or incomplete metaphor, are merely the energy-deficient failure to carry through the movement of correction that constitutes (hermeneutic) truth. Thus, in the opening lines of this seventh section the poet is, for the first time in the poem, sufficiently energized to deal directly and "performatively" with the world beyond the author-reader relationship, via the demonstratives "C'est", "Ce", and "Voici" (the earlier fully perlocutionary language, the "Pardonnez-moi" of section 5, being, after all, confined to the I-you relation):
C'est la lune qui cuit comme un œuf sur le plat
Ce collier de gouttes d'eau va parer la noyée
Voici mon bouquet de fleurs de la Passion
Qui offrent tendrement deux couronnes d'épines

It would seem to me, therefore, that the two crowns of thorns here are intended for the reader and the poet (cf. "Il vient un temps pour la souffrance" in "Les Collines" (174)), and Heitmann is limiting the force of this metaphor unduly in restricting the "couronnes d'épines" to Apollinaire and Annie (81).

As to the identity of the drowned woman and the lady in the window, it seems almost too prudent to try to connect them to the flower-gathering Madonna, to Ophelia, to Annie, etc. They are all these and, because unnamed, the archetypal woman -- mortal, mother, and beloved -- the starting point and the goal, that which allows the poet to make his way in the first place, and that which motivates him to carry out his work of walking and singing all day long.

Section 8 takes the poet to the still broader vista of the sea, and back again to the Madonna:

Au tournant d'une rue je vis des matelots
Qui dansaient le cou nu au son d'une accordéon
J'ai tout donné au soleil
Tout sauf mon ombre

Les dragues les ballots les sirènes mi-mortes
A l'horizon brumeux s'enfonçaient les trois-mâts
Les vents ont expiré couronnés d'anémones
O Vierge signe pur du troisième mois

At this point in the poem the musical element has returned, appropriately accompanied by an accordion, since the poet has, through love, regained the energy to carry out his profession in
the world. Already, in fact, the preceding section tended towards the alexandrine, and the last five of its lines rhymed. Here the first line has 12, the second a more musical (as Verlaine would see it) 13 syllables, with full rhyme at the cesurae ("une rue"/"cou nu"). The second stanza, meanwhile, is in perfect alexandrines with m-initial end syllables, and internally assonant end vowels in the final couplet ("couronnés d'anémones", "troisième mois"). A further musical element here is the arrangement of tense front vowels, emphasized at first in the "rue"/"nu" rhyme, subsequently scattered throughout the section ("sirènes m-i-mortes", "A l'horizon brumeux", "expiré), finally gathered up in the being of the virgin and mother of May in the last line ("O Vierge signe pur du troisième mois"). Thus the phonic stress of the passage is joined to the poem's thematic centre (love symbolized by the Virgin).

The final, ninth, section of "Les Fiançailles" fully readopts a traditional stanzaic pattern, formally improving upon the imperfect "alexandrins croisés" of section 1. Through love in the form of fire (the male element supplementing the female earth and water of the previous two sections) poetry is entirely renewed:

Templiers flamboyants je brûle parmi vous
Prophétisons ensemble ô grand maître je suis
Le désirable feu qui pour vous se dévoue
Et la girande tourne ô belle ô belle nuit

Liens déliés par une libre flamme Ardeur
Que mon souffle étendra O Morts à quarantaine
Je mire de ma mort la gloire et le malheur
Comme si je visais l'oiseau de la quintaine

Incertitude oiseau feint peint quand vous tombiez
Le soleil et l'amour dansaient dans le village
Et tes enfants galants bien ou mal habillés
Ont bâti ce bûcher le nid de mon courage

In this finale to the poem Apollinaire has indeed become Apollo, god of the sun and stars (as he was already, in embryo, in section 3). His action is to light and love the world, as well as to prophesy, ever devoted to the "grand maître" -- that is, devoted to himself, the universe, fire, the Phoenix, and, in the erudite reading, to Jacques de Molays (the last Grandmaster of the Templars, burned at the stake in 1314). The bonfire is the focal point of contradictions overcome and aufgehoben: for the poet is himself the fire, and yet he stands outside it to watch the ornamental fire wheel ("la girande"); he is fire, but he will extinguish fire with his breath; he is fire, yet that destructive flame may also be the medium for his emergence as a prophet.

Another possibility here, in light of our thesis of Apollinaire's language as performative rhetoric, is that we are to a large degree the "templiers", the wardens of the temple, who are enjoined to prophesy with the poet; and we are the master to whom he has devoted himself. Correspondingly, in the curious "tes enfants galants" of the second last line, the "tes" may refer to the bird of incertitude (though previously it was "vous") or to the village, but it seems to refer most directly to "you" the reader. Consequently one is inclined to project the personal address back through this ninth section, identifying with the poet, becoming poets ourselves, at the same time as we admire his "ardent" work.

As we saw in examining Mallarmé, the quest for certitude is extremely important in French thought generally (as a result of the language's grammatical organization). Apollinaire is here exemplary of this attitude, portraying the rejoicing when uncertainty ends, and certainty is
reinstalled as formally regular, fully energized verse. But at the same time Apollinaire's poetry contains strong elements of expressionistic and semiotically uncertain language (borrowed from Rimbaud and Germany), based in the life-world rather than in books; and from this perspective a priori uncertainty and contingency, "fallen" into community life, are the cause for (or ground of) the Dionysian celebration of love and the sun. For Apollinaire, as we have seen, unites all the polarities to bring poetry out of its aesthetic ivory tower and back to the world of living active men and women, where unpredictable energy precedes and creates order -- a democratic order, as he reminds us here in his reference to "tes enfants galants bien ou mal habillés".

This oral-based, popular, even carnavalesque quality in Apollinaire is surely intimately associated with his affection for medieval literature and lore (cf. L'Enchanteur pourrissant, "Merlin et la vieille femme", etc.). His poems are consciously rooted in the speech of the community, the "village", and their ambiguity is correspondingly the "incertitude" of meaning and intention in the world of experience, at the level of the sentence, rather than a priestly Mallarméan uncertainty at the level of the single text-based word-concept. When Mallarmé says "fleur" he conceives that perfect thing in the mind (or on the page) absent from all bouquets; but Apollinaire's flower and bouquets are ideal and real at the same time -- wheels of fire in society's eye first (the eye of the "mulâtresse"), subsequently in his own. The northern Mallarmé's central concern is forever "l'idée", but the Italian-Monogasque Apollinaire's is "l'amour", in a partial revival of the troubadour chanson.

In Alcools Apollinaire seems still to be working out this philosophy of love acted through
the play of opposites (inside/outside, animus/anima, self/world, etc., all ultimately aspects of the psychological antinomy desire/belonging); but in Calligrammes, and particularly in "Ondes" (its pre-war opening section), he more often devotes himself to thoroughgoing poetic engagement in the world, considering the active character of language (and its metamorphosis into true poetry via the operation of love) to be a given. Philippe Renaud offers the following formulation of this development in Apollinaire:

La thématique d'Alcools est fondée sur un système assez explicite d'oppositions complémentaires. L'atmosphère de certains poème[s] d'Ondes provient en bonne partie de l'abandon de cette thématique. Dans Alcools, ce qui ressort à la magie et à l'onirisme est moins enigmatique parce qu'Apollinaire s'y réclame d'une tradition respectable et connue, et parce qu'il y pose en principe une opposition entre les lois naturelles et les puissances surnaturelles. Or, ce qu'il appelle à l'époque d'Ondes "surnaturalisme" est une poétique et une présentation des choses qui nie le dualisme d'Alcools. Ce surnaturalisme-là postule l'abandon de l'interprétation symbolique ainsi que de l'attitude religieuse et de l'invasion de la mythologie sur lesquelles la vision d'Alcools est fondée. (325)

Of course, the dualism Renaud identifies in Alcools is finally (as we saw in "Les fiançailles") transcended in that work itself, it being a call for a poetry of full psychological engagement and immediacy (or "surnaturalisme" if you will) of which Calligrammes is a prototype. Alcools is a search for a method; Calligrammes is its pure practice.

In the opinion of many critics, indeed, starting with the Surrealists, whose opinions have tended to dominate in France itself, Apollinaire's practice is too "pure", being insufficiently political, and overly respectful of tradition. From our perspective, however, outside France and a generation or two removed from the official dissolution of Surrealism, it would seem that the Surrealists' denigration of Apollinaire (from whom they acquired the greater part of their
technique) was largely a classic case of Oedipal rebellion. We would be inclined to say, in fact, elaborating the argument of Marie-Louise Lentengre (98-99), that the Surrealists' "point suprême" is, like the Baudelairean "beau idéal" and the Symbolists' "Absolu", a merely epiphanic gesture in comparison to the more truly creative and engaged practice of Apollinaire that, relying on the instinct for amor and amicability more than on political-aesthetic dogma, itself determines what is true. In this respect Apollinaire again, like Nerval, is closer than most of his countrymen to the organic German tradition that conceives the world not in the divided terms of psyche versus substance, but rather as a dynamic and perpetually evolving unity. This is how I would interpret his statement in "L'Esprit nouveau et les Poètes" that speaks of "téléologie lyriques" (i.e., empirical verse) and "alchimies archilyriques" (a priori poetry) as together opening up the realm of analytic spirit. The sentence in its entirety is: "Les poètes enfin seront chargés de donner par les téléologies lyriques et les alchimies archilyriques un sens toujours plus pur à l'idée divine, qui est en nous si vivante et si vraie, qui est ce perpétuel renouvellement de nous-mêmes, cette création éternelle, cette poésie sans cesse renaissante dont nous vivons" (OPr 952). Of course, at the same time, submitting his own perceptions of truth to continual (Gallic) analysis, Apollinaire's shifts from one experimental style to another are very rapid. As he elsewhere writes, "on ne découvrira jamais la réalité une fois pour toutes. La vérité sera toujours nouvelle. Autrement, elle n'est qu'un système plus misérable que la nature" (cited in Little 100).

Calligrammes, then, is distinguished by a remarkable innovatory genius, to which Apollinaire himself refers in "Merveille de la Guerre" thus:
Je suis dans la tranchée de première ligne et cependant je suis partout
ou plutôt je commence à être partout
C'est moi qui commence cette chose des siècles à venir
Ce sera plus long à réaliser que non la fable d'Icare volant.

(272)

In a more extensive study than mine it might be interesting to examine each one of the poems of *Calligrammes* to determine wherein its newness lies; but given the physical limits of this chapter, a few sketches of Apollinaire's main patterns of innovation, that is, the picture-poem, and the "poème-conversation", with consideration of how successful these are in "realizing the formal diversity of his love", will -- along with a look at his beauty-oriented war lyrics, to see where these stray from his original project -- have to suffice.

At first approach, the most remarkable element in *Calligrammes* is the picture-poems that convey by their form alone a number of new understandings on the part of the poet and his readers. They graphically represent the full unbridling of the creative imagination in a linking of linguistic and visual realities that is, on the one hand, parallel to the historical development of the written character from pictograms, and on the other hand, the setting of word-ideas concerning the world into an appropriate context in the visual dimension (comparable to cubist and surrealist painters' incorporation of words in their pictures). No means of closing the gap between the world and the word, so Apollinaire implies in the calligramme, is to be neglected; the love that is the basis of his poetics requires continual nourishment and release through every communicative path.

When one considers how infrequent picture poems, or "technopaignia", have been in the history of poetry since their brief flourishing in Greek antiquity, when they were composed by
Dosidas and Simmias among others, (though, of course, their production by Rabelais and George Herbert is far from negligible), one wonders to what extent the suppression of punctuation in Apollinaire, comparable to the lack of punctuation in ancient Greek, may have contributed to his revival of the form. Michel Butor has perceptively remarked how the Apollinairean suppression of punctuation already gives his poems a more "cubist" character by presenting words in blocks or planes immediately related to the writing surface, without the organizing mediation of commas and periods (10). And by making the poetic text more polyvalent, this practice liberates readers to a certain extent, allowing them to fit the words together according to their own lights. There is, thus, from the reader's point of view, and necessarily from the writer's as well, a more accurate presentation of the multi-sided "dialogue" of people with their natural and self-created environment.

One may initially be inclined to concur with those critics who have depreciated the picture-poems as "amusing doodles" that, instead of bridging the gap between the verbal and the pictorial, "fall between two stools" (Little 38). But more considered judgement recognizes in these word-pictures the very archetype of graphic communication, emblem of a poet whose devotion to truth as a process of correction, and poetry as an all-encompassing creative communication, outweighs his concern for convention; and they are the shadows of the still greater, more complete, art that Apollinaire foresees as dominating in the future, particularly sound recordings and film:

Quant aux Calligrammes, ils sont une idéalisation de la poésie vers-librisme et une précision typographique à l'époque où la typographie termine brillamment sa carrière, à l'aurore des moyens nouveaux de réproduction que sont le cinéma et le phonographe. (letter to André Billy, cited in Butor 7)
The largest and perhaps most multi-layered of the picture poems in *Calligrammes* (apart from poems such as "Du Coton dans les Oreilles" which blend picturation and verse) is "Lettre-Océan", occupying three pages in the Pléiade edition (183-85). That its language is actively engaged in the world is plain from its conception as letters, cards and wireless telegraph messages (T.S.F.) between Apollinaire and his younger brother Albert, who moved to Mexico in 1913. And the inclusion of certain markings that would normally appear on this correspondence (post marks and stamps, as well as lines and letters already printed on post cards and telegrams) leads us quite naturally into the calligramme form, where, as on a postcard, words appear at various angles, and where the accompanying picture is as important as the text. Here the "pictures" of preeminent interest are the two circular matrices of words, the first occupying only half a page, the second the greater part of two pages.

Clearly one of the things, and I would say the chief thing, these forms represent is the radiant sun, which is Apollinaire's primary symbol for himself and his work. But, of course, these word-figures also represent the Eiffel Tower, since the phrases at the centre of the circles ("Sur la rive gauche devant le pont d'Iéna" and "Haute de 300 mètres") clearly refer to it. And it is not only the visible structure of the tower seen from above or below, that is represented, but also the telegraphic messages sent out in every direction of the compass. Indeed, Philippe Renaud notes how similar Apollinaire's patterns are to the standard Hertzian schematisation of radio waves (that had been popularized in the newspapers before 1914) (372). As well, the patterns may represent the city of Paris (with the Eiffel Tower at its centre) which the poet has, in accord with his
announcement in the lines immediately below the title -- "je la coupe en 2" -- cut into two separate planes, one at the level of the left bank of the Seine, one at the elevation of the tower's summit.

These standard interpretations of the pattern are far from exhaustive, however. When we consider, for example, that the Mexico City area is an ancient pyramid site, it seems likely that the two matrices correlate the Eiffel Tower and Aztec temples -- dominating edifices that "call" to each other across the Atlantic like these brothers who correspond by post: the smaller figure, from Mexico, being in sympathy with European-style religious-political matters ("Evviva il Papa", "A bas la calotte", "Vive la République", "Vive le Roy"), while the larger figure, from Paris, refers to America, and, more generally, to names and places outside the métropole ("rue St-Isidore à la Havane", "Chirimoya", "Pendeco", "l'Indien Hijo de la Cingada", "Chatou", "saint Luca ... à Poitiers").

Presumably, as well, the centres of the matrices (terrestrial or aerial) should be considered the sources of the utterances which seem to emanate from them, whether the voice is an individual's or the community's. Certainly the open angle formed by "ANOMO" and "ANORA", with "Bonjour" at its vertex, puts us in mind of such verbal projection, and perhaps of a megaphone, the horn of a gramophone, or the tower and pyramid in cross-section.

The larger of the figures, with its concentric rings, may represent, too, a sort of mandala with modern object-gods offered by technology taking the place of the pantheons of myth, although in the series "LES CHAUSSURES NEUVES DU POETE", "GRAMOPHONES", "AUTOBUS", "SIRENES" the last element punningly carries us again to the myth level. The
figure is a mandala of sound, however, as much as it is of vision -- because, from the "Hou ou ou" of the sirens, to the active phrases of speech at the outer edge, the "cré cré cré" of the poet going about his creative work in his noisy new shoes joins all sound together into a radiant quasi-solar unity. And naturally, too, the mandala form is amenable to primary psychological analysis as the union of masculine straight lines and feminine circles, accomplished within the "Océan" of letters, a sort of semiotic chora from which all meanings ultimately derive. As Pénélope Sacks-Galey has written of this poem:

La "Lettre" est vaste et débridée comme l’océan, elle participe de sa fluidité, elle la traverse aussi. Elle partage son mouvement sans repos et sa présence qui s’étend à l’infini. Il y a enfin un océan de lettres et de phrases dont les associations sont infinis et les lectures innombrables : la simultanéité pénètre dans les profondeurs du langage. (67)

None of the other picture-poems in Calligrammes is quite so complex as the "Lettre-Océan", and none so artfully represents the multiplicity of life and meaning in the world, or the simultaneity (referred to here by Sacks-Galey) that was one of the desiderata of modernist art generally, as it attempted to display and interact with the multiplex of experience.

Certainly, however, the sense of multiplicity and simultaneity conveyed in the picture-poems carries over to some extent to all the poems in the collection, all of them being, technically, "calligrammes" in its etymological sense of "beautiful letters". Only, of course, in the more traditional poems the artist's attention is not concentrated on iconic pictures, but on the linguistic signifiant-signifié correspondences grounded in our collective rhythmic and phono-semantic intuition -- i.e., the poet's accustomed medium. While certain critics have denied that Apollinaire's
more formally traditional poems can ever approach the simultaneity of the picture-poems, we should remember that, psychologically, the projection from the axis of combination into the atemporal axis of selection that constitutes poetry can bring the poetic work to a sort of simultaneity. Rhyme and metre, then, produce for us something simultaneous and multiplex that Apollinaire draws upon continually in his practice, and that he frequently, after the fashion of poets of every epoch, shifts to the level of theme; although, more than most of his predecessors, he recognizes that he himself creates his language, his persona, and the meaning of his environment: "Regardons nos mains / Qui sont.../... l'avenir" (300).

The poem "Merveille de la guerre", briefly quoted from above, perfectly demonstrates this more world-producing, praxis-oriented manner of the Calligrammes, in comparison to the poems of self-discovery (such as "Le Cortège" or "Les Fiançailles") of the earlier collection. The final two sections of this poem are particularly pertinent in that they directly treat the theme of multiplicity within temporal unity and provide a direct contrast to "Cortège":

Je lègue à l'avenir l'histoire de Guillaume Apollinaire
Qui fut à la guerre et sut être partout
Dans les villes heureuses de l'arrière
Dans tout le reste de l'univers
Dans ceux qui meurent en piétinant dans le barbelé
Dans les femmes dans les canons dans les chevaux
Au zénith au nadir aux 4 points cardinaux
Et dans l'unique ardeur de cette veillée d'armes

Et ce serait sans doute bien plus beau
Si je pouvais supposer que toutes ces choses dans lesquelles je suis partout
Pouvaient m'occuper aussi
Mais dans ce sens il n'y a rien de fait
In "Cortège" the poet knew others, and was constructed by them; here, however, the poet's thrust is more unidirectional -- the push of creation is exclusively outward-directed, for he has already completely matured as a poet, and now constructs his world rather than being constructed by it. And naturally, the various prosodic elements in the poem (anaphora, end-rhyme, etc.) serve to underpin the enunciated ego-based notion of unity in the multiplicity -- the most subtle of these perhaps being the end-rhyming of Apollinaire's own name with "villes de l'arrière" and "univers" -- and even, one might say, the transfer of the first phonemes of his name into the /g/ of "guerre" and the /i/ of "villes" (his given name being officially "Wilhelm").

"Merveille de la Guerre" is interesting, as well, as an example of Apollinaire's war poetry (which constitutes three quarters of Calligrammes). Treating the experience of war at the front lines, the poem is unavoidably active and engaged in the world -- engaged, however, on the super-historic level of imagination rather than on the patriotic level of other poems in the collection. The rocket-flares illuminating the night are perceived here as ballerinas or the hair of Bérénice, and the scene in its entirety is a fabulous cannibal feast, where the earth and sky consume men's bodies and souls. No doubt, in its exploration of war's grotesque attractiveness this work might be considered a prototype of surrealism, within that term's subsequent definition by Breton: "l'idée de surréalisme tend simplement à la récupération totale de notre force physique par un moyen qui n'est autre que la descente vertigineuse en nous, l'illumination systématique des lieux cachés et l'obscurcissement
progressif des autres lieux, la promenade perpétuelle en pleine zone interdite" (791). But in Apollinaire there is very little "vertigo"; in his writing both the illumination of hidden places and the descent into the self are quite systematic. He does engage in a certain amount of "psychic automatism" such as Breton recommends in the first Surrealist Manifesto (328), but this is so grounded in the community (rather than in the credo of a coterie) that he never simply rebels for rebellion's sake -- never, in the mad surrealist fashion, points his gun at the crowd and fires at random (Second Manifeste 783). Having triumphed over Oedipal revolt virtually from the beginning of his career (assisted in this, no doubt, by the fact that his father was unknown to him), Apollinaire was, in fact, the goal towards which the Surrealists were rather blindly struggling -- they too, in a sense, not knowing their "father"; although Breton did finally, in a speech at Yale University in 1942, acknowledge Apollinaire as "Le plus grand poète de ce siècle" (Lentengre 34).

Renaud has remarked how "Merveille de la Guerre", like the war poems generally, seems to lack dynamism, meaning, and a "destination" (442). Littered with "mais" and "cependant" it continually points to imperfections, short-circuits itself, turns against itself in its own sort of cannibal feast. But this, Renaud suggests, is not entirely detrimental to Apollinaire's project, since it forces him to become a more actively rhetorical independent voice. As Renaud articulates it,

"comme ce sens ne se lèvera pas de la lecture du poème, vu l'absence d'un "sens immanent", Apollinaire n'a d'autre recours que celui-ci : dès maintenant, prendre lui-même la parole, donner au poète rhétoricien l'initiative que ne peut avoir le poème ; affirmer, tout en sachant qu'elle n'est qu'un masque, la réalité d'un Moi auquel il s'accroche... (443)

It seems to me, however, that it is not the poem that lacks an immanent meaning here, but
rather the situation of the world, and of the trenches in particular. Apollinaire, in his imagination, is quite prepared to lend the scene all that is required to make it aesthetically complete, short of lying about his own very solitary status as a creator in the destructive environment of war. Considering the rocket-flares lighting up the sky he writes,

Comme c'est beau toutes ces fusées
Mais ce serait bien plus beau s'il y en avait plus encore
S'il y en avait des millions qui auraient un sens complet
et relatif comme les lettres d'un livre

This is the situation precisely. The poem ("les lettres d'un livre") has a complete (and relative) meaning; it's the environment that is problematic and inadequate. The reference to Balthazar's feast seven lines further on is illuminating in this respect, too ("La terre a faim et voici son festin de Balthasar cannibal"); for the poet here takes the place of the hand of God, as it were, writing on the wall "Mene mene tekel u-pharsin": you have been found wanting, your kingdom will be divided. The territorial division imposed in this case is in the realm of being, a division between reality and imagination, and more particularly, between the earth and the sky. The earth, which hungrily swallows up bodies, is the zone of love as belonging, relatively dark, Germanic and female; the sky, consuming only souls (though Apollinaire would prefer that it feast on bodies too), is the bright, Gallic, and male zone of desire. If the world could somehow achieve wholeness, the a priori Erde merging with esprit (as in English?), the intellectual sky with the body, there would be a festival indeed, rather than Frenchmen and Germans merely firing shells at each other. Apollinaire himself has achieved such a merger, being in body and soul throughout the universe, at once sympathetic and vivifying; but after the final pronouncement of the refrain, "Et ce serait sans
doute bien plus beau", he indicates that he is basically alone for the time being in his prophetic vision of a union of existence and the ideal, of (Germanic) belonging and (Gallic) desire.

We might consider the poem "Désir" (263) within the same interpretive framework, that is, as a desire for unification that can only, at this point in history, be imagined. The poet's spiritual desire is focused especially on possession of the Butte du Mesnil, presently in the hands of the Germans who seem virtually rooted in the ground there: "Trop enfoncés sous terre déjà enterrés". And since the Germans have named the trenches in this piece of earth after Goethe and Nietzsche, there is some association made between German thought and the German possession of territory:

Je désir
Te serrer dans ma main Main des Massiges
Si décharnée sur la carte
Le boyau Goethe où j'ai tiré
J'ai tiré même sur le boyau Nietzsche
Décidément je ne respecte aucune gloire
Nuit violente et violette et sombre et pleine d'or par moments
Nuits des hommes seulement

Since these are the only modern writers apart from Apollinaire himself who are mentioned in Calligrammes as a whole (though the 13th-century Persian poet Saadi is referred to in "Fête", Aretino in "A l'Italie", and various other writers in the dedications), it would seem that Apollinaire is bringing them into his outline of a Kulturkampf (cf. "A l'Italie"). As in "Merveille de la Guerre", however, it is not simply Gallic desire and Germanic possession that is at the root of the struggle, but sexual tension as well, for the scene is a "Nuit des hommes seulement"; necessarily an all-male combat, perhaps, insofar as soldiering is attached to the traditional (presumably instinctual)
masculine role of territorial defense; to struggles for dominance that demonstrate virility; and, on a still deeper level, to the craving for an absolute in love that finds its correlative in death sacrifice -- what Apollinaire himself calls "l'idée du sacrifice de mon sang ... qu'exige la perfection paradisiaque de notre amour" (cited in Debon 119).

In the poem immediately following "Désir", "Chant de l'Horizon en Champagne" (265), this character of war as erotic extension or substitute is overtly recognized in the song of a young soldier:

Tandis que nous n'y sommes pas  
Que de filles deviennent belles  
Voici l'hiver et pas à pas  
Leur beauté s'éloignera d'elles

O Lueurs soudaines des tirs  
Cette beauté que j'imagine  
Faute d'avoir des souvenirs  
Tire de vous son origine

Car elle n'est rien que l'ardeur  
De la bataille violente  
Et de la terrible lueur  
Il s'est fait une muse ardente

The frame for these verses is, suitably, the song of the horizon, that place where earth and sky, feminine and masculine, desire and the present world, come together, and in the perspective of which (as in the "horizon" in hermeneutic dialogue) one is presented a situation in its entirety.

Arguably then it is, in the war poetry, not so much love as the mere notion of love, a substitution, that drives the writing; and such a motivation through love's mere notion, as we saw in our examination of "Les Fiançailles", is a mark of decadence. The war poetry is a valiant
attempt to keep the spirits raised, but ultimately something of a falsification or "covering up" that gradually destroys our poet. Tired of the war and having become stoic to the point of considering Vigny's Servitude et Grandeur militaires "peut-être le chef d'oeuvre de la littérature française du 19e siècle" (!) (cited in Debon 120), Apollinaire even asserts, in his "Chant de l'Honneur", that it is a stiff aestheticism, rather than love, that propels the war poet:

Le Christ n'est donc venu qu'en vain parmi les hommes
Si des fleuves de sang limitent les royaumes
Et même de l'Amour on sait la cruauté
C'est pourquoi faut au moins penser à la Beauté
Seule chose ici-bas qui jamais n'est mauvaise
Elle porte cent noms dans la langue française
Grâce Vertu Courage Honneur et ce n'est là
Que la même Beauté (305)

Concentrating too much on love as desire imposed by separation (correlative to the French view of the world), and, indeed, trumpeting the superiority of that French view at the expense of the German one that had always given his poetry its necessary balance, Apollinaire had lost his way as a poet, and strayed from the avowed intention of the Calligrammes, as announced in the prefatory "Liens" (167), to link the nations of Europe through a poetry grounded in a priori sensation:

Cordes faites de cris

Sons de cloches à travers l'Europe
Siècles pendus

Rails qui ligotez les nations
Nous ne sommes que deux ou trois hommes
Libres de tous liens
Donnons-nous la main
In pre-war days, then, when "Liens" was composed, Apollinaire was making a more conscious effort to reach beyond his Gallic desire and sentimentality to a primary sense level where love is simply being/belonging. With the war, unfortunately, the trans-cultural bridge was somewhat retracted and set up again as a Tower of Babel. And it was not only the bridge to Germany, of course, that was affected, but also to women, for his direct contact with Lou and Madeleine (and to normal civilian life generally) was severely curtailed while he was engaged in the fighting. Thus, having revealed the way to a love-based expression more fully engaged in the community, Apollinaire engaged himself in the French army, not consciously realizing (because his manner was more bardic than intellectual) the degree to which that social engagement must be
transnational.

One mitigating feature of the patriotic fervour in "Chant de l'Honneur", at least, is that it is framed and distanced a little by being composed in a choric form, where "the poet" is not exactly Apollinaire, but rather one (albeit the principal) voice, separated off from the voices of the trenches, the bullets, and France. And it is agreeable, as well, to remark that in the last two poems of the collection, written when Apollinaire was essentially back in civilian life (if still in the army's employ), he returns to his original project of seeking "un nouveau langage / Auquel le grammairien d'aucune langue n'aura rien à dire" ("La Victoire" 310), and that he again pursues "la Raison ardente" in the form of love for a real woman, Jacqueline Kolb ("La Jolie Rousse" 313). In this poetry Apollinaire's engagement once again operates on the analytic level of imagination (as in "Lettre-Océan"), rather than on the more empirical and political level of his patriotic poems, that are devoted to semi-instinctive community involvement without the analytic mind's awareness of subconscious displacements and substitutions.

Besides the "analytic" and "empirical" poems in Calligrammes, however, there are also several "poèmes-conversation" that must be considered to be primarily "a priori"; and, before concluding, we should consider one or two of these. The most famous is "Lundi rue Christine" (180), which sounds like a sequence of snippets from conversations in a brasserie, and, as Jacques Dyssord revealed in the Chronique de Paris (no.1, Nov. 1943), is in fact derived from a café meeting of Dyssord with Apollinaire and another friend, Madsen, towards the end of 1913, the night before Dyssord himself left for Tunisia.
While one would certainly tire of this technique if it were overused (as in the pub scene in *Ulysses*), its occasional implementation throughout *Calligrammes* serves as a reminder of the a priori ground of phrasal communication from which all poetry ultimately derives, a reminder that poetry is all about us in a primitive form, and we need only put ourselves in the right receptive attitude to perceive it as such. Of course, Apollinaire himself has exercised his discretion in selecting the phrases for this poetic ready-made, from the implicit intrigue of the criminals' talk at the beginning, to the opening out onto the world through travel at the end — and, at the very end, the enigmatic "L'Honneur tient souvent à l'heure que marque la pendule / La quinte major" that suggests one must look at all language (including the word "l'Honneur") as multiply-layered. Here the phrase "la quinte major" by itself represents the time of day (hence the poem as sequence), the "major fifth" in musical harmony (hence the poem as sound), the "royal flush" in poker (hence the poem as success in a game of symbolic representation), the colloquial "slap on the face" (hence the poem as action in the world), a slang term for syphilis (hence the poem as subject to the world and mortality), and finally, as Hans Robert Jauss has pointed out (53), *quinta major* recalls Maundy Thursday, the fifth day of Holy Week in the *Missa Romanum*, the evening of the Last Supper (and hence the poem as transformation of the profane into sacred ritual).

No other "poème-conversation" in *Calligrammes* is so uniformly constructed as "Lundi rue Christine"; most simply employ elements of that "a priori" style, along with elements of other poem types. "Du Coton dans les Oreilles" (287) is an example of such a mixed form, being apparently partly constructed from overheard phrases, but also incorporating picture-poetry and
verse to create a rather frenzied jumble of phrases and thoughts punctuated especially by the incessant refrain of someone shouting into a telephone (presumably a military field-telephone) "ALLO LA TRUIE" -- Hello, Sow! This poem is so full of empty and confused vociferation that Apollinaire even includes some "punctuation" (an exclamation and a question mark) in the first "iconic" section. In this first section, indeed, it would seem that everything refers to language as an explosive instrument, like the weapons of the artillery: "Tant d'explosifs sur le point VIF!", "Ton troupeau féroce crache le feu OMEGAPHONE" -- fire, in the second of these sentences, representing energized language, that takes us to the limits of communication, to "omega".

The "cotton in the ears" of the title is significant as the insulation from real communication in wartime (or in frenetic modern life generally), and leads to the rather comical shouts to make oneself heard, and the equally comical sequences of rhymes that make little sense (resembling what is "heard", rather than actually said, when hearing is difficult), as in,

La baleine a d'autres fanons  
Eclatements qui nous fanons  

Mais mets du coton dans tes oreilles  
Evidemment les fanions  
Des signaleurs  
Allô la truie  

(289)

How do the whale and its bones (fanons) fit in here? Are we ourselves the explosion that fades (fanons)? Or, in the midst of loud noise, with cotton in our ears, is our only communication the signalmen's flags (fanions)?

Such paronomastic word-drift carries over to all of the language in the first two-thirds of
the poem (probably, for example, the telephone operator is not really shouting "Hello, Sow!") --
and carries over even into the framed name of the artillerymen's shelter "LES CENOBIITES
TRANQUILLES", where the morpheme "ceno-" not only has the sense of the Greek "koinos"
(common) of "cenobites" (common life), but also the sense of "kenos" (empty) as in cenotaph
(hence here "empty life"), or even the sense of "new" as in Cenozoic (hence here "new or modern
life").

The last third of the poem, however, beginning with "Ecoute s'il pleut écoute s'il pleut"
and the accompanying picture-poem, is set amidst virtual silence, "le silence insigne", where every
word is quite clear (except, perhaps, for "Les éléphants des pare-éclats"). The sound of falling rain
is associated with another order of life entirely, that of nature, which can comfort the agonized
blind soldier, victim of the modern frenzy.

Too often Apollinaire is, as a result of his desire to be altogether pertinent to the modern
world, an uncritical supporter of all technological innovation, and it is refreshing to note that he
does, at least occasionally, give anti-technological views some attention in his continuous
dialogical process. In initiating the 20th century poetic renaissance that has united nature and
science, the organic and the mechanical, the a priori and the empirical, into analytic spirit, it was
important that he not disparage the first term in each of these pairs, just because it did not fit so
naturally into the French world view as the second term. Being too often led during the War more
by patriotic conventions than by a genuinely analytic spirit, his writing tended to stray away from
the ideal of truth as continual renewal grounded in love -- a love that is not simply desire for the
new, such as he overpraises in "L'Esprit nouveau et les Poètes" (of 1917), but is also repossession of the past.

Because the a priori in Apollinaire is manifested at the phrase level rather than at the level of the lexeme, his writing is very sensitive to contemporary "news", and perhaps too susceptible to distortion by the popular view of events -- though, at the same time, this engagement with the world lends his lyrical and personal poems their bardic charm, so that they are still quoted by heart in France, alongside Villon and Verlaine. One has a strong sense, in fact, that Apollinaire actively and consciously pursues this populist spirit, in a manner similar to that of the German Romantics a century earlier; but his work, of course, also incorporates the mechanistic, the futurist, and the abstractly international. The result is a sort of "contextualism" based on eternal surprise, where the unexpected ranges across all of human experience. And frequently his poetry is intellectualized even to the point of recognizing this, although in his alternation between boasting and self-pity the theoretical is generally swallowed up again in active emotion.

His art may well be criticized for being too loose a collection of opinions, pieces of myth and suggestive metalepsis -- the work of a "brocanteur", in the estimation of Georges Duhamel in an early review of Alcools. But we can more productively interpret this looseness as an effort to break through the French tendency continually to specify, and a move towards a more complete poetry, beyond forms of rationalism. In most of his poetic output -- even in a significant number of the war lyrics -- Apollinaire does manage (thanks in large part, no doubt, to his mixed background and his year in the Rhine country) to write from a core of love that fuses desire and belonging, and
consequently engages the world and the reader in continual creation. The offspring of the marriage of a contemplative Gallic poetry of aesthetic separation and a Germanic primary awareness, Apollinaire's best work aims for rhetorical connection to the world beyond boundaries of gender, nation and class. And thus it is exemplary not only for writers, who have learned from it how to create poetry pertinent to our industrial, multimedia world, but also for readers generally, who have seen in this poetry how life and language are to be transformed via the development of a more alert, broad-based perpectivity, no matter what one's actual mode of social involvement.
Endnotes

1. This categorization may also be compared to W.K. Wimsatt's in *The Verbal Icon* (49), which distinguishes the three poles of literary theory thus: the emotive, as implemented by I.A. Richards; the mimetic, as exemplified in Aristotle; and the expressionistic and linguistic, exemplified by Croce. Compare also Julia Kristeva's categorization of "discours" into contemplation, narrative and metalanguage.

2. *cf.* my own article, "Linguistic Relativity in French, English and German Philosophy", *Philosophy Today*, Summer 1996, for a fuller discussion of this theory.


5. Faith, hope, and charity: another Hegelian triad?

6. One might profitably compare these variations in a sound's suggestiveness, depending on changes of phonetic context, to Seurat's colour contrast experiments.

7. Of course, Kristeva herself, at least at the time of her writing *La Révolution du langage poétique*, is far from being skeptical in relation to Marxist economic and political theory.

8. Published originally in *Poésie* 41, no.3, Feb.-Mar.1941, and subsequently figuring as an appendix in the remarkable preface to his *Anthologie de la Poésie Française*.

9. Heidegger, in fact, considers form and content "the most hackneyed concepts under which anything and everything may be subsumed" (*Basic Writings* 153).
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