How to read religious poems anthropoetically (using examples from Gerard Manley Hopkins and Kobayashi Issa)

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I have my own hedgehog, namely, the analysis of the linguistic Statement that I have accepted as the most likely, that of a succession of linguists, sociologists, philosophers and literary theorists. Let me list just a few to show you how varied, how interdisciplinary it is: Giambattista Vico, Ludwig Feuerbach, Alexander Bryan Johnson, Augustus De Morgan, William James, Josiah Royce, Fritz Mauthner, Wilhelm Dilthey, Alfred Schutz, George Herbert Mead, Roy Wood Sellars, Sir Alan Gardiner, Mikhail Bakhtin, C. I. Lewis, F. C. S. Schiller, George Herbert Mead, Theodor Adorno, Gregory Bateson, Cornelius Castoriadis, Paul Ricoeur, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Ragnar Rommetveit, Herbert Blumer, Harold Garfinkel, Aaron V. Cicourel, Erving Goffman, Ernst von Glasersfeld, Richard H. Brown, Randall Collins, John Shotter, Siegfried J. Schmidt, Humberto Maturana and Francisco J. Varela. So, briefly, what is the *Erinaceus europaeus*, the Common Hedgehog, the analysis which they all recommend?

Initially I might take William James's dictum that 'we all trade on each other's truth' (James, 1967, 433), a homely enough metaphor but one which goes to the heart of the linguistic enterprise. 'To trade on' sums up one essential in the interaction of a market, that there is an exchange in which, ideally, differing values, one of goods and one of money, allow both participants to feel that they have gained — hopefully a bargain for both, as we call it. Recall the common habit of shaking hands over a bargain as if a balance, an equivalence, has been achieved? We are all well aware that there are common exceptions to this ideal — the buyer might think that the commodity is not up to the standard expected, and the seller might think that too low a price was arrived at, but the mutual hope is that each feels satisfied: a strange ambiguity is tolerated as if there were no such thing, for how can both take away the sense that their desires were achieved and their loss cancelled by the same act?

It is no surprise that language is like money, in that its symbols can vary in value according to the way the bargains are going. Just as on Wall Street the value of the Dollar goes up and down depending on what bargains were enacted, so too the accepted meaning of our words

are adjusted by their use day by day, in what we ought to call an evolution of meaning. That language has evolved is generally recognized: what is not is that the principle of language itself — and thus of the human — is essentially *evolutionary*.

Evolution has a particular similarity to a game. Two members of the same species face an environmental challenge, apparently the same challenge to both of them — but it wasn't, for one of them could meet the challenge while the other could not, and thus survived. Note again how this is parallel to a bargain or a joke or a story or a game. This is the key resemblance between language and a game (as was noted before, this is what Wittgenstein missed when he called language a game: there is more than a 'family resemblance' across languages). *The resolution of ambiguity by perceiving something newly relevant is the tonic essence of a game*. The position, velocity, and direction of a ball may be seen by many among the spectators, and hopefully by the striker of the ball, to constitute the certain winner of a point (equivalent to the initial tentative agreement), but the defender perceives something newly relevant, namely, a weakness in the ball's speed and line of motion— just as a contestant in judo can use the very momentum of his opponent's attack to upset its balance. Wittgenstein should have called the essence of language, *play*.

It should be no surprise then that the evolutionary nature of language is disguised from us since the course of every informative statement that succeeds goes from an imagined agreement through a gestalt-switch to a newly adjusted imagined agreement. A mutual agreement thus begins and ends the Statement, although the one at the beginning is not the same as that at the end. Easy to miss this. The evolution has been successfully performed (we hope) so why should we trouble our minds with how it was done?

I shall save time here by not producing an actual example (my favoured one, about the silhouette of some leaves being seen as a bird can be read in my *Anthropoetics* article of 2008 on Gregory Bateson, paragraph 6). Bateson quotes the lines from Tennyson's 'Morte D'Arthur' (Bateson,1980; 223):

> The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

a quotation that seems to disengage 'God' from the idea of an eternal logical order, but here we can rather see that order as what must be mutually *postulated* but not *believed*. At the beginning of a would-be informative statement, Speaker and Hearer collude in a reference being the same for both of them: this is to enable the Speaker to update the Hearer so that he or she now has a new perspective on the region of existence, of the Real, in question (a question, after all, is an expression of a wish to be updated about the Real). I usually quote the sociologist Alfred Schutz, who has the useful phrase for the initial step in a statement, 'the Idealization of Reciprocity', but, having quoted one ally, William James, I now move to

another, the psycholinguist Ragnar Rommetveit.

He is known for having scientifically demonstrated that no one has the same set of criteria as someone else for the application of a word (Rommetveit, 1974, Ch. 4). He describes the initial, strictly false, hypothesis of mutual agreement — that is, what it is that allows Speaker and Hearer to get a rough superimposition of their differing takes on the region of the Real in question — in the following way: 'We take a *perfect* intersubjectivity for granted in order to achieve a *partial* one' (Rommetveit, 1978, 31), one in which the practical outcomes appear to confirm both sets of expectations. My own way of describing this trick has been to say 'It is by a PRETENCE of *complete* success that we *partially* capture the REAL' (Wright, 1978, 538). Notice the near-paradoxical clash in what Rommetveit says, that we have to take something for granted that we should both know perfectly well is not the case!

Not so difficult to do as you might expect, for it is what all of us do when we read a story, watch a film, use a trope (e.g. a 'header' in football) or act in a play. Someone who can't do this isn't acting. On TV recently I saw a little girl who was exceedingly annoyed with her father: he was supposed to be acting the Big Bad Wolf, but he was giggling! The Child is Father of the Man. Good actors don't let their acting slip: *they pretend seriously.*

Notice that it provides one likely assessment of the Parmenides- Heraclitus controversy (that emerged later as the Plato-Aristotle one). Parmenides gives pride of place to the taken-for-granted agreement in reference that founds the Statement, as do all later 'conservatives'. In Parmenides' metaphysics, existence was a system of entities that endured without any change. It appears to him and his like as authorizing the objective view of the world, giving priority to established law and obedience, and thus keeping anarchy at bay. It is an attitude that seems to guarantee simultaneously the certainty of knowledge and the order of society, and thus is a turning of the hypothesized agreement (necessary for an informative statement to be set under way) into a literal fact. They were taking a myth *we have to play to talk at all* as something we have to believe literally, a conclusion which is frankly superstitious. One could say that they were disinclined *to play* the language-game because of the risk to identity, plus their unconscious ignoring of the ever-present dangers — and unexpected benefits! — that the Real can suddenly present us with. Their disinclination is a refusal to evolve.

On the other hand, Heraclitus's well-known adage that 'you never step into the same river twice' draws attention to the Statement in its evolutionary phase; that the Speaker, hopefully, updates the Hearer in the predication part of the Statement — to match Schutz's formulation, one has to add that *two people never step at the same time into the same river,* otherwise the Speaker could never update the Hearer. Some later 'liberals', thus, conversely, see themselves as having the priority because they are correcting what they view as highhanded, out-dated, authoritarian. The trap they can fall into matches that of the

Parmenideans in taking their part of the speech-process to its extreme, thus rejecting, not only all that has been so far established, but also the fundamental ethical bond implicit in engaging with a speech partner. The Right and the Left have *to play* together: it is best to accept that democratic parliaments must therefore never lose their theatrical character. The Tyrant and the Revolutionary are both obdurately serious. That 'seriousness' is traceable to an inner fear of the Real, both outside and inside them.

One recalls that old rhyme about what a bride has to wear: 'Something old, something new' — Apply it to Rommetveit's dictum: the 'perfect intersubjectivity' that we adopt, the completely agreed logical 'Subject' of the Statement, is the 'old', what has so far been taken for granted as its referent; the 'partial intersubjectivity' is what the logical 'Predicate' of the Statement achieves, that which updates our understanding of 'the' referent, a 'new' choice from the Real. So every informative statement has to have 'Something old, something new'; ideally, the old brings the Speaker's and the Hearer's perspectives into a rough overlap, the new tweaks the Hearer's perspective to align it with the Speaker's. No wonder the wedding jingle put old and new together: it is what the husband and wife will discover about each other and themselves!

One can also notice here that this is the hidden ground of Karl Popper's proposal that science advances best by falsification (Popper, 1999); *falsifiability* became the test of a good hypothesis. Rommetveit's analysis of the Statement makes every attempt to inform someone a rendering doubtful of the received wisdom, which is a democratic, as well as a (hopefully) evolutionary, use of language. Popper, who did take an evolutionary view, was indirectly drawing attention to what all informative communication, the essential criterion of the human, consists of. We 'falsify' in each successful statement. We enter into a riddle; riddles are solved when a shift of context transforms a core ambiguity, which is precisely the game-play of language.

Worth adding here that this makes the actual grammar of our speech in actual use is much more fluid than has been assumed. The early 20th century logician, John Cook Wilson, made a clear distinction between the *logical* and *grammatical* features of a sentence. He illustrated his point effectively by pointing out that the substantial meaning of a sentence in use, that is, an actual statement, depended on the *question* in the mind of the Hearer, whether openly expressed or not or even not in mind at all. For example, let us suppose that before the informative statement 'The cat is on the mat' by a Speaker, the Hearer had asked (1) 'Where is the cat?' Then the new information is contained in the words 'is on the mat', which makes 'The cat' both the logical and the grammatical subject of the sentence, and 'is on the mat' both the logical and the grammatical predicate (Wilson, 1926, 123-6). But suppose that the Hearer had asked (2) 'What is on the mat?' In that case the new information is contained in the words 'The cat', with the result that the *logical* subject is now 'is on the mat', and the *logical* predicate is 'The cat' (while the grammatical subject and predicate remain as before, *grammatical* subject 'The cat', and *grammatical* predicate 'is on

the mat'.) Note that the very intonation of the Speaker's answer would differ in answering question 2, for, instead of the stress being on 'is on the mat', it would be upon the informing words 'The cat'. So the whereabouts of the update in a statement does not necessarily match the grammatical predicate. We can add to Cook Wilson's insight the fact that the speaker may have no idea what question is in the mind of the hearer (because, if you think about it, even with this simplest of sentences more questions are possible), so meanings are not bound to ideas believed to be beyond question. It is more evidence that Schutz's Idealization of Reciprocity cannot but be an unreal idealization, a faith-supported mutual act of play.

This analysis of the Statement leads to a defensible account of the origin of language (see my earlier article in this journal on Gregory Bateson, Wright 2008). The fact that a wish to inquire into the origin of language used to be regarded in linguistics as naïve, even cranky, is further evidence of the prejudicial fear mentioned above. At the same time the analysis (Wright, 2005, ch. 5) offers a novel view of logic, rhetoric and grammar, giving an explanation of the Synchronic/Diachronic distinction, of the nature of the Joke, the Riddle, the Story and the Trope, advances in science (see Thomas Kuhn, 1962), and such logical conundrums as the Ship of Theseus and the Cretan Liar.

Music falls within its scope: every succeeding bar is together a repetition of what preceded it and a possible transformation of it; the melodic pattern of repetition and transformation can extend over the form of many bars. The brain is only exercising the same performance it employs in language. No wonder music has been found by educational psychologists — and Daniel Barenboim — to facilitate education, a fact that the M'Choakumchilds with their insistence on the *certain* memorizing of facts, have not woken up to. And look at the extraordinary transformation in people's lives that, in Britain, Gareth Malone has produced in his choirs, matched by the achievement of the choirmaster Yutaka Sugino in Sapporo in Japan.

If the linguistic agreement that is required to initiate a statement (though not necessarily to begin one) is in the nature of a strictly false mutual hypothesis, we cannot logically count on our *entire* understanding of our partner in dialogue. This raises a key question: if one is supposed to be taking into account all the motivations of our partner in language, there can be no guarantee, either for the promiser or the promisee that subsequent happenings may bring something quite unexpected to light. This is why, in language, *blind trust is utterly inadequate as an ethical stance*: it amounts to an ignoring of the responsibility which is of the essence in speech. To insist on a final truth in one's personal initial understanding of the linguistic agreement is to betray your partner in language, for it assumes that any unexpected sacrifice can only be the partner's burden. There is a narcissism in this that can be hidden from speakers and hearers. There are possible outcomes that may be beyond the implicit, for neither of you may have known that a responsibility to sacrifice something may emerge that is a demand upon you or them or both of you or members of your family or

society. You may have hoped that all eventualities had been *mutually* foreseen, but there is nothing in the original 'taking-for-granted' that could have taken account of everything that might happen. If it could, there would be no point at which evolution could enter. Schutz, who used the homely metonym 'standing in someone else's shoes' for the Idealization of Reciprocity, should have warned against the narcissistic implications if it was taken to mean an exact match of understandings.

This is why *love trumps trust*, why those who have meditated upon faith, including many a person within a religion, have refused to remove the presence of risk from faith. However, in everyday life we have come by force of habit to accept what are, in the last analysis, only differing hypotheses being seen as a single truth. The psychologist Richard Gregory argued that all of our percepts have the character of hypotheses (Gregory, 1997), a claim that has been ignored because it is thought to be on the slippery slope to solipsism. The flows of the real do seem to countenance so many of our collaborative guesses for most of the time, but it will be recognised, from the structure of the compact between speaking partners, that the inescapable mismatch never goes away. We can here take Ernst von Glasersfeld's comment as relevant, that 'all our percepts are [only] viable' (1984, 25), in that many have served us reasonably well. That viability includes, not only all the reassuring furniture of so-called 'reality' that we have surrounded our-'selves' with, but also that our own intimate notion of our-'selves'. However, being only 'viable', that reassurance is no guarantee of a final 'objectivity' in those hypothetical sortings from the indubitable Real that we call 'entities', and that is why, to evolve is to keep up with the flowing convolutions of the Real.

If we say 'an entity', the etymology of the two words gives us 'one existent', which can be interpreted to mean *one part or portion of what exists* ('an' meaning *one*, and 'en' meaning *being*). Its singularity is an achievement of human collaboration, marking the matching of two or more sensings in different bodies that have enabled human beings to bring their actions into providing *sufficient* co-operation to achieve what is judged to be a '*common*' task. All one can say is that the Real frequently tolerates our measurings and objectifications, but we have no final certainty because every measurement and objectification is the result of a human settlement between two or more observers, them-'selves' subject to the inescapable method, plus the fact that evolution could not keep up with the flows in the Real if we could not continually readjust.

What is of relevance here to the reading of a religious poem is that the initial act of agreement required for speech has commonly led to a tempting misconstrual of its function, similar to that of Parmenides. Recall what its function is: namely, to bring two differing selections from the real into enough of an overlap to permit an action to be carried out by the speech partners together to their current motivational satisfaction. This habitual mindset in both partners has implications beyond their immediate concern; there is an unavoidable sense of extending the presupposed common purpose into the future, towards a horizon of indefinite reach. This was dealt with at length in the article in *Anthropoetics* cited

earlier (2008), using an insight of Joel Feinberg's: that, whatever the purpose of an act, one can always for a further purpose that underlies it: thus 'to idealize one's reciprocity', to use Schutz's terminology, is implicitly to envisage a culminating point at which all motivations converge, a *summum bonum*. No wonder that the metaphor used for the completion of logical and mathematical equations is 'satisfied'.

Language is *taken to be* evolving towards a final match to the world, a virtual state of omniscience for all, the True and the Good forever synonymous — which as you will readily see, involves a paradox, for, if all were in a state of omniscience there would be no point in speaking as no one would need any updating! All the countless human acts that have brought languages to their present state, and what are referred to by them, whether particular things, persons, selves or qualities, seem to be the creations of an all-powerful god. Since those myriad collaborations arrived at what use they have by incessant test and adjustment, they have gathered to themselves an habitual respect, strengthened by the awe that inevitably attended nature, considering its power over us. Those collaborations have settled into a reassuring shell of so-called 'reality', what the philosopher Edmund Husserl called the 'Lifeworld', held tentatively, experimentally, over the Real underneath it. It, nevertheless, as well as awe just spoken of, bears the mark of the efforts of our ancestors, especially *the fossil strength of the faith that created and sustained it*.

As I mentioned before, blind trust cannot be to the satisfactory ethical basis of the initial agreement, only a faith that does not rule out unexpected sacrifice for others, nor the possibility of a radical reshaping of one's own identity (see Charles Dickens's Pip as one who was prepared to accept such a reshaping). What we customarily call 'truth' and 'sincerity', in spite of their impossibility, have accrued the aura of sacredness that really derives from *the acceptance of the risk in faith*. Don't we expect in games people to be good losers? One really is a 'loser' in the sense given it in the metaphor of the current vernacular if one cannot have the courage to face the chance of literally being one, that is, *a fortiori* in the language-game? Since language can been taken to be the defining mark of the human, it should be no surprise that the act of *play* that is an essential part of a statement is a part of the key foundation of its grandeur. It is similar to the aura of imaginary authority that surrounds a monarch of the powerless, symbolic, kind. It can be said to be the ground of the Christian emphasis on sacrifice and on loving one's enemy, strong reasons for the resilience of the creed throughout history.

But there is an unfortunate paradox here. This very aura is owing to the acts of genuine faith that have characterized the origin and continuance of the language in use, as well as to the acts of imagination that were essentially interfused with them. There are two misconstructions which prevent this aura from being seen for what it is, that induce a slide from authentic play.

Firstly, there arises *a suspicion of the fictive* in the words of one's language partners, for the

latter's interpretations did not (and could not) perfectly match one's own. This can become sensed as betrayal. Think of those religious sects that banish fiction on the ground that stories are lies.

Those philosophers who hold to Direct Realism are sadly in the same boat. When a philosophy professor of the analytic persuasion, Robert Kirk, said to me, "You're not going to tell me that that is not the sun up there!", I replied, "All you are doing is *exhorting me to share the basic, poetic trust of language with you*, and I will, for unless we treated our *co*-reference as a perfectly singular reference, I could never update you about the Real, such as now by saying that, strictly speaking, that bright disc of light is not the sun, for the actual sun is invisible some degrees further down the sky!" The Direct Realist at this point will set about an argument for showing how objectivity can be pursued back through time, and I could do the same with the theory of language of this article, but that is not primarily why I have quoted Professor Kirk here. I would rather you noticed how he began his attack with the words "You're not going to *tell* me . . ." That is a frank prohibition of my speaking at all, that I can have nothing *telling* to say, that I am forbidden to update him with something that could transform his notion of 'the sun'. I regard this as a performative self-contradiction, in that, in the middle of speech he is denying both me and *himself* the dialogic right to try to alter another's understanding of a region of the Real, in this case human dialogue.

Secondly, and out of sight, there lurks *a shaken sense of identity*, strongly coupled with a weakening of communal feeling, that goes along with that suspicion. It is as if the risk in the faith needful in the language-game, a risk indeed to the current version of one's identity, a risk that is a real and inescapable source of concern *within the game*, is misapprehended as a threat from others *from without*. No wonder autocrats busily stir up fear of the foreigner, declare that the nation must build walls against them, for it encourages the idea that they alone, the *Führers*, speak 'the truth', and can thus protect them. Sacrifice becomes only a service to them.

One strength as a religion that Christianity does possess is its emphasis on *sacrifice*, as notably evidenced by its central symbol, that of the Cross. Yet what is curious is that the Church has asked us to take it as to represent Christ suffering for our sins, so that our guilt, in not obeying the dictates of the Church, can be foregrounded — and ultimately assuaged by our future obedience. This is a clever rhetorical ploy in that it leaves the 'commandments', the authority's laws, its program, as outside criticism. As a child brought up on the Roman Catholic Church, I never understood why Christ's 'suffering for our sins' resulted in our being forgiven by God; it was as if Christ were suffering on the Cross outside our prison knowing that we prisoners would be released by God the Father when he had suffered enough. A further disturbing implication was that every sin of our own made Christ suffer. My mother, whose religious commitment was all the stronger for her being a convert, would always talk of 'each of us bearing our own cross'. In my child's mind that didn't seem to fit with Christ redeeming us, his 'taking away the sins of the world'. Of course, we were

never allowed to think that the 'sin' might be that of the god himself in asking too much of bodies, an 'original sin', not of ours, but of the program. Bodies, after all, differ from computers in that (1) they have the ability to change the program; (2) are that for which the program exists; and (3) can change the mode in which they them-'selves' and 'selves' of others are mutually to be defined. The third, notice, rules out the possibility of solipsism as implicit in this argument.

If you are within the Church as a priest, the commandments are naturally believed by its members to apply with especial force. Gerard Manley Hopkins, a convert himself, was, as a Jesuit priest, deeply committed to Catholicism, and thereby had to accept the rigid discipline of his order. In the last years of his life he suffered under the weight of a depressive illness. His first act in joining the Jesuits had been to burn all the poems that he had so far written, taking them to be evidence of self-indulgence. Later, having read the mediaeval theologian John Duns Scotus, he gave up this self-denial, and began to write poems in praise of natural objects insofar as, in his view, they enable us to apprehend the divine. The fear of self-indulgence was thus rendered inert, and Hopkins permitted himself to explore the beauty of the sensuous and attribute it to God. He refrained from interpreting it as a crude pantheism: instead, what he borrowed from Scotus was the belief that the created order of beings retained the mark of a holy purpose through their sharing in a marvellous characteristic of their Maker.

That characteristic was *haeccitas*, which can be accurately rendered (from the Latin *haec*, 'this') as 'thisness', its unique individuality. Hopkins' invented word for it was 'inscape', and for the power that kept it in place, its 'instress'. Here Scotus, and his disciple Hopkins, are oddly echoed by someone, an old atheist, who would have been disturbed to be ranged with such theological figures. This is Bertrand Russell, who, in analysing the logic of language, declared that 'in the real there can be no such thing as vagueness or precision; things are what they are there's an end of it' (Russell, 1997 [1926], 62). In fact he treated the word 'this' as itself a kind of existent logical atom — as it certainly is, *within the game*. Russell was drawing attention to the apparently pure act of referring when two partners in language single out what we call a 'particular', a singular entity. But this is what, as has been explained above, we have mutually *to imagine* when we are trying to bring our differing acts of referring into a supposedly common focus if the game is to be played. Compare agreement about the rules of chess, compared with the hidden disagreements between players about the state of play which gives winners their opportunity: there is the 'old' and the 'new' all over again.

What we often achieve is a sufficient overlap to allow our supposedly commonly wished-for action to be carried through. If this happens we are obviously disinclined to pursue any differences which seem to have no bearing on the action in question, so that together we are so satisfied with the partial singularity thus achieved that we take it to be the logically complete one *we mutually hypothesized*. That faith might have to come to deal with

unintended mismatches is frequently out of the current view for those involved in this collaborative selection from the real: they, as explained above, do not want to view their collaborator as suspect!

Hopkins, however, takes singularity to be a divine characteristic. Listen to this poem, a sonnet the title of which is the first four words 'As kingfishers catch fire'.

> AS kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies dráw fláme;
> 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 *Whát I do is me: for that I came.*
>
> Í say móre: the just man justices;
> Kéeps gráce: thát keeps all his goings graces;
> Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is—
> Chríst—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.
> (Hopkins 1953, 51)

Now this is a remarkable evocation of the delight that the achievement of the blending of focus across minds can bring. It is an essentially linguistic pleasure in which Hopkins offers to us, blessing that pleasure with the evocation of the aura of sacredness that our sharing can bring. It heightens the imagined solidarity that we enjoy when those around us home in with us on a portion of the real and show it to be, not a threat, but a source, not only of sensuous pleasure, of an evocation of that faith-play that constitutes our human being. Not for nothing did the sociologist Benedict Anderson describe nations as 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1991). It is the real source of what we call 'the spiritual', for the spiritual, being sustained by the fictive, by the play of imaginations, appears to be outside 'reality'.

We can also here perceive the reason why science has been loth to ask scientific questions of poetry and drama: it would bring to the surface the fact that the whole would-be logical edifice that we have taken it to be would be revealed for what it is at its best, *a mutually maintained, dramatic act of faith* — and, ironically, one acknowledging that no total explanation, no 'theory of everything', can be forthcoming (though there is a Theory of Every-'Thing', namely the one you are reading now).

The outstanding difference from a stage play lies in the obvious fact that the words and

actions performed have no immediate motivational consequences: in a stage play, as was noted above, no one suffers or dies or enjoys sensory delight (this is why one could hardly be attending to the film if one is wondering whether Angie McDowell and Hugh Grant in the *Four Weddings and a Funeral* film were enjoying their kisses, or whether the guests at the banquet in *Macbeth* like their food and drink). The theory also suggests why the superstition of physical danger in acting *Macbeth* exerts a strange hold over the feelings of some actors.

This theory renders harmless Gilbert Ryle's jibe about there being 'the soul' being a 'ghost in the machine' (Ryle, 1949, 15-16), since we are metaphorically 'machines' that are making real 'ghosts', that is, *the dramatic projections of everyone including our 'selves'*. This is why there has been talk of the 'spiritual' nature of the 'soul'. Many a theorist has regarded 'the soul' as invisible, outside measurement, impervious to experiment, and non-scientific, and thus 'unreal'. You could say the same of the characters in a play being performed, but 'they' are undeniably a part of the real as a mutual projection, and, as certainly therefore, a justifiable subject of scientific study.

Notice what is performed in this play with *haeccitas*. Take the first line of the sonnet: the simple wonder that the mind cannot but share, a childlike play of attention upon two examples of rapid animal flight, the kingfisher's and the dragonfly's, both enhanced by the subtleties of colour as they sweep by. The very words perform the linguistic trick by which we are referring to them. We can pick out the rhythm of the triple alliterative patterning of /**k**/, /**d**/ and /**f**/: 'k̲ingfis̲hers c̲atch f̲ire, d̲ragonf̲lies d̲raw f̲lame', as well as the assonance of /**ai**/ in 'f̲i̲re' and 'fl̲i̲es', and /**æ**/ in 'c̲a̲tch' and 'dr̲a̲gonflies'. Each of these performs what we do together when we refer as speakers of a language, namely, bind together two separate sequences of words with something they have in common — which in this case is their *haeccitas*, the play of singularity which our mind projects onto the flows in the real from which by this projection become a satisfying play of recognition, and the word 'play' is here significant.

Scotus and Hopkins both misconstrue this human method, this performance of our humanity — and the attendant sensory delight — and take it to be something bestowed by a divine being, but this is only a metaphor for the endless past history of the skill and delight of those forebears who have handed them on to us, the hidden myriad of those who reached through to the genuine faith that language really requires.

One could take the virtuosic onomatopoeia of the lines about the stone falling in the well, the plucked string, and the resounding bell as further performances in parallel to the meaning of the words, a play in which the word-sounds become the very sounds being referred to by the meaning. And we must not miss Hopkins' use of the words 'tells', 'tongue' and 'name' to remind us of the humanly *linguistic* pleasure. Not for nothing is the metonym within the word 'linguistic' from the Latin for 'tongue', *lingua*; as so often, the body asserts itself in our speech.

But 'tells' gives us a hidden key to the dynamic of this poem of which Hopkins was not consciously aware. Indeed, he would probably have objected on the ground that 'God' did create the unique entities Hopkins numbers here. 'To tell', especially in 'to tell a story', is *to change the perceptions of the hearers* by showing how, inside the story itself, is a demonstration of just how understandings are transformed. This is the key criterion of a story as I set out to establish in my book on narrative (Wright, 2005). To quote from the close of J. K. Rowling's impressive Commencement address at Harvard in 2008, her quoting in turn from Seneca: 'As a tale, so is life.'

It is plain in every joke, for jokes are mini-stories. The reason is that in a joke there is always something that the statement seems to take as having a fixed meaning and then subverts it. Take David Pope's cartoon on the Charlie Hebdo massacre, which has the jihadi murderer standing by one of the corpses saying "He drew first." There is a common meaning we give to the word 'drew' in the context of guns, namely, *pulled his gun from its holster*. But change the context into that of *drawing a critical cartoon* and we see how humour is casting a new light on the intention of the killers. We end up with the taken-for-granted meaning being replaced by a satirical comment on the killers' misconception.

Consider this joke, highly topical, from the Edinburgh Festival of 2016, listed as among the best produced by the comedians performing there:

> The reason that pandas are so popular is diversity — They're black, white, and Asian.

I shall leave the reader to pick out (a) the ambiguities on which its success relies; (b), the portion that contains the 'idealization of reciprocity' (the 'something old'); and (c), the clues to other contexts (the 'something new') — for there are more than one — that effect the transformation, one that has wide resonance in the state of the world today.

So how did Hopkins view 'each tucked string *tells*'? He wanted to say that every individual thing was marked by its uniqueness, the *haeccitas* that performed the Oneness of God Him-'self'. God has often called 'the One' in theological discourse, the One of whom nought may be said, lying outside human language (and we have seen how He in His omniscience requires no language as He is omniscient). What Hopkins does not see is that oneness is the ideal of our *co*-reference that impels its own transformation in the Statement. It bears witness to the faith and imagination that *co*-reference must involve if the language-game is to be played correctly, *tellingly,* that is, not taking it literally as the superstitious do, and not through blind trust, which is a form of narcissism, as was shown earlier.

Hopkins shows himself sensitive to the accusation that the over-emphasis upon uniqueness might lay itself open — within Christian morality — to the encouragement of 'selfishness'. In the line in the sestet 'Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is', he implies that God, the omniscient, knows all aspects of the soul's 'oneness' and so is aware of what that soul could

be. This at once raises the freedom/determinism question for all those for whom words have certain meanings, for whom 'justicing' is the application of rigid law. Hopkins obviously wants 'the just man' to embody justice and 'keep grace', becoming godlike in his own right. 'Grace' is a vital concept in Catholic theology; in one of its theological senses it does apportion to God a vein of mercy, assistance and forgiveness. From the point of view of the present theory, this is an acknowledgement of the inability of the grand social playscript to specify all that a body does, that justice and law are open to adjustment, to 'adjusticing'. The free will / determinism problem cannot arise when the 'laws', moral and physical, are viewed within the scope of the play of language.

Nor can there be a self before symbolic interchange with another — for a child does not have to wait for actual *speech*. Pro-life protestors are mistaken in thinking the human can precede engagement with symbolic action, facial or gestural, from another. Once in the program then each of us can play 'Self' and thus contribute to the program, 'selving' as we go. The pro-lifers' belief that the self begins with the sperm entering the ovum are, paradoxically in effect, not giving animal life outside the installing of the program the respect it deserves: we are still animals throughout life and the program exists at base for their happiness within society, however impossible in its final achievement.

In addition, the self does not have an invulnerable being, for others can change it, as we them. That is part of the game. What we 'deal out' in the game of word-playing-cards is not some 'soul' that has been with God and has now entered the world to be tempered by its fires. Evolving selves do 'dwell' within bodies and thus have the right to alter the program that gave rise to them — hence, the good sense of democracy. Hence, also comedy and tragedy, which are both actual possibilities in life, for there is no guarantee that some contingency might not set a mind on a paradoxical course.

Can one not regard the line of the poem third from the close as an unrealised acceptance of the theory?

> — for Christ *plays* in ten thousand places

The word 'plays' could not be escaped by Hopkins. It is an astonishing giveaway. It presents God Him-'self' as engaging in the language-game. What could this mean at the level of the present theory? Why, that His part is His being the trope of the Idealization of Reciprocity and *the true faith that has to be at its heart*, for that is the foundation of the idea of God, imagined so that language can proceed with its evolution in our minds. It means, as was emphasized before, that

> (α) the literal interpretation of the poetic, mythical symbols of God is superstitious, a failure to face the risks of the Great Drama, and a failure to realize the dramatic value of those symbols;

(β) also, that in trying to ignore the Idealization of Reciprocity, the old-Atheists put them-'selves' in a self-contradictory position as they try to speak without admitting one cannot do so without that Idealization, without the poetic transformations with which we construct language;

(γ) the only satisfactory stance is the one recommended here, the *Faitheist* one, the one courageous enough to accept that the mismatches entail what faith has to, a love that reaches outside the Drama to confront the sacrifices that arise beyond 'one's' current assessment of one's-'self' and society (Wright, 2012).

To those who might object to finding the origin of the concept of God in something so mundane and habitual as our speech forget that the core of speech — and speech is what makes us human — in its worthiest form is faith. That fact that speech is used for deceiving others, for sustaining a weak self with superstition, for issuing brutal commands, for buying and selling, and so forth, gives the impression that it is utterly neutral from the ethical point of view, and, true, it is misused in these and other unethical ways. Nevertheless, genuinely to enter into the play of speech, even at the humblest level, is to be led to the demand of faith and the possibility of sacrifice. Within every utterance, obvious or hidden, is the reference to *mutual* choosings from the Real, not only of material 'things', but of your-'self' and those of others around you that the faith of our forebears has bestowed to aid your body and mind in its journey inside the Real. This is nothing mundane or mindlessly habitual. No wonder the idea of a god came into being; no wonder that many sustain their loyalty to a creed by arguing that, because it is to be found in all societies in one form or other, there must be a god! Well, there is! — as a poetic way of speaking of the faith and sacrifice that speaking requires. The answer to the question of the existence of God lies, literally as well as metaphorically, under our noses; hence, our failing to solve it.

If you go along with this Faitheist explanation of the origin of God, you can never fall into the superstitious error of thinking that 'God' created the universe: easy to see now that it was all those acts of faith of our forebears that created the words that enable us to talk of the Real as divided into re-cognizable 'entities'. Creationism misconstrues the whole process. If we say "Look at that *star*", it is because long ago some human enabled another to select that portion of the Real for some human purpose. Both the 'singular portion' we call 'a star' remains an extraordinary combining of countless, subtly differing perceptions from the Real, for our countless, subtly differing purposes, a combining that allows an evolution of meaning through time. So Nietzsche and the rest were under a misapprehension when they spoke of 'the death of God': 'He' was never alive, though what 'His' poetic 'Self' refers to does go on in the acts of faith that, at its best, originate and maintain our speech. That constitutes His dramatic reality in the language-game. If now we use the word 'spiritual' in the sense arrived at above, as testifying to our skillful and imaginative playing of the language-game, we can see every word, every utterance as a spiritual challenge without committing ourselves to any occult dogma.

It is worth applying this unprecedented conclusion to the first two of the positions listed above:

The superstitious old-religious distort the Idealization because they cannot play it; they are like the little girl's father who couldn't be the Big Bad Wolf because of his mistaken fears of not inhabiting his current 'self'-hood for a while. They want a cast-iron assurance of a certain knowledge in the world and a certain reward after death, which is *to lack faith*; those 'martyrs' who do die for God or Allah are not, in the best sense, religious, or do they fully understand what 'spiritual' actually means.

Equally 'self'-defeating are the old-atheists, for, if they repudiate the 'spiritual-as acted', which embraces both the 'imagined community', and the hypothesized 'self', they are like people on the stage in a play who don't know where the script is going and their responsibility for writing it. One can find a parallel in Stephen Fry's recent old-fashioned-atheist dismissal of God (in an interview on Irish TV) as 'capricious, mean-minded and stupid'. Treat God with the same play-seriousness as Santa Claus and we can give Him a role in the great social drama without superstitiously believing in Him — or Her or It or Them — at all! Fry is like the know-all children who say there can't be a Santa Claus because he couldn't possibly get round to all those chimneys in one night': those children must be told how to play the game of 'Santa Claus'. Fry also shares Snug the Joiner's misunderstanding (in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) of how to participate in drama, a misunderstanding evidenced in Snug's warning to all the ladies in the audience that they should not be scared because, in spite of his disguise, he was not a real lion. One undoubtedly good thing to be said in Fry's favour is that he said that he could not believe in a god who created a world that allowed children to die of bone cancer, because this remark can be viewed as evidence of his recognition of the demand for love.

Fry's reaction can be usefully aligned with that of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who, commenting on the shootings in Paris, said that it made him doubt the 'presence of God'. Within Faitheist theory, which takes 'God' to be a needful *focus imaginarius*, held to in a mutual act of faith, the Archbishop's fear is evidence of a *lack* of faith. Those ancient Chinese who used actors in their religious ceremonies were on the right track. This is what gods and monarchs and popes and Supreme Leaders *have always been* and it is time to acknowledge it. We want little girls and others to be somewhat like the boy on Hans Anderson's parable, with the exception that they should complain, not about the *absence* of the Emperor's Clothes, but about his neglecting to put on a perfectly good *Stage Costume* that everybody tacitly understands as a costume in the national drama. All that ritual and ceremony surrounding queens and kings is not 'flummery' to be abandoned as soon as may be: it is the justifiable poetic and dramatic accoutrements of *powerless* monarchs who have part of the task of unifying the nation as an Andersonian 'imagined community'. Sad to see in some countries that same kind of ceremony surrounding the public appearances of *powerful* dictators; there it is undoubtedly worthy of the word

'flummery'.

To conclude, a look at a haiku of the Japanese poet Kobayashi Issa:

> Tsuyu no yo wa
> Tsuyu no yo
> Nagara sari nagara
>
> A world of dew
> Is but a world of dew —
> And yet, and yet . . .

Now it is plain that the possible interpretations of this poem are innumerable. Just to glance at one of them. It could be taken as the thoughts of someone who has lost in love in some way: that the love, though indescribably sweet, being at the mercy of the Real, has proved to be transient. Nevertheless, later, on occasion, its power over feeling still asserts its old force. The progression of feeling in Emily Brontë's poem 'Remembrance' matches that of Issa here.

However, the relevance of this haiku to our present topic could hardly be passed by. The first two lines can be taken as a metaphor for the Schutzian Idealization, in that the logical subject, it seems, is agreed without question as a tautology. And what is agreed is that the world around us (and ourselves) is as blankly material and no more than that, and remains as fleeting as the morning dew, so that we have to accept its disappearance into the Real, the 'Heraclitean fire', as Hopkins calls it in another poem (Hopkins, 1953, 65-6). Nevertheless, the last line with a most delicate uncertainty, asserts a value that outfaces that transience. Something of 'the old' survives in the continuing Great Drama, in a 'new' form a form that is certainly not a bizarrely 'eternal' immortality, but persists in the influences we have left behind.

Let us give up once and for all this pointless fear of death and the 'undiscovered country' that is supposed to lie beyond it. The only thing to be fearful about, apart from the obviously possible sufferings in the process of dying (and apart from the morbid lust for torture and execution in some countries) is whether or not you have helped us, and even that was not wholly 'your own' doing. What matters is what we have brought to the Great Drama and, as was emphasized above, what will survive of our words and deeds in how it continues, our *influence* on others, and 'the wicked' have their effect as much as the good (which is why most religions make the wicked as 'immortal' as the good). When the American historian David Blight discusses the 'legacy' of the Civil War (Blight 2001), finding it in habits of body and language, in ideology, attitudes, traditions, and more, he is exploring such influences. Raymond Tallis, in his new book on death (Tallis, 2015), has also explored these 'ripples', as he calls them, that we make, consciously or otherwise, in the scenes of the great play that are to succeed us, and these make up what constitutes our 'immortality'. In future, when

parents and teachers and friends are instilling/installing the 'program', this widening continuation of our deeds ought to be foregrounded (and not that notion of immortality that involves bugaboo hells and childish rewards). The speech made by Prospero as he throws away his magic wand shows no pointless regret at the end of life on this planet: we too ought to see that apocalypse as a curtain coming down on a play that, at last, is over.

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