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The Windhover and Evening Hawk Shudder in Sync: Gerard Manley Hopkins and Robert Penn Warren

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No, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;
Not untwist—slack they may be—these last strands of man
In me ór, most weary, cry *I can no more*. I can;
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.
—Gerard Manley Hopkins: “Carrion Comfort”¹

The above epigraph from Gerard Manley Hopkins's poem “Carrion Comfort” also serves as the epigraph for Robert Penn Warren's final novel, *A Place to Come To* (1977). Warren's reference to the Hopkins poem is, perhaps, the only direct evidence that Warren spent any time considering the Jesuit poet's work. Yet, Hopkins's influence is traceable throughout Warren's poetry. Even if the epigraph were the only reference Warren ever made to Hopkins, it stands as an important one. Beginning with *All the King's Men*, Warren chose epigraphs that would serve as the interpretive core of his novels. Concerning the Dante epigraph included in *All the King's Men*, Warren notes that “[i]t [. . .] is a secret indicator of what I meant in my book.” Similarly, in *World Enough and Time*, he affirmed another “case of trying to let the epigraph interpret the book.”² If the epigraph for *A Place to Come To* is to serve a similar purpose, then it suggests that Warren spent enough time considering Hopkins's poetry to warrant it important enough to use as a key to understanding the novel. Nevertheless, virtually no critical consideration of the Hopkins influence in Warren's poetry has been undertaken.

Mentions of the Hopkins-Warren poetic connection have been brief, passing comments. Generally, critics note the similar nature of Hopkins and Warren's rhythmic style and

¹ Gerard Manley Hopkins, “Carrion Comfort,” in *The Major Works*, ed. Catherine Phillips (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002), 168.

² Floyd T. Watkins, John T. Hiers, and Mary Louise Weak, *Robert Penn Warren Talking* (Athens, GA: U Georgia P, 1990), 187.

frequent use of compound expressions. For example, Joseph Blotner comments that in *Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce*, Warren “employ[s] alliteration like that of Gerard Manley Hopkins.”³ It is a driving alliteration that Blotner speaks of, present in a line such as, “The war-whoop, the *whang* of arrows at short range.”⁴ In the majority of Hopkins’s lines, there is a similar driving alliteration, as in “The Windhover”: “Fall, gáll themselvés, and gásh góld-vermílion.”⁵ Calvin Bedient comments upon the similar use of compounds that also occurs in such lines, but notes the philosophical difference: “Where Hopkins, finding God in all things, graciously lifted even an auxiliary word to hyphenated heights in ‘very-violet-sweet!’ Warren notices clottedness [. . .] and allows his poetry to be infested with little compound plots.”⁶ Certainly, these stylistic similarities provide some evidence that Hopkins was an influence on Warren’s poetry.⁷ However, I am more concerned with the thematic and philosophical aspects of their work, which are strikingly similar when compared.

One factor that has possibly deterred further consideration of the Hopkins influence is, perhaps, the fact that Hopkins was a Jesuit and that his faith is the primary basis of his poetry. Warren, on the other hand, did not have an explicit religious conviction. Nevertheless, there are clear parallels in their thematic and philosophical concerns. Thematically, they both explore the state of the human condition and its inescapable relation to nature. In fact, despite Warren’s secular status, he wrote from the same position and out of the same spirit as Hopkins. In the forward to *Christian Faith and the Contemporary Arts*, Warren defines the common ground that religion and art stand upon, where “[t]he common term between the life of art and that of religion is humility. Both depend on

³ Joseph Blotner, *Robert Penn Warren: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1997), 471.

⁴ Robert Penn Warren, “Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce,” in *The Collected Poems of Robert Penn Warren*, ed. John Burt (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1998), 500.

⁵ Hopkins, “The Windhover,” in *Major Works*, 132.

⁶ Calvin Bedient, *In the Heart’s Last Kingdom: Robert Penn Warren’s Major Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1984), 46.

⁷ For an even clearer example of the stylistic influence, one might turn to the closing poem of *Altitudes and Extensions*, “Myth of Mountain Sunrise,” which appears to be a blatant experiment in the full poetics of Hopkins.

revelation—and both recognize that revelation comes only from a prayerful reverence for the truth, especially from an unsacred reverence for the shockingness of inner truth.”⁸ We will return to the concept of revelation and prayerful reverence for the truth, which provides a distinct bridge between the logical structure of Warren and Hopkins’s works. For now, let us consider further Warren’s unique secular philosophical position.

In order to reconcile what appears to be, at first glance, an apparent contradiction in claiming distinct philosophical similarities between Warren and Hopkins, we must consider how Warren viewed his philosophy in relation to religion. In a 1976 interview with Bill Moyers, Warren states that he is “a non-believer, I’m a non-churchgoer [. . .] I’m a rather common type [. . .] of a yearner.” He goes on to define his status as a yearner: “I would say that I have a religious temperament . . . with a scientific background.”⁹ Michael Beilfuss describes Warren’s yearner position as a “trait that takes the place of religion for Warren, and in itself becomes a type of religion, guided very much by Christian ideals.”¹⁰ Certainly, Warren’s consideration of the common processes and goals of art and Christian faith ring true with Beilfuss’s definition of the yearner. We even find, in Warren’s work, characters that resemble the yearner. William Bedford Clark describes Jack Burden’s final revelation in *All the King’s Men* — which comes, in the end, from a prayerful reverence for the truth—in this manner: “As the story of Jack Burden unfolds, two powerful streams, the historical past and the lived present, converge and move inexorably toward a revelation and rebirth that is finally the equivalent of a religious conversion in which the ‘sick soul’ of a representative modern man, alienated, skeptical, and vulnerable, is made whole.”¹¹ The yearner, then, is a person who meditates upon or witnesses the world in which he or she lives and comes to a revelation or

⁸ Robert Penn Warren, “Forward: Notes and Notions on Reading This Book,” in *Christian Faith and the Contemporary Arts*, ed. Finley Eversole (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 8-9.

⁹ Watkins, Hiers, and Weak, 213.

¹⁰ Michael Beilfuss, “Discovering the Sacred Light of Secular Conditions: Coleridge’s Light of Imagination in Warren’s Criticism and Poetry,” *Shawangunk Review* 17 (2006): 38.

¹¹ William Bedford Clark, *The American Vision of Robert Penn Warren* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1991), 93.

heightened sense, which results in a unity, a making whole of the individual, while also acknowledging a complicit relation to the world. This concept also appears in the essay “A Poem of Pure Imagination: An Experiment in Reading,” which Warren wrote concurrently with *All the King's Men*. In the essay, Warren posits the concept of “One Life,” also referred to as the sacramental vision, which Beilfuss describes as involving “recognition and an appreciation for the unity within the material world and a unity between the material and spiritual realms of existence.”¹² Considering that Warren often focused on aspects of other writers’ work that he practiced himself, and the above discussion of his status as a yearner, we may conclude that Warren likewise considered the sacramental vision as the philosophical core of the yearner, which is the point where Hopkins and Warren intersect philosophically.

Generally, in Gerard Manley Hopkins’s early poetry, he too observes the world, most specifically nature and our relation to it, which results in a vision or revelation of the human condition. The major difference, as might be expected from a Jesuit poet, is that Hopkins sees that, in the end, everything in the world is, at its core, a reflection of God. In his later poetry, God remains at the core, but the focus of his poetic meditation is on the inner world of the poet. There is a distinct shift in Hopkins’s poetry from consideration of humankind in relation to the world to the individual’s relation to the world. In Hopkins’s 1877 poems, we can see a sense-perceived pattern of nature celebrated, where we are immersed in the charged grandeur of God and bear witness to Hopkins’s disappointment in the soiled human condition. The inscapes of these poems are outward projections of Hopkins’s observations. Between this year and the years of Hopkins’s “terrible sonnets,” 1885-6, which represent the poet’s Dark Night of the Soul, there is a noticeable shift in inscape. These poems are inward observations that inscape Hopkins, himself. It seems as though Hopkins shifted from macro to microcosm. This shift has the makings of a spiritual journey that finally culminates in the very essence of Hopkins’s inscape with

¹² Beilfuss, 43, n. 1.

the poem “That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire.”

Warren, on the other hand, meditates upon nature and humankind and reveals the stain of Original Sin, the darkness of the human condition. However, if we consider Hopkins’s orthodoxy, that God is a unifying center that exists in everything, and the darkness of the human condition as the unifying center for Warren, then in both we see a philosophical concern that considers the uniqueness of each individual thing, but acknowledges that everything is tied together, complicitous. In addition, keeping in mind the religious overtone of the yearner, we often find a god-like force at the center of Warren’s vision of the human condition, which is pervasive in his poetry and prose. Arriving at this core vision, the revelation, for both Warren and Hopkins involves, as noted earlier, “prayerful reverence for the truth, especially from an unsacred reverence for the shockingness of inner truth.”¹³ In both cases, they meditate upon a subject, human or natural, in a prayerful state in order to reveal its truth, employing a similar structure.

The meditative, prayerful reverence displayed in Hopkins’s poetry leads to the recognition of a core self and its interrelation with the physical and spiritual world. The meditation is a three-step or three stage process, similar to the process of St. Ignatius’s spiritual exercise of meditation, where the exercise starts by urging the exercitant to picture the scene associated with the subject of the meditation and to realize the scene as fully as possible by contemplating the sensations that it would give each of the senses in turn. From a full evocation of place the exercitant then turns to contemplating the significance of the event and its implications for his own life.¹⁴

The three stages of meditation, then, are: 1) Composition of place (careful observation of nature); 2) Revelation of truth or inner core of a thing (Inscape, which will be discussed shortly); and 3) The realization of individual implications, which demonstrates both individual uniqueness and the interconnectedness of all things. Warren similarly proceeds

¹³ Warren, “Forward: Notes and Notions on Reading This Book,” 9.

¹⁴ Catherine Phillips, “Introduction,” in *Major Works*, xxi.

to recognition of complicity, or deeper understanding of the individual in relation to the world, by means of a three-step process. In order to demonstrate this process as a prominent structure in Warren's work, I will first consider some instances of it in his prose.

In Warren's novel, *Flood* (1964), Yasha Jones gives Maggie and Brad Tolliver a brief rumination on the quality of "depth and shimmer" in poetry, something that "predicted our physics." Baudelaire, Pound, Eliot, Perse, Coleridge, and Wordsworth "had it," but "Yeats," he says, "had it backwards—he thought that the shudder comes from a flight out of nature. It comes from a flight into nature."¹⁵ Warren makes a similar statement twenty years before *Flood* in "The Ballad of Billie Potts," where the "shudder," the heightened recognition of human physics, comes from flight—in this case, "plunge"—into nature:

The salmon heaves at the fall, and, wanderer, you
Heave at the great fall of Time, and gorgeous, gleam
In powerful arc, and anger and outrage like dew,
In your plunge, fling, and plunge to the thunderous stream:
Back to the silence, back to the pool, back
To the high pool, motionless, and the unmurmuring dream.¹⁶

By plunging into nature, into the stream of Time, the individual will experience the shudder, which may manifest itself in a number of ways, but will reveal, in the end, a core state of being.¹⁷ There are many examples of this flight into nature throughout Warren's work. To note two specific examples, we see Brad fleeing into the swamp with Frog-Eye in *Flood* and, in Warren's first novel, *Night Rider* (1939), Willie Proudfit's journey into the West, which climaxes on a mountain with a feverish vision. They both attempt to escape from their lives in order to find some sense of freedom from responsibility. In both

¹⁵ Robert Penn Warren, *Flood: A Romance of Our Time* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2003), 179.

¹⁶ Warren, "The Ballad of Billie Potts," in *Collected Poems*, 91.

¹⁷ See also the many references to "plunging" into the wild in *World Enough and Time* (1950), where Jeremiah Beaumont repeatedly plunges into nature in an attempt to define himself against the world.

these cases, flight into nature serves as a way to find, in some sense, their way home. When they experience the shudder, they are finally able to recognize something about their own nature.

Brad feels this shudder at the end of *Flood*, remembering his and his father's flights into the swamp. Because of his final meditation, Brad "[t]herefore, in his inwardness [. . .] said: *I cannot find the connection between what I was and what I am. I have not found the human necessity.* He knew that that was what he must try to find." Brad's acceptance of his inability to find the human necessity in his life evokes the shudder, which manifests as a tearing, ripping gesture: "For this was his country. But then [. . .] he felt a sudden, unwilled, undecipherable, tearing, ripping gesture of his innermost being [. . .]." Following this, the recognition of the self's core being is revealed, which is defined, for Brad, by his final thought: "*There is no country but the heart.*"¹⁸

Willie Proudfit also experiences a revelatory vision of home by his flight into nature. His redeeming story at the end of *Night Rider* is a story of a man who leaves home and wanders aimlessly through the west hunting buffalo. Settling in the mountains, he constructs a seemingly happy state of existence. He is free from the responsibility "of folks off yander, down in the flat country." Approximately five years after settling down in the mountains, Willie falls ill. As he tells Percy Munn, "Then the fever come hit taken me and I said, 'Willie Proudfit, you gonna die.'" [. . .] But the fever come again, and I said, 'You gonna die, and in a fer country.'"¹⁹ In his feverish sickness, the shudder comes and reveals a vision of where his right place is in the world, an image of his core being: "All the time I was a-thinkin' what I'd seen, the church and the green trees standen and the spring. [. . .] Hit was the road come-en down to Thebes, in Kentucky, when I was a kid thar [. . .] and I said, 'I'm a-goin' thar.'"²⁰ Willie and Brad's stories of revelation unfold with the same structure. It is a three step process similar

¹⁸ Warren, *Flood*, 439-440.

¹⁹ Robert Penn Warren, *Night Rider* (1939; Nashville, TN: J. S. Sanders, 1992), 421-422.

²⁰ Warren, *Night Rider*, 424-25.

to Hopkins's Ignation meditation: 1) Flight into nature (escaping responsibility); 2) A shudder of recognition (often accompanied by a sick feeling); and 3) The revealing of knowledge, or the core image of the self. In Warren's poetry, this process is more concentrated, which results in an even closer similarity to the process that takes place in Hopkins's poetry.

The "shudder" step in Warren's process, the step that recognizes the core self, is similar to Hopkins's concept of inscape. For Hopkins, careful observation of nature leads to the inscape of a thing, which ultimately leads to the recognition of God's presence in that thing. Hopkins never gives a clear definition of his idiosyncratic term, "inscape." Its meaning is implied through random uses of the term in his journals and letters. In one such journal entry, he writes, "All the world is full of inscape and chance left free to act falls into an order as well as a purpose."²¹ In another entry, he writes, "One day when the bluebells were in bloom I wrote the following. I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our lord by it. It[s inscape] is [mixed of] strength and grace like an ash [tree]."²² The inscape of the bluebell is individually mixed of strength and grace, but in a deeper sense, the inscape is the "beauty of our lord," which, since God is the ultimate inscape of everything for Hopkins, interrelates all of nature and humankind. Even with these references, which often seem cryptic, Hopkins never defines the term outright, nor does he use the term in his poetry. Yet, his poems demonstrate or imply the meaning of inscape. In a letter to Robert Bridges, Hopkins writes that his poetry is an attempt to represent inscape: "[A]s air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern, or what I am in the habit of calling 'inscape' is what I above all aim at in poetry."²³ Still, we are left with no clear definition of inscape, but through the references in his prose and his poems as examples, critics have come to a general

²¹ Hopkins, "Journal," in *Major Works*, 215.

²² Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, eds. Humphry House and Graham Storey (London: Oxford UP, 1959), 199; Hopkins's brackets.

²³ Hopkins, "Letters," in *Major Works*, 235.

understanding of the term.

Inscape, in general, is the unique inner core, or pattern, of self that everything in nature has.²⁴ It is the inner landscape of something. Alan Heuser sums up the various critical definitions of inscape as “defined, most frequently as (1) internal form, ‘inshape’, soul, idea; (2) ideal structure, excellence of form molded from within, beauty; (3) natural pattern, unitive glimpse of natural scenery as design of the whole. It is agreed that inscape indicates form of some kind, internal, ideal, natural.”²⁵ Warren does not refer to inscape at any time, but in light of this definition, we can certainly see that his poetry follows a similar concept. In fact, it is so similar that in the same interview in which he calls himself a “yearner,” Warren refers to poetry as offering a glimpse at an inner landscape: poetry “offers an inward landscape . . . it offers a sense of what man is like inside.”²⁶ Was Warren thinking about Hopkins when he made this comment? It is quite possible, considering that Warren was working on *A Place to Come To* in 1976, the same year as the interview. Even if Warren was not referring to Hopkins, the similarities remain. When the shudder of recognition comes in both Warren and Hopkins’s work, the inscape, or inward landscape, is revealed to the individual.

As I have already suggested, the shudder of recognition is only possible through a flight into nature, which can be achieved symbolically through a meditative state. This suggests that a force must act upon the self to effect the shudder of recognition, the inscape. Hopkins refers to this force as “instress.” Without instress, inscape is not revealed or comprehended. Instress is the force or glue that molds and holds a thing together, while also stressing inscape to emanate in flashing moments. For Hopkins, instress is also the presence of God in everything and the stress of the presence of God on things. Again, Hopkins neglected

²⁴ J. Hillis Miller’s consideration of inscape and its closely related concept of instress in *The Disappearance of God* is perhaps one of the most thorough explorations of the terms, in which Miller teases out every reference Hopkins makes to them in journals and letters as well as how they manifest in Hopkins’s poetry.

²⁵ Alan Heuser, *The Shaping Vision of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1968), 25.

²⁶ Watkins, Hiers, and Weaks, 212.

to leave us with a clear definition of instress, which has led to various critical definitions. Heuser summarizes the definitions of instress as stress “(1) in the object, depth of feeling as spring of its unity; (2) between object and subject, identity of being through a flash of intuition; (3) in the subject, depth of feeling in response to the intuition of being.”²⁷ Instress can come in any form, whether it is in wind, a type of friction, the striking or forging of an object—whatever factor brings stress to bear on a person or object. There is one occasion where Hopkins uses the term in a poem, “The Wreck of the Deutschland,” which demonstrates instress as acting upon a subject: “His mystery must be instressed, stressed; / For I greet him days I meet him, and bless when I understand.” In these lines, the implication is that the instress of God’s mystery makes it possible for the speaker to understand the mystery. Later in the poem, there is a clearer example, which illustrates Hopkins’s insistence that instress is what shapes and holds together man and nature. The speaker pleads, “God, three-numbered form; / Wring thy rebel, dogged in den, / Man’s malice, with wrecking and storm.”²⁸ In light of these lines, the instress seems to be an almost benevolent violence, but it is not always so violent in Hopkins’s poems.

A correlation to this instress of benevolent violence to the self is seen in the sick feeling that often accompanies the shudder of recognition that Warren’s characters experience. The tearing and ripping of Brad Tolliver’s innermost being when he is on the verge of revelation bears the same molding force as instress. Instress expressed symbolically as a shaping physical force also appears in the closing pages of Warren’s *The Cave*. Jack Harrick thinks, “*Every man’s got to make his own kind, his own kind of song.*” Moments later, he strikes a “big clanging chord” on what was once his guitar and cries out, ““Let that anvil ring!”” This moment suggests that pressure, the striking of guitar strings or hammering of metal (which Harrick did as a blacksmith), results in the revelation of the individual self, the inscape. Each thing

²⁷ Heuser, 27.

²⁸ Hopkins, “The Wreck of the Deutschland,” in *Major Works*, 111-112.

sings its own song.²⁹

Instress is what completes and unifies a thing, or in other words, instress forms and bonds the inscape of a thing. An excellent example of this relationship in Hopkins's work is "The Windhover," which I will first consider before moving on to a similar instance in Warren's "Masts at Dawn." Here follows Hopkins's complete poem:

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
 dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
 Of rolling level únderneath him steady áir, and striding
 High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
 In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
 As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
 Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
 Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
 Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
 Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wónder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion
 Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
 Fall, gáll themséives, and gásh góld-vermílion.³⁰

The sonnet is separated into three parts, just as the exercise of Ignation meditation discussed earlier is a three-step process. In the octet, we are presented with the subject of meditation, the windhover or kestrel. The kestrel is pictured "in his ecstasy," stressed and hovering on the wind. In the first tercet, there is an intense contemplation of the sense created in the speaker of the kestrel's arrested action. To the speaker, the subject becomes, "brute beauty," "valour," "act," "pride," "plume," and "fire." With this intense mental sense comes an understanding, a realization, of the significance of the event, which occurs in the final three lines. The process of realization is made apparent by the phrase, "No wonder of it." The statement of understanding follows, and the meditation reveals to the speaker (and the

²⁹ Robert Penn Warren, *The Cave* (1959; Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 2006), 401, 403.

³⁰ Hopkins, "The Windhover," in *Major Works*, 132.

reader) the inscape of the subject.

Displayed in this process is the inscape of the kestrel and the way in which instress shapes its inscape. The inscape or “mastery of the thing” is the kestrel “in his ecstasy,” instressed by the air that waves upon his “wimpling wing.” The act of fighting against “air” culminates in “here buckle!” Here, “buckle” denotes instress, which reveals the inscape, the “fire that breaks from thee.” In the 1976 edition of *Understanding Poetry*, Brooks and Warren footnote “buckle” and suggest three possibilities for its meaning: “(1) putting on battle dress? (2) bringing together into unity? (3) giving way, crumpling under pressure?” Certainly, the second of these suggestions is the most relevant in considering this relationship between instress and inscape. In the discussion questions that follow the poem, Brooks and Warren note the poem’s “symbolic force” and ask students to consider the importance of this force when interpreting the poem.³¹ In using the term “symbolic force” instead of symbolism, Brooks and Warren have called attention to the process of instress, the force, acting on the symbol, making the kestrel more than just a symbol, but a glimpse of inscape.

In the final three lines of the poem, this process occurs. The speaker says, “No wonder of it,” or “No wonder I’m so struck by this display of instress,” and then contemplates the revelation. He sees the stress or force as unlocking a core essence, which is demonstrated in the two examples detailed following the realization. In the first example, he notes that “sheer plod,” which can be considered working or grinding away, makes a plow shine after it has done its work. The roughness of the plow wears away, making it smooth and shiny. The second example is even more illustrative of an outward stress revealing an inner essence. “Blue-bleak embers,” or nearly spent ashes, when stoked or struck, reveal a much more intense “gold-vermilion” flaming at their core.

“Masts at Dawn” is similar to “The Windhover” in that it is also logically structured into three parts and reveals the inscape

³¹ Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1976), 208-209.

of a thing, resulting in a revelatory moment. Even though the subject matter of the two poems is different, they both contain a shudder of recognition, which leads to a recognition of the self. In addition, by considering the kestrel as an emblem of some deeper meaning, we can connect Hopkins's poem to Warren's mode of perception in his later poetry, which Valerie Morrison describes as "similar to decoding or deciphering hieroglyphic symbols." According to Morrison, Warren "engages his personae in a dialectic conversation with the surrounding world" and "concentrates on the images that nature presents, images that can be marveled at or reflected upon by an interior mind, even though they can never be completely or accurately communicated."³² Here, Morrison coincidentally describes Warren's meditative process in terms similar to Hopkins's and, in turn, summarizes the structure of "Masts at Dawn." In a 1977 interview with Peter Stitt, Warren again addresses his status as a yearner, but in direct relation to "Masts at Dawn." He also suggests that he sees a deeper meaning in things. The "immanence of meaning" he refers to may be likened to inscape: "I am a creature of this world, but I am also a yearner, I suppose. I would call this temperament rather than theology—I haven't got any gospel. That is, I feel an immanence of meaning in things, but I have no meaning to put there that is interesting or beautiful. I think I put it as close as I could in a poem called 'Masts at Dawn' [. . .]."³³ The speaker of "Masts at Dawn" is in the midst of reflecting on the images of nature in relation to humankind and reflects upon these images in a meditative state.

Calvin Bedient includes "Masts at Dawn" as an example of Warren's failure to remain "honest and intelligent" to the material addressed in the poem, where "Warren's posturing puffs or curdles it, and his impulse to instruct, to inflict judgment, chokes it up." Though Bedient describes "Masts at Dawn" as "the best managed, most resounding poem in *Incarnations*," he also asserts that "it is mostly nervous; it is 'talk.' Thus, after

³² Valerie Morrison, "The Tangled Hieroglyphics of Robert Penn Warren's Late Poetry," *rWp: An Annual of Robert Penn Warren Studies* 4 (2004): 125-6.

³³ Watkins, Hiers, and Weaks, 243.

the first line [. . .] little failures begin to mount. [. . .] The sea, the poet will later say, ‘doubts its mission,’ but so does the poet, whose writing hand is shaky. [. . .] He is a little anxious to project both a moral and philosophical authority.”³⁴ I disagree that the poem is a series of “little failures” written by an unsure hand, and that Warren’s impulse to instruct “chokes it up.” In fact, the poem proceeds in a very structured way. Again, we can break it into three parts, bearing in mind the three-step meditation of Hopkins and Warren. The first part (lines 1-18) demonstrates careful observation of nature, where the speaker meditates just as the “sea sinks into meditation.”³⁵ Within these eighteen lines, Warren intimates a moment of instress revealing inscape: “When there is a strong swell, you may, if you surrender to it, experience / A sense, in the act, of mystic unity with that rhythm” (lines 8-9). Here, he describes the process of self-revelation, the instressing of inscape. The “strong swell” serves as the instress that brings forth the inscape of the individual experience, which results in a feeling of “mystic unity.” The initial composition of the scene that takes place leads to the second step of the meditation, consisting of only one line (line 19): “I lie in my bed and think how, in darkness, the masts go white.” In this line, the speaker is connected to the natural world. He brings himself into the scene upon which he has been meditating. This inevitably leads to the third part of the meditative process (lines 20-22): recognition of a core being and a deeper understanding of the self in relation to the world, which occurs in the closing lines: “We must try / To love so well the world that we may believe, in the end, in God.” Because the speaker is tied to the world, the implication is that he, along with everything else in the world, is connected to God. Loving the world is acknowledging that there is a God—or a god-like force, the god of the yearner—because it includes a recognition of the divine image in everything, and in Hopkins’s terms, “we can know the beauty of our lord by it.”³⁶ Interpreting

³⁴ Bedient, 9-10.

³⁵ Warren, “Masts at Dawn,” in *Collected Poems*, 233; subsequent quotations cited by line number in the text.

³⁶ The “dawn-dove,” which awakes just before the speaker of “Masts at Dawn” states his revelatory pronouncement, echoes the image of Hopkins’s kestrel, “daylight’s dauphin, dapple-

“Masts at Dawn” in relation to its three-part meditative structure demonstrates that, contrary to Bedient’s opinion, the poet is not anxious to project a moral and philosophical authority. The structure of the poem necessitates a realization of this sort. In fact, the structure of “Masts at Dawn” mirrors the logical organization of *Incarnations*, the collection in which it is included and wherein the realization of the speaker of “Masts at Dawn” takes place on a larger scale.

Morrison’s apt observation that Warren’s later poetry “concentrates on the images that nature presents, images that can be marveled at or reflected upon by an interior mind,” is entirely applicable to *Incarnations* (1968) and links the considerations made thus far concerning the similarities between Warren’s and Hopkins’s poetics.³⁷ In addition, Randolph Paul Runyon’s extensive consideration of the intricately braided nature of Warren’s poetic sequences, their universal singularity, provides an excellent foreground in which to consider the structural movement of *Incarnations* as similar to the three-step meditative process found in both Warren and Hopkins.³⁸

M. Bernetta Quinn notes the strong sense of the tied-togetherness of man and nature in *Incarnations*: “No object in Creation exists in isolation: man and Nature are looped together by a band of light, which symbolizes the common destiny of a mortal world awaiting fulfillment. Robert Penn Warren’s vision, including *Incarnations* [. . .] is basically affirmative.”³⁹ The man-nature relationship in Warren’s work, as has been discussed above in relation to revelation, is at its most intense, sustained scrutiny in the poetic sequence of *Incarnations*. The entire collection proceeds as a form of meditation, which moves toward revelation through prayerful reverence for truth, signified by nature, to an unsacred reverence for the shockingness of

dawn-drawn Falcon.” In addition, if the dove is representative of the Holy Spirit, then there is another correlation between the two poems, because Hopkins not only dedicates his poem to “Christ our Lord,” he also refers to the kestrel in a manner of lordship as “O, My Chevalier!”

³⁷ Morrison, 125.

³⁸ See Runyon’s *The Braided Dream: Robert Penn Warren’s Late Poetry and Ghostly Parallels: Robert Penn Warren and the Lyric Poetic Sequence*.

³⁹ M. Bernetta Quinn, “Promised Land,” *Robert Penn Warren: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Neil Nakadate (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1981), 286.

inner truth, signified by the human condition, in order to reveal the necessity for recognition of individual complicity. The movement from consideration of nature to the consideration of inner nature follows an arc similar to many of Hopkins's poems as well as the arc of Hopkins's entire body of work, which moved increasingly from macrocosm to microcosm before achieving a final individual revelatory moment.

The title, *Incarnations*—which suggests embodiment of the ineffable in flesh or, in non-secular terms, the embodiment of God in human flesh—also indicates this outward-inward relation, where humanity and divinity or physicality and abstraction are inextricably tied together. Hopkins's term *inscape*, as I have defined it, is synonymous with the idea of incarnation, which reveals another bridge connecting Hopkins and Warren. In addition, the title of the collection seems to indicate that Warren, like Hopkins, is considering not only the relationship between humankind and nature, but also a way to love or accept God. Yet, Warren does so from the position of the yearner, balancing religious temperament and physicality by adding two epigraphs under the title: "Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren" and "John Henry said to the Captain, 'A man ain't nuthin but a man.'"⁴⁰ "Although *Incarnations* must inevitably recall 'And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,'" notes Blotner, "[the] two epigraphs broaden [the title's] implication. They refer to the inhumanity of man to man yet also suggest man's dignity and a kind of community shared by all things that live, as well as the element of the divine that can inhere in them."⁴¹ Recalling Warren's comments on the importance of the epigraphs to his works as keys to understanding them suggests that the theme, or key, to *Incarnations* lies in the consideration of the *inscape* of the individual speaker, nature, and humankind as tied together by some divinity or spiritual complicity. With this in mind, it is possible to draw further parallels between Hopkins and Warren in addressing the philosophy and structure of *Incarnations*.

⁴⁰ Warren, *Incarnations*, in *Collected Poems*, 221. The first epigraph is from Nehemiah 5:5. The second comes from the traditional folk ballad, "John Henry."

⁴¹ Blotner, 374-5.

The structure of *Incarnations* is comprised of three sections (“Island of Summer,” “Internal Injuries,” and “Enclaves”), which again suggests the shared three-step meditative process of Warren and Hopkins. The inscape revealed to the speaker is the human condition, manifested through instress, which is followed by a physical sickness or ailment at the moment of recognition. This structure is intimated by the speaker in the second poem of the first section, “Where the Slow Fig’s Purple Sloth,” in which he remarks, “I sit and meditate the / Nature of the soul, the fig exposes, / to the blaze of the afternoon.”⁴² Although we are told that this process is taking place, it seems at first that the speaker is unwilling to experience the revelatory moment of inscape. He warns the reader, in the initial poem of the collection, “What Day Is,” “Do not / look too long at the sea, for / the brightness will rinse your eyeballs. / They will go as gray as dead moons.”⁴³ By meditating too long on nature, symbolized by the sea, the speaker tells us that we will suffer some kind of pain or something like a catatonic shock where our eyes glaze over in lifelessness. The shocking revelation that results from this meditation on nature is the brightness or flash of the inscape of the human condition, which, as we will see in section two, is almost as terrifying as Eliot’s “handful of dust.”⁴⁴ However, we realize that it is unavoidable, because the speaker sees that nature and humankind are unavoidably tied together. As James Justus notes,

[T]he poems in this first section show the commonplaces of natural history heightened into an exacerbated awareness of their relation to man. [. . . N]ature is not merely a reflector of man’s changeable moods but a realm in its own right, not susceptible of man’s casual manipulation but as richly varied as man’s own condition and competitive with it.⁴⁵

Yet, both man and nature remain unique, though simultaneously

⁴² Warren, *Collected Poems*, 223.

⁴³ Warren, *Collected Poems*, 223.

⁴⁴ T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (New York: Norton, 2001), 6.

⁴⁵ James Justus, *The Achievement of Robert Penn Warren* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1981), 83-84.

tied together. The moment of inscape is revealed when these two overlap or “instress” each other.

There are many cases in the first section where the inscape of nature is intimated and which also provide revelatory knowledge and understanding. One such image occurs after the speaker invokes the meditative process in “Where the Slow Fig’s Purple Sloth.” The poem closes: “When you / Split the fig, you will see / Lifting from the coarse and purple seed, its / Flesh like flame, purer / Than blood. // It fills / The darkening room with light.”⁴⁶ Here, we see the application of the term “incarnation,” in that the flesh of the fig embodies a greater, abstract power that can brighten a dark room. In a non-secular sense, this is God, which is more clearly stated in “Masts at Dawn.” In a secular sense, this is knowledge or recognition of the human condition. In both senses, there is inscape. As discussed earlier, recognition of this core vision, the “shudder” step, will cause a feeling of pain, about which the speaker warns us in “Riddle in the Garden”:

[. . .] be careful not to break that soft

Gray bulge of fruit-skin of blister, for
 exposing that inwardness will
 increase your pain, for you
 are part of the world. You think
 I am speaking in riddles. But I am not, for

The world means only itself.⁴⁷

The statement, “The world means only itself” implies the concept of inscape. For the speaker to make this statement, he must acknowledge the shudder, or pain, the instress of the revelation that the “world means only itself.” Each thing in nature, including the individual, has a core being that is its self, which Hopkins similarly expresses in “As kingfishers catch fire”:

Each mortal thing does one thing and the same

⁴⁶ Warren, “Where the Slow Fig’s Purple Sloth,” in *Collected Poems*, 224.

⁴⁷ Warren, “Riddle in the Garden,” in *Collected Poems*, 225-6.

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.*⁴⁸

The idea of a core intangible being, the inscape of something, is expressed and further highlighted when the speaker alludes to Plotinus in Warren's "A Place Where Nothing Is":

Earlier
 I have warned you not to look
 too long at the brightness of
 the sea, but now—yes—
 I retract my words, for
 the brightness of that nothing-
 ness which is the sea is
 not nothingness, but is
 like the inestimable sea of

Nothingness Plotinus dreamed.⁴⁹

The allusion to Plotinus not only implies that there is a core being for everything, but also that there is a divine presence in this being which, once again, harkens back to incarnation and inscape. Plotinus states, "[D]rawing on something well within our observation, represents the Creator as approving the work he has achieved: the intention is to make us feel the lovable beauty of the archetype and of the Divine Idea; for to admire a representation is to admire the original upon which it was made."⁵⁰ This reflection of the divine parallels Hopkins's statement that he "can know the beauty of our lord" by a single bluebell.⁵¹ The reference to Plotinus also foreshadows the direct statement or affirmation of God inscaped in nature made in the following poem, "Masts at Dawn": "We must try / To love so well the world that we may believe, in the end, in God."⁵² In addition, it is significant that in "A Place Where Nothing Is,"

⁴⁸ Hopkins, *Major Works*, 129.

⁴⁹ Warren, *Collected Poems*, 232.

⁵⁰ Plotinus, "The Fifth Ennead," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch, (New York: Norton, 2001), 180-1.

⁵¹ Hopkins, *Journals and Papers*, 199.

⁵² Warren, *Collected Poems*, 233.

the speaker retracts the warning he gives the reader in “What Day Is.” Now, instead of warning against meditation on the sea, the speaker demonstrates a moving toward acceptance of the revelation, and it is significant because “Masts at Dawn” is a result of this acceptance, where the speaker focuses his meditation literally on the seascape, resulting in the revelation of inscape. The poems leading up to the pronouncement of revelation in “Masts at Dawn” logically necessitate the statement, just as the poem itself does. It is the result of a growing meditation on nature and man’s relation to it over the course of the first section. This mounting of observation and realization culminates in the last poem of the section.

In the concluding poem of section one, “The Leaf,” we see the shudder of ultimate realization by the speaker’s self. The speaker recognizes that the leaf’s purpose is to shelter him “from the blaze of the world,” and that it is time to face that blaze, the instress, which pains him: “To this spot I bring my grief. / Human grief is the obscenity to be hidden by the leaf.” The shudder comes in the form of a hawk riding the wind:

[. . .] The hawk shudder[s] in the high sky, he shudders
 To hold position in the blazing wind, in relation to
 The firmament, he shudders and the world is a metaphor, his eye
 Sees, white, the flicker of hare-scut, the movement of vole.⁵³

Given Hopkins’s kestrel, an embodiment of the inscape of the world, it scarcely seems coincidental that Warren would use the image of a shuddering hawk to express the shudder of recognition. Brooks and Warren, in *Understanding Poetry* (1976), even define the kestrel as “a small European hawk, somewhat resembling the American sparrowhawk.”⁵⁴ The symbolic force of both Hopkins’s kestrel and Warren’s hawk suggests that every physical manifestation, its flesh in the world, is a metaphor for its core being.

After this shudder of recognition, the flesh is broken by instress, here signified by heat—the blaze of afternoon sun

⁵³ Warren, *Collected Poems*, 234.

⁵⁴ Brooks and Warren, 208.

evoked throughout the section—and the inner being, the inscape, is exposed:

The world is fruitful. In this heat
The plum, black yet bough-bound, bursts, and the gold ooze is,
Of bees, joy, the gold ooze has striven
Outward, it wants again to be of
The goldness of air and—oh—innocent. [. . .]⁵⁵

Here is another Hopkins-like image invoking the divine presence in things. In “God’s Grandeur,” Hopkins states, “The world is charged with the grandeur of God. / It will flame out, like shining from shook foil; / It gathers to a greatness, like ooze of oil / Crushed.”⁵⁶ In fact, the speaker of “The Leaf” comes to realize that he has the divine in him. Christ is incarnate in man which, in turn, implies that God the father is present in all men, which the speaker acknowledges: “From a further Garden, from the shade of another tree, / My father’s voice, in the moment when the cicada ceases, has called to me.”⁵⁷ Yet, while the “gold ooze” that comes from the plum may invoke the divine in the human, it also represents the human condition, which was once gold in innocence but now must strive toward innocence lost. It is fitting that Hopkins’s “God’s Grandeur,” specifically the first four lines of the sonnet, is invoked as section one comes to a close, because it suggests the unifying presence of God in nature as well as a prelapsarian state. Warren’s speaker has likewise immersed himself in this idyllic nature through meditation in section one. We may consider “Island of Summer” as the first step of the meditative process, a flight into nature. Section two, “Internal Injuries,” is the shudder stage, the revelation of inscape, the “unsacred reverence for the shockingness of inner truth.”⁵⁸

In section two of *Incarnations*, we are no longer in idyllic nature but submerged in the real world of the human condition—hence the title “Internal Injuries,” the soiled divinity of the human condition, the “gold ooze” gone dull. Hopkins describes

⁵⁵ Warren, *Collected Poems*, 235.

⁵⁶ Hopkins, *Major Works*, 128.

⁵⁷ Warren, *Collected Poems*, 235.

⁵⁸ Warren, “Forward,” 9.

this condition after invoking God's idyllic nature in "God's Grandeur":

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
 And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
 And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
 Is bare now, nor can foot feel being shod.⁵⁹

The poems included in "Internal Injuries" move from outward nature to the problem of the inner human. In this world, we see the filth of humankind on nature: "Owl, owl, stop calling from the swamp, let / Old orange peel and condoms and / that dead catfish, belly white [. . .] slide whitely down the sliding darkness [. . .]."⁶⁰ In this world, the catfish that was one with the Mississippi and a symbol of oneness with God in *Brother to Dragons* is now belly up and rotting.⁶¹ This section is also full of crime and mechanization, making it quite contrary to part one. Yet, the revelation of inscape occurs in a similar manner, although on a more intense and dark level, where "[. . .] metaphors will scream in the shared glory of their referents. / Truth will embrace you [. . .]."⁶² The metaphors or symbols in this section, like Hopkins's kestrel, are instressed in order to reveal the referents, the inscape, which results in revelation of truth and unity.

"Internal Injuries" consists of two narratives, dividing the second section of *Incarnations* into two parts, "Penological Study: Southern Exposure" and "Internal Injuries." In both narratives, we are presented with literal internal injuries, where the old inmate, Jake, suffers from stomach cancer in the first part and in the second, an old woman has been struck by a car outside of Penn Station. Symbolically these stories reveal the inscape of the human condition as instressed by gnawing cancer or the impact of a car, the latter followed by the woman's piercing

⁵⁹ Hopkins, *Major Works*, 128.

⁶⁰ Warren, "Dawn," in *Collected Poems*, 241

⁶¹ "The catfish is in the Mississippi and / The Mississippi is in the catfish and / Under the ice both are one / With God. / Would that we were!" Robert Penn Warren, *Brother to Dragons* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1996), 61.

⁶² Warren, "Tomorrow Morning," *Collected Poems*, 237.

scream in the New York City night to which the speaker, as he comes to realize, is tied. As Runyon notes,

The narrator of both sequences is of one flesh with the dying person who has accidentally come into his field of vision, though in both he tries to escape that fact. [. . .] Poetically, the two sequences presented under the title “II. Internal Injuries” approach the state of being of one flesh, too, given the parallels in their narrative outline and their shared images and language.⁶³

Runyon’s phrase “one flesh” harkens back to Warren’s “One Life,” or sacramental vision. The juxtaposition of narratives, tied together structurally and thematically in conjunction with the consistent presence of the narrator, displays a unity in the physical world, an underlying pattern of humanity. Yet, the unity between the physical and spiritual world remains to be demonstrated, which will occur in the third section. “Internal Injuries” represents a meditation on the unsacred reverence for the shockingness of inner truth, which the speaker is in the midst of experiencing. It is in experiencing the horrors of these two narratives that the speaker is able to come to a revelatory moment in the final section of *Incarnations*.

The immediate revelation in section two is that the speaker is inextricably tied to the pain of both Jake and the old woman. These stories are not merely anecdotes. As Runyon notes, “In the context of the two sequences titled ‘II. Internal Injuries,’ the relation is a complex and subtle interplay that sends us back and forth between the two, searching for what truth beyond the immediately anecdotal might emerge from their relation.”⁶⁴ The speaker acknowledges the serious implications of these events as he claims that he is no “Peeping Tom” while staring at onlookers and the woman on the street. He is on the verge of the revelatory shudder:

[. . .] I,

⁶³ Randolph Paul Runyon, *Ghostly Parallels: Robert Penn Warren and the Lyric Poetic Sequence* (Knoxville: U of Tennessee Press, 2006), 129.

⁶⁴ Runyon, *Ghostly Parallels*, 130.

Ashamed of their insensitiveness,
Am no Peeping Tom with my

Own face pressed directly to the
Window of your pain to peer

Deep in your inward darkness, waiting,
With slack-jawed and spit-wet leer,

For what darkling gleam, and spasm,
Visceral and pure, like love.⁶⁵

At this moment, the speaker understands that there is some deeper meaning, a core referent, symbolized by the screaming woman. He readies himself for the revelatory glimpse of inscape, her inward darkness, and waits for the shudder (here, “spasm”) to occur and reveal the “darkling gleam” of truth, a pure truth “like love,” dark as that truth may be. However, the sight of the woman’s hat stuck under the car wheel distracts the speaker. He is not ready to accept the common bond of inward darkness that he shares with her. At the instance of witnessing these painful glimpses of the stained human condition and the inferred complicity in events experienced by the speaker, he wishes to flee, to disconnect himself, as they threaten to take hold of him:

I must hurry, I must go somewhere
Where you are not, where you
Will never be, I
Must go somewhere where
Nothing is real, for only
Nothingness is real and is
A sea of light. The world
Is a parable and we are
The meaning.⁶⁶

Therefore, he does go somewhere else where “nothingness is real,” where the physical world dissolves, resulting in a final revelation. In the last poem of the sequence, “Driver, Driver,”

⁶⁵ Warren, “Her Hat,” *Collected Poems*, 243.

⁶⁶ Warren, “The World is a Parable,” *Collected Poems*, 246.

the speaker is almost feverish as he says, "Driver, driver, hurry now." His "guts are full of chyme and chyle, of Time and bile," which seems to signal that the shudder is about to come, punctuated by the sound of screaming and jackhammers. In the last line, "Driver, there's an awful glitter in the air," we know that the shudder has occurred and that the inscape, or truth, which is often associated with "glitter" in Warren's work, is about to be revealed to the speaker whether he likes it or not.⁶⁷ This final revelation of complicity with the darkness of the human condition occurs in the last section of *Incarnations*, "Enclaves."⁶⁸

"Enclaves" places the speaker in isolation, as is suggested by the title of the section. This seems rather unlike Warren since he continually emphasizes the need for a person to remain in contact with the world in order to realize his or her self. However, if we take into account what Warren says in "Knowledge and the Image of Man," this isolation makes sense: "In the pain of isolation he [Man] may achieve the courage and clarity of mind to envisage the tragic pathos of life, and once he realizes that the tragic experience is universal and a corollary of man's place in nature, he may return to a communion with man and nature."⁶⁹ This statement is particularly apt when applied to "Internal Injuries" and "Enclaves." As the body of the speaker dissolves, cloaked in fog, he can now recognize his core self, making it possible for the speaker to "return to a communion with man and nature." At this moment, the speaker is, as Warren states in his essay on Conrad, "precariously balanced in his humanity between the black inward abyss of himself and the black outward abyss of nature."⁷⁰ Having come to a revelation of the necessity of accepting the human condition as part of himself, manifested by the shudder felt in part two, he is now, in

⁶⁷ Warren, "Driver, Driver," *Collected Poems*, 246-7.

⁶⁸ In discussing section three of *Incarnations*, I should clarify that all references to "Enclaves" consider Warren's revised version of this section for *Selected Poems 1975*, which he renamed "In the Mountains." Because *The Collected Poems of Robert Penn Warren* has been the source for all quotations of Warren's poetry in this paper, I have continued to refer to this section as "Enclaves," which Burt has also done for editorial clarity and consistency.

⁶⁹ Robert Penn Warren, "Knowledge and the Image of Man," in *Robert Penn Warren: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. John Lewis Longley Jr. (New York: New York UP, 1965), 241.

⁷⁰ Robert Penn Warren, "'The Great Mirage': Conrad and *Nostramo*," in *Selected Essays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 55.

his isolation, able to understand the significance of the inscape he has witnessed. The speaker even begs this communion in the last lines of the section:

The body's brags are put
To sleep—all, all. What
Is the locus of the soul?

What in such absoluteness,
Can be prayed for? Oh, crow,
Come back, I would hear your voice:
That much, at least, in this whiteness.⁷¹

The speaker's call to the crow is the moment of acceptance of the unity of all things in nature. The answer to his questions, "What is the locus of the soul?" and "What in such absoluteness, can be prayed for?" is communion with both the physical and spiritual world, the "One Life" or "one flesh." It is recognition of the underlying pattern of all things that ties everything together.

The act of calling to the crow as *Incarnations* closes marks the recognition of complicity, the revelatory moment that is so often found in Warren's work. Present throughout *Incarnations* is the suggestion that the revelatory moment occurs by witnessing the inscape of nature and humankind through a meditative process. After considering the philosophy and meditative structure of Hopkins's work, the similarities between Warren and Hopkins's poetry should be clear. Still, it is hard to say how much influence Hopkins had on Warren. Certainly, there is a connection between the two, one on which I have tried to shed some light. Yet, without any hard evidence of Warren commenting upon Hopkins, other than the epigraph to *A Place to Come To*, the connection can only serve as a point of consideration in approaching Warren's poetry, specifically his later work.

Evidence from the successive editions of *Understanding Poetry* would seem to indicate that Hopkins became more of a consideration for Warren, and therefore more of an influence,

⁷¹ Warren, "Fog," *Collected Poems*, 249.

as the years went on, which would explain the heavier stylistic echoes of Hopkins in Warren's later poetry. Surveying the four editions of the textbook reveals that the first edition (1938) contains no Hopkins poetry, the second edition (1950) includes one poem, "The Windhover," and the third edition (1960) includes "The Windhover" as well as "Binsey Poplars," "Inversnaid," and "Thou Art Indeed Just, Lord."⁷² Finally, the fourth edition (1976) also includes four Hopkins poems: "God's Grandeur," "Inversnaid," "Thou Art Indeed Just, Lord," and "The Windhover." Two things are noteworthy in this survey. First, the number of Hopkins poems not only increased, but commentary and discussion of these poems increased over the course of the four editions. The 1976 edition displays the most consideration of Hopkins, and it was published during the same time that Warren was working on *A Place to Come To*. Second, and perhaps most importantly, "The Windhover" is the only poem included in three of the four editions. It is only fitting, when considering the Warren-Hopkins connection, that Brooks and Warren highlight "The Windhover," the poem that many believe to be the best example of Hopkins's work, since Warren's own "hawk" poem, "Evening Hawk," serves as one of Warren's most emblematic poems. It is even more telling that the image of the hawk that appears in *Incarnations* and "Evening Hawk" both follow poems, in their respective collections, that concern belief in or love of God, and both "hawk" poems were written at a time when it seems Warren's consideration of Hopkins was at its highest.⁷³ Similarly, Hopkins's "The Windhover" is the poet's most specific attempt to show his love for God—hence the dedication "to Christ our Lord."⁷⁴ While the Warren-Hopkins connection may be clouded with more conjecture than hard facts, I do not think that it is entirely speculation to state that both Warren and Hopkins, the evening hawk and windhover, shudder

⁷² In the revised, shorter edition of *Understanding Poetry*, published that same year (1950), "The Windhover" is not included.

⁷³ In *Incarnations* (1966-68), "I saw // The hawk shudder in the sky," from "The Leaf," follows "Masts at Dawn" and its final lines, "We must try // To love so well the world that we may believe, in the end, in God." Similarly, "Evening Hawk," from *Can I See Arcturus From Where I Stand?* (1975), follows the poem, "A Way to Love God."

⁷⁴ Hopkins, *Major Works*, 132.

in sync.