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Fluidity and Subjectivity in G. M. Hopkins' "A Vision of the Mermaids"

Kumiko SUWA

"A Vision of the Mermaids" was written in 1863, when Gerard Manley Hopkins was eighteen years old and a student of Oxford University. It consists of 143 lines, making it significantly longer than Hopkins' other poems. It is also an expanse of free and fresh imagery. The description of various jewels and colours expresses sensual beauty, which can also be seen in the poems of Edmund Spenser and John Keats. This shows a contrast to his later religious poems. If we consider that a mermaid is a female, this poem is rather different from his other poems in that his other works have few descriptions of women other than the Virgin Mary or other saints. I will try to read into the nature and consciousness of Hopkins as a poet in this early poem, which seems somewhat different from his later poems. Although we have few critics who have argued on "A Vision of the Mermaids" in detail, J. Hillis Miller shows impressive interpretation of the poem in *The Disappearance of God*:

Hopkins' early poetry... expresses the suffering of a man who believes in God, but finds him unattainable, and who finds himself isolated in the midst of a universe which rebuffs him with blank unlikeness.

Such a universe has double emptiness. There is nothing in it which shows any kinship to man himself, and there is nothing in it which reveals any sign of its creator.... Distance, vacancy, silence — these are the keytones of Hopkins' early poetry.¹⁾

Although Miller discusses the world of Christianity, "A Vision of the Mermaids" is more Hellenistic than Christian. But how can we explain the sad tone in the end? It may be possible that

we read in this poem the sadness of a Christian man who is far from God. In this respect, I refer to Miller's opinion, but with a broader scope of his interpretation of this poem.

In the first paragraph — not stanza, I think, because "A Vision of the Mermaids" is a narrative poem in which the component lines are not uniform in the number and lengths — "I" rowed and reached a rock, which could be seen at that moment, but is covered with the water at high tide.

The second paragraph begins like this: "Plum-purple was the west; but spikes of light/ Spear'd open lustrous gashes, crimson-white". Purple is the colour of Eros' manteau, and also of Aphrodite's veil. The sea often appears in Hopkins' poems, and it is related to mermaids, which are the theme of this poem, and also associated with Aphrodite. Images of Greek myth, such as Aphrodite and Siren, may show that Hopkins' belief in God was not as strong as in his later poems, which clearly have Christian themes.

From lines 9 and 10, the view of the narrator can be seen: "Where the eye fix'd, fled the encrimsoning spot,/ And gathering, floated where the gaze was not". This means that the view around us changes according to the observer's viewpoint, which is consequently subjective. For this reason, the theme of this essay revolves around the meaning of descriptions in the first-person point of view in "A Vision of the Mermaids"; for, although the heart of the poem focuses on the description of the mermaids, the first person "I" appears many times, and Hopkins often uses the words, "see", "gaze", and "watch", which remind us of the existence of the observer.

That kind of description, in the first-person point of view, suggests to us the influence of nineteenth-century impressionism, which could have been represented by the thoughts of Walter Pater, a tutor for Hopkins at Oxford University. "A Vision of the Mermaids", however, was written in 1862, one year before

Hopkins entered Oxford, so it is true, as Miller asserts, that Hopkins could not have learned this world view directly from Pater:

Hopkins' notion of the fixity of subjective consciousness within an evanescent flux of sensations recalls similar ideas in the writing of his tutor at Oxford, Walter Pater. The early Hopkins might well have agreed with what Pater says in the celebrated "Conclusion" to *The Renaissance*....

It is not possible to say that Hopkins learned to see the world in this way exclusively from Pater, for Hopkins' most impressionistic or Paterian poem, "A Vision of the Mermaids," was written in 1862, before he went up to Oxford.²⁾

Pater, in "Conclusion" of *The Renaissance*, quoted the proposition of Heraclitus as the epigraph: "All things are in motion and nothing at rest." (But Pater's interpretation is that "All things give way: nothing remaineth.")³⁾ Then he introduced the idea of "impressionism" as the means to grasp fluid things:

And if we continue to dwell in thought on this world, not of objects in the solidity with which language invests them, but of impressions, unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them, it contracts still further: the whole scope of observation is dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind.... Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world.⁴⁾

Thus Pater argues that impressions cannot be separated from the subjectivity of each individual. But Hopkins takes a pessimistic view of this idea in his later sonnet, "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", and he tries to get out of that situation in "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and the comfort of the Resurrection". Hopkins did not want to be isolated in a world centring around the self, but he wished to be situated around God. Miller says that Hopkins tries to transcend subjectivism in his early poems:

"A Vision of the Mermaids" dramatizes the tragedy of an unsuccessful attempt to escape from the prison of Paterian phenomenalism. If Hopkins begins in a position near Pater's, unlike Pater he can see no way to make a viable philosophy out of it. The early poems do everything they can to transcend subjectivism. The mermaids long for the sun, and the alchemist [in "The Alchemist in the City"] in his central tower wants to reach "one spot" on the "horizon-round". If he could reach the horizon he might be on the periphery of a circle around the divine gold sun rather than fixed in his subjective prison. The poet who finds himself the "unchanging register of change" looks with admiration on the "lovely ease in change of place" of the birds, clouds, and brooks which circle effortlessly around him. He wants to pass beyond the situation of being always the center of the world. He would far rather circle around God.⁵⁾

The interpretation of the sun as God is previously stated: "... the sun is a symbol for the divine centre, that absent God whose unattainability darkens Hopkins' early poetry."⁶⁾ Virginia Ridley Ellis, however, doubts Miller's interpretation :

I am not sure... that the lushly Keatsian schoolboy poem, "A Vision of the Mermaids", as yet identifies the sun as "a symbol for the divine center, that absent God whose unattainability darkens Hopkins' early poetry," but it does anticipate later uses of this image and also expresses what will remain deeply characteristic: a strange longing and a pain on the presence of mystery.⁷⁾

As Miller does, I interpret the sun as God, but I also admit Ellis' statement, because, when the poem was written, Hopkins was only a schoolboy before entering the Society of Jesus. I am sure that this poem is not as religious as his later poems, but it is possible that we might see it in the context of the development of his works. As Ellis says, "it does anticipate later uses of this image". Ellis also discusses the recurrent image of the sun and the person seeking the sun, and I agree with her insights :

If such recurrent imagery does validly show something of the consciousness that wrought it, if it reflects the persistent attempt to find

in sunlight Son-light, a second, and counter, point also needs to be made about it.... All but one of them [the poems which show such imagery] are sunset, if not actually twilight or night, pieces: the sun is sinking, or misted, or blurred by rain or cloud, or somehow melting into invisibility or "uncertainty," even when the poem is not centrally or at all a poem of frustrated vision or outright despair. Latent in such imagery therefore may be more than the obvious point of human blindness and divine elusiveness. The imagery may reflect already Hopkins' sense of the nature of religious vision, which can neither be, nor be expressed in terms of, clear daylight sight.⁸⁾

Although I am interested in Miller's statement on the poem, I do not completely agree with him, for he regards the mermaids as the representation of subjectivism (see also quotation 5):

... the mermaids, like the alchemist in "The Alchemist in the City," can get no closer to the sun than "free long looking". The sun sinks beneath the horizon, the color vanishes from the west and from the irritated waters, and the mermaids, their longing unassuaged, sink back into "the dusk depth of the ponderous sea".⁹⁾

On this poem, Miller does not refer to the observer "I". When the sun goes down in the west, the mermaids also disappear, and, in the end, "I" is isolated from all, so that the representation of subjectivism cannot be the mermaids but "I".

With the view from "I", the eye of God as the sun is implied in lines 11 and 12: "...thro' their parting lids there came and went/ Keen glimpses of the inner firmament". The scene in the sky which is compared to "water-lily flakes...in beryl lakes" (11. 13-14) reminds me of the imagery of the sun boarding the ship of water-lilies and sailing into the night, which describes a scene of the evening becoming the night. The sunlight changes:

Anon, across their swimming splendour strook,
An intense line of throbbing blood-light shook
A quivering pennon; then, for

Ebb'd back beneath its snowy lids, unseen.

(11. 15-18)

The colour of blood is said to shine in the end among the colours

of sunlight, and the word "blood" evokes an image of the death of the sun. In addition, the transition of the colours and the words, "swimming," throbbing," and "quivering," express fluidity.

In the third paragraph, all things turned rosy, and the west is described as "an orb'd rose" (l. 20). The rose bloomed at first when Aphrodite was born in the sea, and in the Middle Ages it is the emblem of both Christ and the Virgin Mary, indicating spiritual love.¹⁰ Both the sky and the sea are tinged with rosy hues :

Now all things rosy turn'd: the west
To an orb'd rose, which, by hot pantings blown
Apart, betwixt ten thousand petall'd lips
By interchange gasp'd splendour and eclipse.
The zenith melted to a rose of air;
The waves were rosy-lipp'd: the crimson glare
Shower'd the cliffs and every fret and spire

With garnet wreath and blooms of rosy-budded fire. (ll. 19-26)

The "ten thousand petall'd lips" in the sky corresponds to "rosy-lipp'd" as the metaphor of ripples, and as we see in the meanings of the eye of the sun in the sky and Aphrodite in the sea and of the imagery of roses, the imageries of Christianity and Greek myth are connected by the sensual metaphor "lips". Moreover, lines 23 to 26 recall to us the thoughts of Heraclitus, that is, the transmutation of the four elements: "a rose of air" (air); "the waves" (water); the rain that showered the cliffs (earth); and "rosy-budded fire" (fire). All of them gradually become rose-coloured.

In the fourth paragraph, it is suggested in the phrase, "looking on the waters" (l. 27), that the narrator has observed the scene so far. The scene is changing :

Then, looking on the waters, I was ware
Of something drifting thro' delighted air,
— An isle of roses, — and another near; —

And more, on each hand, thicken, and appear
 In shoals of bloom; as in unpeopled skies,
 Save by two stars, more crowding lights arise,

And planets bud where'er we turn our mazed eyes. (11. 27-33)

The islands of roses are compared to stars in the sky. The phrase, "our mazed eyes", indicates the state of mind in our reason and judgment, and the planet imagery encourages us to anticipate some upcoming mysterious events.

The narrator continues to gaze at them to find that they are in fact, mermaids:

I gaze unhinder'd: Mermaids six or seven,
 Ris'n from the deeps to gaze on sun and heaven,
 Cluster'd in troops and halo'd by the light,

Those Cyclads made that thicken'd on my sight. (11. 34-37)

That kind of description suggests that one impression is changing to another in the mind of the individual. In contrast with the narrator's gaze on the mermaids, they "gaze on sun and heaven", and it may be suggested here that they are within the world encircling God, seeing from a different viewpoint than he does. Besides, the mermaids are also compared to "Cyclads", which sounds Greek.

In the fifth paragraph, we see the descriptions of the mermaids in detail. Here, I would like to consider the changing views of mermaids from the classical and Middle Ages, through the Renaissance and the Romantic period, up to the nineteenth century.¹¹⁾ In the classical and Middle Ages, a mermaid was considered to be like Siren, who tempted sailors and wrecked their ships. During the Renaissance, however, Siren was given a positive connotation through the influence of Neoplatonism. This is shown in Petrarch's Sonnet 167, where Siren is described as a Muse in the heavens, or the personification of oratory and scholarship. Although the image of mermaids as women who are the ruin of men did not entirely disappear, it got fainter, and the name

"Siren" is used as a cliché in literary works. Romantics, however, inherited the medieval image of a Siren who combs her hair on a rock and wrecks ships, as we see in Heinrich Heine's *Lorelei*. On the contrary, in the nineteenth century, a fairy tale of Hans Christian Andersen gives mermaids the image of being innocent maidens.

The English in the nineteenth century were so interested in mermaids that eyewitness reports of them were published in newspapers and magazines. From the late nineteenth century to the twentieth century, the mermaid as a temptress became the theme of fine arts again, and the mermaid is drawn as a femme fatale in Edward Burn-Jones' "The Depth of the Sea" (fig. A). Hopkins saw it in an exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1887, and commented on the features of the mermaids.¹²⁾ I think that he was interested in the image of the femme fatale with mysterious eyes who draws the drowning sailor into the depth of the sea. In France, Gustave Moreau drew a mermaid as a Muse who gives inspiration to Orpheus, who has a harp on his back, and, in this respect, Moreau is similar to Petrarch (fig. B). Thus, the late nineteenth century was the time in which various images of mermaids coexisted.

In the fifth paragraph, the mermaids are uniquely expressed, as we see in the illustration by Hopkins himself (fig. C), which clearly shows that "his earliest ambition was to be a painter-poet, like D. G. Rossetti"¹³⁾; it also reveals "a remarkable talent for minute Pre-Raphaelite draughtsmanship and a sure sense of organic design"¹⁴⁾:

This was their manner: one translucent crest
Of tremulous film, more subtle than the vest
Of dewy gorse blurr'd with gossamer fine,
From crown to tail-fin floating, fringed the spine,
Droop'd o'er the brows like Hector's casque, and sway'd
In silken undulation, spurr'd and ray'd

And was as tho' some sapphire molten-blue
 Were vein'd and streak'd with dusk-deep lazuli,
 Or tender pinks with bloody Tyrian dye. (11. 38-47)

The description of "crest" is unprecedented in images of mermaids through ages, and here the masculine image of "Hector" and the feminine one of silk are combined together. Here, we see the description of gems like "sapphire" or "lazuli". We find even more as we continue to read the poem.

In the description in lines 48 and 49, "From their white waists a silver skirt was spread/ To mantle-o'er the tail", silver symbolizes chastity and the goddess Artemis. The skirt "was spread/ Around the Water-Nymphs in fretted falls,/ At red Pompeii on medallion'd walls" (11. 49-51), and other expressions of the mermaids are similar to classical and masculine images: "Hector's casque" (1. 42); and "One bound o'er dripping gold a turquoise-gemme'd/ Circlet of astral flowerets — diadem'd/ Like an Assyrian prince, with buds unsheath'd/ From flesh-flowers of the rock." (11. 60-63) These images of mermaids are original and androgynous, and give similar impressions as Moreau's.

The mermaids in Hopkins' poem are not expressed as they had been in the past:

A tinted fin on either shoulder hung;
 Their pansy-dark or bronzen locks were strung
 With coral, shells, thick-pearlèd cords, whate'er
 The abysmal Ocean hoards of strange and rare.
 Some trail'd the Nautilus; or on the swell
 Tugg'd the boss'd, smooth-lipp'd, giant
 Strombus-shell. (11. 52-57)

There are various images of gems and parts of the body, and Miller says about them:

The poem ["A Vision of the Mermaids"] sets up several sequences of imagery — colors, flowers, gems, sea-shells, music, parts of the body, the sunset, the mermaids — and defines them all in terms of one another,

so that there is a bewildering vibration back and forth between one motif and another. This produces a coruscating surface of simmering color in which all things are continuously transformed in the universal flux.¹⁵⁾

As Miller says, the imagery of this poem is continually changing, and even gives us the impression of untidiness. W. H. Gardner also points out the instability of expression and "the flux of nature" in the poem :

Epithets of colour pass before the eye with such frequency that the impression we receive is of unstable reds and blues which have "run"; — *purple, crimson, scarlet, carmine, pansy-dark, violet, blood-vivid, crimson-golden*. Yet we can hardly condemn an excess which is integral to the total effect.

The poetry is at its best when the luxury of a Keats is whipped into movement by something like a Shelly's dynamism:

[Quotes lines 84-91]

...[Both] Shelly and Hopkins were interested in the flux of nature, though not entirely for the same reasons. ...[To] Hopkins, its significance lay first in the sheer beauty of "sliding" inscape, and then, through that, in the numinous emotion, the mystical apprehension of the immutable One behind the changing Many.¹⁶⁾

Gardner presupposes in the poem the binary opposition between "the immutable One" and "the changing Many", but he does not mention man. The position of man, who is isolated both from nature and God, should not be overlooked in the poem.

In the fifth paragraph, the imagery of the mermaids is in flux, but in the next paragraph, the viewpoint from "I" is consciously fixed, integrating those fluid impressions :

Then saw I sudden from the waters break
Far off a Nereid company, and shake
From wings swan-fledged a wheel of watery light
Flickering with sunny spokes, and left and right
Plunge orb'd in rainbow arcs, and trample and tread
The satin-purpled smooth to foam, and spread

Slim-pointed sea-gull plumes, and droop behind
 One scarlet feather trailing to the wind;
 Then, like a flock of sea-fowl mounting higher,
 Thro' crimson-golden floods pass swallow'd into fire. (11. 74-83)

Nereids with the swan-fledged wings are in contrast to the mermaids with a caudal fin, and androgynous imagery can be seen here, too. The swan is the symbol of unity between opposites, and "a wheel" is the emblem of the moon and is associated with spinning cotton into threads which is the work of women, so that here we find the symbol of woman. The "watery light/Flickering with sunny spokes" means the spray flickering with sunlight, and here the water is the symbol of mother, while the light means the male principle. In the description of Nereids plunging "left and right," the left suggests materiality, femininity and unconsciousness, and the right implies spirituality, masculinity, consciousness and reason.¹⁷ The "rainbow arcs" are half circles, as one made by the mermaids in the ninth paragraph (discussion of this image to follow). The "foam" (1. 79) is associated with the scene where Aphrodite was born from the foam of ripples, surrounded by Triton and Nereids (fig. D).¹⁸ These fairies in the sea are not identified with Siren.¹⁹ The swan-fledged wings turn to "Slim-pointed seagull plumes" (1. 80), and in the description in line 83, the thoughts of Heraclitus, who defines "fire" as most important of the four elements, can be seen.

In the seventh paragraph, the mermaids crowding to the rock from where "I" was looking are figuratively described in these fourteen lines:

Soon — as when Summer of his sister Spring
 Crushes and tears the rare enjewelling,
 And boasting 'I have fairer things than these'
 Plashes amidst the billowy apple-trees
 His lusty hands, in gusts of scented wind
 Swirling out bloom till all the air is blind

With rosy foam and pelting blossom and mists
 Of driving vermeil-rain; and, as he lists,
 The dainty onyx-coronals deflowers,
 A glorious wanton; — all the wrecks in showers
 Crowd down upon a stream, and, jostling thick
 With bubbles bugle-eyed, struggle and stick
 On tangled shoals that bar the brook — a crowd

Of filmy-globes and rosy floating cloud: — (ll. 84-97)

The simile in lines 84 and 85 shows the sudden change from the mild imagery of spring in the first half of the poem, as well as the surprise and change in the consciousness of "I" who "gazed unhinder'd". In lines 87 and 88, the masculine imagery can be seen. Summer is compared to "A glorious wanton" so that we can read "His lusty hands" and the images in lines 91 and 92 sexually. Onyx is said to control passion. The phrase "all the wrecks" (l. 93) is associated with the ships and sailors wrecked by Siren, and in the figure of speech in lines 93 to 97, the words "bubbles" and "filmy-globes" represent the transience of imagery and impression. The mermaids, as the representations of transient impressions, "crowded to my rock" (l. 98); in other words, they were in a moment of being grasped by fixed subjectivity.

In the eighth paragraph, some of the mermaids "sported", being careless of the narrator:

Careless of me they sported: some would splash
 The languent smooth with dimpling drops, and flash
 Their filmy tails adown whose length there show'd

An azure ridge;... (ll. 102-105)

The narrator is fixed outside fluid imageries which mix with one another, and he cannot be mixed with them, being isolated from all that is in the poem. The chain of imagery can be seen between "Plashes" (l. 87) and "splash" (l. 102); the "filmy tails" of the mermaids and "filmy globes" (l. 97); and lines 109 and 110, "... the argent bubbles stream'd/ Airwards, disturb'd", which once more remind us of the transient nature of impression.

On the other hand, in the ninth paragraph, we see the description of other mermaids watching the sun in a half-circle: "But most in a half-circle watch'd the sun" (l. 116). The mermaids watching the sun, which is a circle and the representation of God, are described as being in a half-circle. This imperfection is also represented in their bodies as half man and half fish. The once brilliant description of the mermaids turns now to a sadder tone: "...a sweet sadness dwelt on everyone" (l. 117).

Up to this point, the verbs, "gaze," "see," "watch," which express sight have been used for the acts of the narrator, but in line 118, the verb "know" is used:

I knew not why, — but know that sadness dwells
 On Mermaids — whether that they ring the knells
 Of seamen whelm'd chasms of the mid-main,
 As poets sing; or that it is a pain
 To know the dusk depth of the ponderous sea,
 The miles profound of solid green, and be
 With loath'd cold fishes, far from man — or what; —
 I know the sadness but the cause know not.
 Then they, thus ranged, 'gan make full plaintively
 A piteous Siren sweetness on the sea,
 Withouten instrument, or conch, or bell,
 Or stretch'd chords tuneable on turtle's shell;
 Only with utterance of sweet breath they sung
 An antique chaunt and in an unknown tongue.
 Now melting upward thro' the sloping scale
 Swell'd the sweet strain to a melodious wail;
 Now ringing clarion-clear to whence it rose

Slumber'd at last in one sweet, deep, heart-broken close. (ll. 118-135)

The narrator knows "that sadness dwelt on Mermaids," but does not know "why"; in other words, he can tell the impression as he sees it, but cannot know the cause of their sad hearts, although God can. In this way, he is in a suspended situation, isolated both from nature and God. From lines 119 to 125, he thinks about

the reason for their sadness, only to show that all he can have is imagination or impression, as we see in his repetition, "I know the sadness but the cause know not" (l. 125). Through his imagination, lines 119 and 120 remind us of the antiquated image of Siren, which is later confirmed by line 127. The mermaids are described as "cold fishes, far from man" (l. 124), so that they are different from "I" as man, being an element of fluidity in nature. In lines 130 and 131, "they sung an antique chaunt", but "in an unknown tongue". Because he can't understand or recognize the language, his situation is still isolated. Their chaunt "Slumber'd at last" (l. 135), and the word "slumber'd" gives the impression that these scenes may have been transient dreams.

In the final paragraph, the sun, representing God and the element of fire, "had lapsed to ocean," (l. 136) and the tide is in, in contrast to the ebbing tide in the opening paragraph:

But when the sun had lapsed to ocean, lo
 A stealthy wind crept round seeking to blow,
 Linger'd, then raised the washing waves and drench'd
 The floating blooms and with tide flowing quench'd
 The rosy isles: so that I stole away
 And gain'd thro' growing dusk the stirless bay;
 White loom'd my rock, the water gurgling o'er,
 Whence oft I watch but see those Mermaids now no more.

(ll. 136-143)

The flowing tide "quench'd the rosy isles" (ll. 139-140), and the narrator was left alone in the description of the Heraclitean flux of all things.

Unless the poet gives up the subjective point of view, he cannot reach God — that was the dilemma of Hopkins as poet-priest in his later years. His life's work was to discover the way to unite himself with God by means of writing poetry. To write poetry from the first-person point of view is to describe his own impressions, and we can see in "A Vision of the Mermaids"

the sadness of the poet who is trapped in subjectivity and solitude within the natural world which surrounds God and fluxes at His will. Moreover, the changing images of mermaids through the ages show that mermaids are also beings that are grasped by man's subjectivity, and the uniquely described mermaids in Hopkins' poem are but one of these images. In other words, the mermaids in the poem are the representation of "form" which is given various meanings according to each period and each person. That is also connected to the nature of words which is the main theme of Miller's statement in *Linguistic Moment*.²⁰⁾ Hopkins tried to describe the substance of a thing with words, which is the concept of inscape, but such enlightenment cannot be attainable because word and substance lack unity; the substance for a thing is continually in flux just as we see in "A Vision of the Mermaids". The sadness in the poem already hints of the anguish in the Dark Sonnets, and we also see in the poem the yearning of the fixed self for the fluidity of the mermaids.

Notes

- 1) J. Hillis Miller, *The Disappearance of God* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1963), p. 273.
- 2) *Ibid.* pp. 274-75.
- 3) The original is: "Λέξει Ἡράκλειτος ὅτι πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει". Cf. Walter Pater, *The Renaissance*. ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986), p. 150 & 174n.
- 4) *Ibid.* p. 151.
- 5) Miller, *The Disappearance of God*, pp. 275-76.
- 6) *Ibid.* p. 275.
- 7) Virginia Ridley Ellis, *Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Language of Mystery* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), pp. 10-11.
- 8) *Ibid.* p. 11.
- 9) Miller, *The Disappearance of God*, p. 275.
- 10) See the section of "rose" in Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols*

and *Imagery* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1974).

- 11) Cf. The Japanese translation of Vic de Donder, *Le chant de la sirène* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991).
- 12) See the comment on fig. 26 in Russell Ash, *Sir Edward Burn-Jones* (London: Pavilion Books, 1993).
- 13) Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, eds. W. H. Gardner and N. H. Mackenzie (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1970), p. xviii.
- 14) *Ibid.* p. xix.
- 15) Miller, *The Disappearance of God*, p. 275.
- 16) W. H. Gardner, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy in Relation to Poetic Tradition*, vol. II (1949; rpt., London: Oxford UP, 1961), pp. 55-56.
- 17) See the sections of "swan", "wheel", "water", and "right and left" in *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*.
- 18) *Ibid.* cf. the section of "foam".
- 19) On "Nereids", see the Japanese tr. of Vic de Donder, *Le chant de la sirène*, p. 50.
- 20) J. Hillis Miller, "Chapter Five: Hopkins," in *Linguistic Moment* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985).

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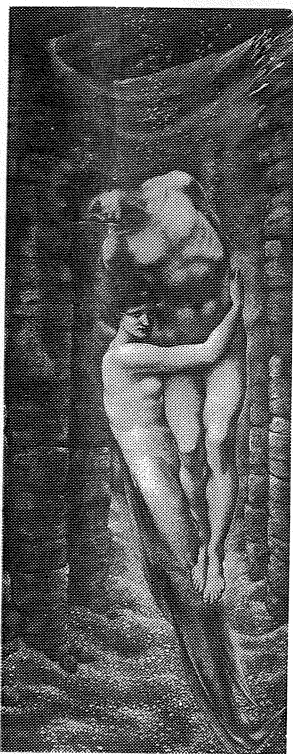


Fig. A. Edward Burn-Jones
"The Depth of the Sea"
(1887)
[Russell Ash, *Sir Edward Burn-Jones* (London: Pavilion Books, 1993).]



Fig. B. Gustave Moreau
"La sirène et le poète" (1895)
[Vic de Donder, *Le chant de la sirène* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991).]



Fig. C. The illustration by Hopkins on the heading of "A Vision of the Mermaids" [Humphry House, ed., *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).]

Fig. D. "The Birth of Venus" (A cop-
tic cloth made in 6th century) [Vic
de Donder, *Le chant de la sirène*.]

