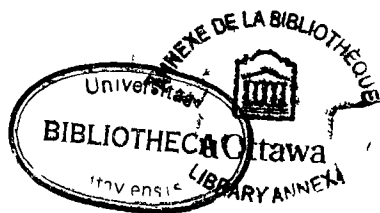


FRANCIS THOMPSON: THE POET
REVEALED IN HIS IMAGES

by

Joseph J. George

Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts
of the University of Ottawa in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



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INTRODUCTION

1. The Nature of Imagery

In inquiring into the nature of poetic vision, let us direct attention to the problems of semantics. In this study, the writer's purpose has been to evaluate the subject-matter of Francis Thompson's images with a view of understanding the man himself. The technical aspects of imagery are of minor importance because the form of the image does not affect the validity of the meaning; the content, does. The differences between metaphor and the other figures of resemblance and identity exist only in the expression, not in the mind.

The word 'image' suggests primarily a general idea of picture or comparison of some kind. In explaining an unfamiliar idea to someone else, we find ourselves using imagery. Our daily speech is made up of all sorts of images. Imagery springs from the inadequacy of language to express thought precisely. The myriad analogies between the world of sensible reality and the imaginative faculty are the poet's foundation for the making of images. In Shelley's felicitous phrase it consists in the observation of the "before unapprehended relationships of things."¹

1. Cook, A.S., Shelley: A Defence of Poetry, Ginn & Co., Boston, 1891. p. 3.

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images are not beautiful. Images show lack of good taste by being florid, gaudy, or too obvious. Images with endless detail are neither in good taste nor poetically effective.

2. The Function of Imagery in Poetry

In poetry, then, the term 'imagery' includes the figures of resemblance, metaphor, simile, and personification, and the minor figures of contiguity, metonymy and synecdoche. Any word used in other than its literal meaning is a metaphor. For purposes of this study, this wide, rather general definition will suffice.

Metaphor is the natural language of poetry. For the gifted poet, it is a mode of apprehension, an intuitive perception of reality. It is incessant in fine poetry. A poet leads in discovering likenesses, similarities, and relationships that do not exist. Metaphor is the name given to the imaginative function between two ideas, that bear a resemblance brought about by the poet's experience of life.

By the use of metaphor, a poet attempts to express in terms of his experience, thoughts lying beyond experience, to express the abstract in terms of the concrete, the unfamiliar by means of the familiar, and the intellectual by the sensible. Metaphor then, is the personal expression of a poet's individual vision. If we think of images as links in a scattered chain, their meaning lies in re-assembling them according to their subject-matter.

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In language, imagery is the use of words or phrases in other than their proper signification; or an image is the use of a word in other than its root meaning. Imagery is the use of one idea, the known, to picture, describe, or explain another idea, the unknown. An image makes an intellectual idea visible to the perception. When a poet cannot communicate the whole of an intellectual concept, he compares it with a sensible object. Thus he is able to express this concept for which no exact literal equivalent existed in language.

The use of an image does not necessarily involve the sacrifice of truth. At times, an image may be able to express truth with a greater degree of accuracy than literal statement. Sometimes the only way a poet can communicate emotion is by describing the objects which aroused it. Insofar as an image is the outcome of emotion, it gives to the expression color, vigor, and intensity, but not logical clearness. An idea may not be clear in the order of logical association (i.e. Hound of Heaven), but it is immediately grasped by the perception. Imagery expresses truth more concisely, vividly, memorably, and emotionally than literal statement. The ideal image springs from spontaneous emotion. To be poetically effective, an image must be intelligible and in good taste. Neither an obscure image nor a too familiar image is beautiful; artificial images, conceits, and trite

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3. Method Explained

The problem of the thesis is that the study of imagery is a much closer approach to a poet's personality and innermost thoughts, insofar as they are recorded in the images, than either biography or autobiography. A biographer shapes his material and usually has a predetermined viewpoint in approaching his subject; a person writing about himself is limited in treating with candor events in his past life which may be embarrassing, or actions which he regrets having done.

Imagery is to a certain extent an unwilling record of experience. An image is based on the poet's individual experience of life and thought. In studying the poetic creation of any writer, we find that the poet tends to draw his images from the departments of life and reality in which he is most interested. In his images then, a poet leaves a record, unknown to himself, of his preferences and aversions, beliefs, opinions, and a glimpse into his personality:

"...like the man who under stress of emotion will show no sign of it in eye or face, but will reveal it in some muscular tension, the poet unwittingly reveals his own innermost likes and dislikes, observations and interests, associations of thought, attitudes of mind and belief, in and through his images."²

2. Spurgeon, Caroline F. E., *Shakespeare's Imagery: And What It Tells Us*, The MacMillan Company, New York, 1935, p. 4

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It is the writer's purpose in this study to evaluate the subject-matter of Francis Thompson's images and reveal his thoughts and philosophy and sources of poetic inspiration. The evidence of the images is the sole basis for making conclusions; all known biographical data has been omitted. At no time does the proof of the argument depend on biographical data. Biographical facts are only brought in to prove the validity of conclusions which have been made on the evidence of the images alone.

The writer has also found that it is almost impossible to discover the fine points of meaning because the nature of poetic imagery is a subject upon which critics disagree. Another limitation in the study is that the analysis of imagery while indeed representative can never be complete.

In studying the imagery, a count has been made of the images, then sorted them into categories, studied each category, and finally made conclusions. Each chapter of the thesis is based on one of the main groups of Thompson's images. A sufficient number of images have been quoted to give the reader an impression of the basic thoughts and dominant interests that went into the formation of the images of Francis Thompson.

4. Survey of Previous Literature

In attempting to define the term 'image', the writer has met with almost universal disagreement among the major

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critics on the subject. As early as 1929, a noted psychologist demonstrated the importance of studying poetic images:

"Recently it has been realized that from the psychological point of view a study of such figures is most promising."³

Nearer our own time, many critical studies have been made, with results that range from excellent scholarship to personal opinion. While conscious of the fact that the imagination cannot be explained, in the strict sense, many studies of poetic vision are reasonable and scholarly and convincing. Before discussing some of the major critical studies on imagery, a brief definition of terms is necessary.⁴

Every metaphor consists of four elements: the main idea, which is the poet's original concept or the unknown, the idea common to the poet and his reader, the known, which defines or describes the original idea, the area of identity or comparison, and the extent of this identity or comparison. The main idea is the poet's thought in its origin, the imported idea, the known, by implied comparison or identification forms the image; then the poet's individual vision forms and limits the area of identity or resemblance.

The differences between metaphor, simile, personification, metonymy, and synecdoche, exist only in expression;

3. Downey, June E., The Creative Imagination, New York, Harcourt Brace and Company, 1929, p. 135.

4. Brown, Stephen, The World of Imagery, London, Kegan, Paul, Trench Trubner & Company, Ltd., passim

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each is a species of metaphor and contains the four elements; therefore in studying the meanings of images it is not necessary to separate the images and classify them according to form.

A metaphor is a veiled comparison; a simile is a direct or stated comparison. In metaphor, the comparison or identity is suggested or implied, in a simile, the two ideas are compared by the use of a word such as 'like', 'as', and sometimes 'so'. In a simile, the imported idea is always distinct from the main idea; in a metaphor, the ideas are more closely associated together. The metaphor of identification is based on an implied identity wherein the elements of two unconnected ideas are associated together, (i.e. Hound of Heaven, the two ideas 'Hound' and 'Heaven' are entirely unrelated and would never be logically associated together). The metaphor of comparison is based upon the perception of a similarity between two ideas, (i.e. How a pedlar, dry and rude/
As a crook'd branch taking flesh, the two ideas, the old man with a bent back and the crook'd branch bear a likeness in form).

Personification is a species of metaphor where the imported idea is always some aspect of human life. When insensate objects or abstract concepts are endowed with some kind of human life or action, then this product of the poetic imagination is called personification.

Synecdoche and Metonymy are minor forms of imagery. Synecdoche is the substitution of the physical part for the

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whole. It excludes the genus, the universal idea, and directs attention to the species, the serviceable part of the idea. Metonymy involves an external or nominal change; in metonymy one name is substituted for another. / Metonymy differs from synecdoche in that the former involves an external substitution, in name, and the latter, an internal substitution, the physical part.

Agreement among the major critics stops with these simple definitions. The functions of poetic imagery and the analyses of imagery in order to prove the validity of conclusions based thereon differ in the extreme. Among the primary sources, the method of procedure in each case varies.

In attempting a reconstruction of the mind of Francis Thompson, insofar as it is revealed in his imagery, the writer is indebted most of all to the distinguished Shakespearean scholar, Professor Caroline F. E. Spurgeon. In her convincing study of Shakespeare's imagery⁵, Professor Spurgeon pioneered the method followed in this study. Drawing logically and simply from the fundamental and primary meanings of images in groups, Professor Spurgeon arrived at an intelligible and convincing conclusion, in each category of images, of the mind and poetic philosophy of William Shakespeare.

5. Spurgeon, Caroline F. E., Shakespeare's Imagery: And What It Tells Us, New York, The MacMillan Company, 1935.

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In the approach to Thompson, let us briefly examine the methods of the other major critics, before returning to Professor Spurgeon.

In his study of Coleridge⁶, Professor John Livingston Lowes makes no formal definition of imagery but does the minute and painstaking work of studying the ways of the imagination as revealed in The Rime of the Ancient Mariner and Kubla Khan. A small volume of about ninety pages, written in Coleridge's hand, in which he jotted down, in chaotic fashion, all sorts of notes and suggestions, serves as the sole source of the study. How these jumbled recollections of Coleridge's reading became transmuted into pure poetry is the subject of Professor Lowes's study of the moulding imagination of the poet, Coleridge. In his introductory pages, Professor Lowes points out and emphasizes that:

"Coleridge as Coleridge, be it said at once, is of secondary moment to our purpose; it is the significant process, not the man, which constitutes our theme."⁷

In studying the entries in the notebook, and finding the shaping influences by going to Coleridge's sources, Professor Lowes not only arrives at a method, but also realizes at the end of his study, that he has come to a knowledge of Coleridge himself; and the evidence is overwhelming:

6. Lowes, John Livingston, The Road to Xanadu, London Constable and Company Ltd., 1951.

7. Ibid. p. 6.

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"I have said that this book was not to be about Coleridge himself. So in my ignorance I thought when I began to write. But now I know that the figure of Coleridge has been a living presence all the way."⁸

Unknown at the beginning, Professor Lowes hits upon a method that Werner Beyer used with success in his study of Keats's sources.⁹

Professor Beyer's basic thesis is that daemonology played a key part in Keats's mode of expression and especially in his conception of Sleep and Poetry, Endymion, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Lamia. Much of the source material for these poems, the illusions and imagery that they contain, and indeed the meaning of certain passages is obscure because one of Keats's major sources has been completely overlooked. Cristoph M. Wieland was the writer of Oberon, a German romance, which was acclaimed as the best German narrative poem of its time:

"More than one reader has thought that in all later German romanticism there is no work which in brilliancy of imagination, in lightness of movement, and in golden worth of sentiment, surpasses the ever-youthful remance. Both in Germany and in England these qualities were appreciated far more intensely than has been realized. Internationally famous, Oberon, was Wieland's masterpiece and most enduringly popular work."¹⁰

The works of Wieland appeared in innumerable editions and he was recognized as an influential and versatile writer.

8. Lowes, The Road to Xanadu, p. 434

9. Beyer, Werner William, Keats and the Daemon King, Oxford University Press, New York, 1947, p. 8

10. Beyer, Werner William, Keats and the Daemon King, Oxford University Press, New York, 1947, p. 8

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Professor Beyer's thesis is that much of Keats's imagery which is not found in Shakespeare¹¹ or anywhere else minutely resembles the imagery of Wieland's Oberon.

His proof is the evidence of the images themselves. He studies Keats line by line and compares the lines of Keats to Wieland's Oberon. An example may perhaps clarify Beyer's method:

W2 "Meantime with grief the beautiful gard'ner dies-
W4 With unsuccessful toil, sev'n tedious days,
Around the harem wall the lover strays,
Where Rezia, sure, with equal misery sighs.- K66
W6 Not tho' a lattice had he seen his bride"¹² K113

Taking now a text of Keats, he shows the many similarities paralleling Wieland's:

K74 "...Meantime, across the moors, W2
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
K76 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores W4
K78 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
K80 That he might gaze and worship all unseen"¹³.... W6

Professor Beyer's method consists in showing similarities between Keats and Wieland that are so numerous, that his study of the achievement of Keats and the workings of the creative imagination, in the light of Wieland's Oberon, greatly increase our understanding of one of Keats's major sources that had hitherto been completely neglected.

11. Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery *passim*.

12. Byer, Keats and the Daemon King, p. 367 (Oberon xi, 32)

13. Ibid. p. 367 (Eve of St. Agnes. ix)

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The method of Professor Beyer is invaluable because it has been employed in the chapter on Thompson's derivative imagery.

Mr. John Middleton Murry applies a curious and personal method of procedure to Keats and Shakespeare.¹⁴ At the outset, he stated that his purpose was to approach the mind of Shakespeare; daunted by the enormity of using Shakespeare and making his readers understand his method, he makes a startling claim:

"I saw that my one chance of making intelligible these slowly formed convictions of mine concerning Shakespeare was to use the greatest of his successors John Keats, as though he were a mediator between the normal consciousness of men and the pure poetic consciousness in which form alone Shakespeare remains to us."¹⁵

That Keats was essentially like Shakespeare, in some respects, has been admitted by eminent critics like Matthew Arnold, Professor A. C. Bradley, and the late poet-laureate, Robert Bridges. Murry's criticism is inspired but time and again his judgments are based on his own interpolations and not on evidence. It would be perhaps not unjust to say that Murry's interpretations and readings carry the thesis of the book. In several chapters, especially Chapter IX and Chapter X, wherein Murry discusses Keats's religion, particularly the ideas on soul-making, Murry carries the argument alone and it seems that he is discussing something very remote from the accepted scholarship on Keats. There is ample proof in Chapter IV that Keats was influenced by Shakespeare but that this influence was the sole

14. Murry, John Middleton, Keats and Shakespeare, Oxford University Press, London, 1949.

15. Ibid., p. 4.

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or motivating power behind Keats is obviously too much simplification of the very complex workings of the poetic imagination. While Murry's work is a very popular labor of love, his method is too personal, and in very many cases, unsupported by evidence. Mr. Middleton Murry's enthusiasm is infectious and his imaginative interpretations are engrossing, but in the final analysis his highly interesting book is not an orthodox commentary on Keats. Much material that the present writer has omitted, and many conclusions have been left out solely because of the errors in Mr. Middleton Murry's book. In putting down notes and jottings for the several chapters, the indirect influence of the Keats and Shakespeare must be generally acknowledged.

Professor G. Wilson Knight's book of Shakespearean interpretation is an essay towards integration.¹⁶ A distinction is made between the words 'criticism' and 'interpretation'. Professor Knight states that criticism is concerned with evaluating the good and bad points of a work and finally, making a formal judgment regarding its permanence; interpretation, on the other hand, tends to discuss the work apart from its merits or flaws, it receives the poetic drama as a unit and attempts a reconstruction of vision. In proceeding with his analysis, Professor Knight considers each play as an integral whole bound to none but self-imposed laws, each play is an expanded metaphor,

16. Knight, G. Wilson, The Wheel of Fire, London, Oxford University Press, 1937.

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by means of which the dramatist has projected his vision in a form corresponding to reality; and furthermore, what is most significant, "where certain images continually recur in the same associative connexion, we can, if we have reason to believe that this associative force is strong enough, be ready to see the presence of the associative value when the images occur alone."¹⁷ Professor Spurgeon's method is foreshadowed in the study of Professor Knight. As we shall prove in the first chapter, several conclusions can be drawn from the associations of ideas in imagery.

Before concluding this brief summary on method, Mr. I. A. Richards' two contributions to semantics should be mentioned.¹⁸ Mr. Richards agrees with the general definition of metaphor:

"Metaphor is the supreme agent by which disparate and hitherto unconnected things are brought together in poetry."¹⁹

However, in discussing the function of poetic imagery, Mr. Richards' views are very strange; he holds that the mind of the reader orders the thought relationships which constitute imagery. Forcing his subjective interpretation to its logical conclusion, language can be moulded into the meaning of its reader and words have no real meaning of their own. While it is true that "...whether a word is being used literally or metaphorically is not always, or indeed as a rule, an easy matter

17. Knight, The Wheel of Fire, p. 16.

18. Richards, I. A., Principles of Literary Criticism, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938, p.240.

19. Richards, I. A., The Philosophy of Rhetoric, New York, Oxford University Press, 1936, p. 119.

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to settle,"²⁰ this statement is a demurrer which does not prove the sweeping generalization which is the basis for criticism of much of the modern poetry.

Mr. Richards' main thesis is that most words change meanings with use; therefore, he concludes, that the proper meaning of a word is a fallacy. In the main, Mr. Richards doesn't add to our knowledge of imagery, as much as Father Brown's penetrating study; there remains a feeling that his major points have been treated by Father Brown with more insight. Mr. Richards' problems concern language rather than the nature of the creative imagination. His Lecture V is the most important; in investigating the nature of metaphor, Mr. Richards' inferences are for the most part true, though not essential to the present study of Thompson's imagery.

The chief debt in undertaking this study, is to the distinguished Shakespearean scholar, Professor Caroline F. E. Spurgeon. In her book, Shakespeare's Imagery,²¹ Professor Spurgeon catalogued and classified the images in Shakespeare's sonnets, plays, and poems. Professor Spurgeon drew conclusions about Shakespeare himself, his philosophy, association of ideas, interests, and personality insofar as it was based on the evidence of the images. This study is a similar approach to the mind of Francis Thompson. In referring to the poems of Thompson, Terence L. Connolly's, Poems of Francis Thompson²² has been used throughout the thesis.

20. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, p. 119.

21. Spurgeon, Caroline F. E., Shakespeare's Imagery And What It Tells Us, New York, The MacMillan Company, 1935.

22. Connolly, Terence L., Poems of Francis Thompson, New York, D. Appleton-Century Company, 1941.

CHAPTER I

It is the writer's belief that if the study of imagery is a revelation of a poet's mind and hidden thoughts; in the long run a poet will select the subject-matter of his images, whether consciously or unknowingly, from the range of objects he knows best or thinks most about.

To prove the truth of this statement, not only of Thompson, I have made a partial analysis of two other poets whose writings influenced Thompson, namely, Coventry Patmore and John Keats. The purpose is to study and compare their philosophy as it appears in their imagery. If this had been left undone, it might leave the impression that the conclusions are the result of interpretation.

1. Patmore's Dominant Image

Coventry Patmore's poetry is dominated by one basic idea--the marriage image. Open a book of his poems to any page, and no matter what he is saying or describing, some aspect of marriage, love, or sex, is used in the imagery. He seems preoccupied with the subject-matter of married love throughout his entire poetic creation. This imagery turns up at intervals in all of his poems without exception. In order to understand Patmore's use of this imagery, it is necessary to understand the symbolism of the Church as the Bride of Christ, and the realltion of God to the soul - (Psyche and Eros series) is a prototype of the lovers in marriage.

The dominating idea in Patmore's poetry is that a Christian in faith may apprehend the Deity in terms of married love. The perfect Woman, the Mother of God is his constant inspiration:

"Mother who lead'st me still by unknown ways,
Giving the gifts I know not how to ask,
Eless thou the work
Which done, redeems my many wasted days,
Makes white the murk,
And crowns the few which thou wilt not dispraise."

The Child's
Purchase¹
155

Our Lord took human flesh from his mother; she became a partaker in the Divine nature by giving herself completely to the Will of God:

"Mere emptiness of self, the female twin
Of Fulness, sucking all God's glory in."

The Child's
Purchase-58

By giving birth to the Redeemer, Mary conquered death, and became the "womb" of life:

"Life's cradle and Death's tomb"

Ibid.-46

One of the greatest merits of our Blessed Mother was her spotless virginity:

"My Lady, yea, the Lady of my Lord,
Who didst the first descry
The burning secret of virginity,
We know with what reward!"

Ibid.-75

She alone merited to be called Daughter of the Father, Spouse of the Holy Ghost, and Mother of the Son:

1. Connolly, Terence L., Poems of Coventry Patmore, Boston, Bruce Humphries Inc., 1938.

"Rainbow complex In bright distinction of all beams of sex, Shining for aye In the simultaneous sky, To One, thy Husband, Father, Son, and Brother, Spouse blissful, Daughter, Sister, milk-sweet Mother;"	The Child's Purchase-82
---	----------------------------

The Church, like the soul of man, is always feminine with regard to Christ; he speaks in reverence of the "Motherhood" of the Church and the "Fatherhood" of Christ:

"Christ's marriage with the Church is more, My Children, than a metaphor."	Wedding Sermon-93
---	----------------------

The loveliest tribute that Patmore paid his wife, Emily, is contained in the beautiful couplet in which Vaughan says of Honoria:

"I loved her in the name of God, And for the ray she was of Him."	Angel in the House-35
--	--------------------------

In some images, Patmore shows wretched lapses of taste:

"Enough, enough, ambrosial plumed Boy! My bosom is aweary of thy breath, Thou kissest joy To death."	Psyche's Discontent-1
---	--------------------------

In others, his enthusiasm carries him into error:

"Female and male God made the man; His image is the whole not half; And in our love we dimly scan The love which is between himself."	Angel in the House-4
--	-------------------------

Patmore even includes the elements in his dominant image; in the movement of the tide toward the shore, he sees an expression of love:

"And all the heaving ocean heaves one way,
 T'ward the void sky-line and an unguess'd weal;
 Until the vanward billows feel
 The agitating shallows, and divine the goal,
 And to foam roll,
 And spread and stray
 And traverse wildly, like delighted hands,
 The fair and fleckless sands;"

Wind and
 Wave-23

Many pages can be filled with imagery based on the idea of marriage; the idea of nuptial love dominates the poetry of Coventry Patmore. Even the casual reader of his poetry will be impressed by his rich knowledge of love which he gathered from experience, study, and prayer.

2. Keats's Hidden Thoughts

John Keats, youngest of the major English poets, died at an age when men are beginning their careers. Unlike Patmore, he had no strong abiding philosophy of life, but his imagery reveals a penetration into the basic problems of existence which he always connected with his own suffering. Keats looked on the beauty of the world but could not reconcile it with the pain and agony he saw:

"Dear Reynolds! I have a mysterious tale
 And cannot speak it: the first page I read
 Upon a Lampit rock of green sea-weed
 Among the breakers; 'twas a quiet eve,
 The rocks were silent, the wide sea did weave
 An untumultuous fringe of silver foam
 Along the flat brown sand; I was at home
 And should have been most happy,-but I saw
 Too far into the sea, where every maw
 The greater or the less feeds evermore.-
 But I saw too distinct into the core
 Of an eternal fierce destruction,

Still am I sick of it, and tho', today,
 I've gather'd young spring-leaves and flowers gay
 Of periwinkle and wild strawberry,
 Still do I that most fierce destruction see,-
 The shark at savage prey,-the Hawk at pounce,-
 The gentle Robin, like a Pard or Cunce,
 Ravening a worm..."²

Keats saw the great problem clearly: the heart-breaking loveliness of the world, and the contradiction and mystery of the evil in creation. How reconcile these opposites? Thompson, as we shall see, knew the answer; Keats did not live long enough to mature and philosophize. He was devoted to the principle of beauty, and in the song of the nightingale he longs to flee from the world and all its sorrows:

"Fade far away, dissolve and quite forget
 What thou amongst the leaves has never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here where men sit and hear each other groan;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad last gray hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;"

The last line of the preceding image strongly suggests that Keats is speaking about his own physical condition; three stanzas later, the image becomes profoundly personal;

"Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Called him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath;"

The adjective "easeful" is significant; Keats was constantly aware of his impending death and the increasing anguish of his physical suffering escapes into his imagery. Indeed, in one of his best known lines, one of his first definitions of the beautiful is that it must be a place of health and rest:

2. De Selincourt, Ernest, The Poems of John Keats, London, The Methuen Press, 1951.

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
 Its loveliness increases; it will never
 Pass into nothingness; but will keep
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing?"

Wouldn't it have been a beautiful joy if Keats could have attained his first image of the beautiful: "a sleep/ Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing?/" In a great many other images, Keats joins the two ideas, the suffering in the world with his own weak physical condition. In the second Hyperion, Keats cannot reconcile the beauty and suffering in the world which he finds unbearable; ravaged by pulmonary consumption, drawing nearer to death day by day, not having found the answer to his heart's longing, he falls back upon himself. Nowhere is the plight of mankind without the Redeemer, more poignantly described:

"...Without stay or prop,
 But my own weak mortality, I bore
 The load of this eternal quietude,"

Keats takes the mystery into himself and here is the high tragedy of his agonizing condition:

"And every day methought I grew
 More gaunt and ghostly. Oftentimes I pray'd
 Intense, that death would take me from the vale
 And all its burthens; gasping with despair
 Of change, hour after hour I curs'd myself;"

Notice that Keats had been "half in love" with death; now he "pray'd intense" for death to take him from life. The reason for the change is not hard to find. Instead of "quiet breathing" and "gasping" are an exact description of the

horrible progress of consumption; Keats's agony is so great that he curses himself and grows more wan and sickly day by day.

In treating one phase of the imagery of Patmore and Keats, it is significant to note the differences that manifest themselves. Patmore's poetry is dominated by one image. Keats's poetry is the search for beauty in all things. Patmore repeatedly stresses the need for God's help in marriage (in daily life), Keats had no philosophy and despaired beneath the onslaughts of his illness. Patmore's imagery is the result of experience; Keats's images are the result of vision. Patmore is more subjective in his choice of subject-matter, Keats is the opposite.

In the words of these two poets who influenced Thompson, the divergence of the subject-matter of the images points to two entirely different personalities, poets, and philosophies. The conclusions are the results of the evidence of the images and not of interpretation.

CHAPTER II

IMAGERY BASED ON HUMAN LOVE

1. Thompson's Love of Children

One of the chief characteristics of Francis Thompson's personality was his love for children. From his knowledge of child-nature, he drew many images which refer to children in general or to girls.

A very noticeable omission from Thompson's childhood images is the absence of imagery from boys and their actions. The most probable reason for this peculiar and marked absence dates back to Thompson's own boyhood. In 1870, he was sent to Ushaw College, which was about four miles from his home in Durham. Bishop Casartelli remembered him as a timid, shrinking little boy who was bullied and picked on by the other boys. Thompson had a quiet and shy nature. He did not mingle with his classmates but seemed happiest when alone. He recalled in one of his notebooks:

"It seemed to me a hideous thing that strangers should dislike me, should delight and triumph in pain to me although I had done them no harm. God's good laughter turned to be the devilish apparition of a hate now first known; hate for hate's sake, cruelty for cruelty's sake. And as such they live in my memory, testimonies to the murky aboriginal demon in man.¹

Thompson was extremely introspective and the impressions made on his sensitive nature by the playful jibes of his classmates

1. Meynell, Everard, The Life of Francis Thompson, New York, Charles Scribners' Sons, 1913, p. 17.

caused him real suffering. In his images then, he reports the actions of children as the result of personal experience or observation: Ultima-3

"Your little languid land in mine you slide,
Like to a child says-"Kiss me and let me go!"²

These images are not particularly beautiful but they are little emotional scenes from child-life: Penelope-13

"You gave yourself as children give, that weep
And snatch back, with- 'I meant you not to keep'"

Thompson captures the mood of childhood in these images; in speaking of the angels in Heaven, Thompson compares them to:

"...pent children, very wistful,
That below a playmate see. Scala Jacobi
Portaque Eburnea
11

In speaking of children, the outstanding characteristic that Thompson notices is their innocence:

"And with the sea-breeze hand in hand Daisy-7
Came innocence and she."

In repeated thoughts, he stresses the idea of the innocence of children; "a guileless look", Daisy 29, "standing artless as the air", Daisy 33, "And candid as the skies", Daisy 34; he thinks of children as "White flake of childhood", To Olivia 3.

The next image gives us an insight into the poet's personality. It is one of his best known lines and it is engraved on his tombstone; Thompson unites himself with

2. All references to Thompson's poetry are in Connolly, Terence L., Poems of Francis Thompson, New York, D. Appleton-Century, 1941.

children:

"Look for me in the nurseries of heaven" To My Godchild-67

And thinks of himself as a Child in relation to Our Lord:

"So, a little Child, come down Little Jesus-41
And hear a child's tongue like thy own;"

2. Love Imagery

Francis Thompson's magnificent love imagery is inspired primarily by his love for ideal beauty personified in our Blessed Mother; ultimately, his love for women is, in reality, an expression of his love for the perfect Woman, the Mother of God:

"The Woman I behold, whose vision seek From the Night
All eyes and know not; t'ward whom climb 337 of Forebeing
The steps o' the world, and beats all wing of rhyme,
And know not."

And in the second place, by his love for Mrs. Meynell and her daughters. In one of the most moving images in his poetry he avows his pure love for Mrs. Meynell:

"O be true Manus Animam
To your soul dearest, as my life to you," Pinxit-13

Thompson's gift of his poetry to the two sisters, Monica and Madeline, is to him, like the humble gift of a child offering to an adult some meaningless trifle:

"As when a child, upstaining at your knees Sister Songs
Some fond and fancied nothings, says, 'I Inscription-44
give you these!'"

Thompson's philosophy of love included nothing that was base or ignoble; like his friend Patmore, he believed in

chastity and prayer as the essential attributes of true love. In fact he himself tells us, in a paragraph written years before he embarked on a literary career, of his high ideals and his esteem for women:

"It was my practice from the time I left college to pray for the lady whom I was destined to love--the unknown She. It is curious that even then I did not dream of praying for her whom I was destined to marry; and yet not curious for I previsioned that with me it would be to love, not to be loved"

The thought of purity as one of the chief attributes of love is the central idea in Thompson's love poetry. He tells us that his love was that of "...chaste fidelity upon the chaste" Manus Animam Pinxit 6. Thompson regarded sex as a limitation of love:

Sister Songs II
298

"Who wear'st thy femineity
Light as entrail'd blossoms, that shalt find
It erelong silver shackles unto thee."

The young child contains its sex within its soul in the same way that the undeveloped grape is contained in the vine: Ibid.

202

"Thou whose young sex is yet but in thy soul,
As hoarded in the vine
Hang the gold skins of undelirious wine,"

In the next image, Thompson reveals his Catholic concept of a woman's body as the Temple of the Holy Ghost:

Domus Tua-1

"A perfect woman--Thine be laud!
Her body is a Temple of God."

The poet believed that an infinite distance separated love and

lust; he places them at opposite extremes, heaven and hell:

"Yea, not a kiss which I have given,	Orient Ode
But shall triumph upon my lips in Heaven,	102
Or cling a shameful fungus there in hell,"	

In thirty images, Thompson personifies love. He reveals some conventional ideas, but in some of these images he reiterates the idea of purity in love.

He calls on love to save him from the claws of Time, The Poppy 77; he tells us that whenever we love deeply, we usually lose the love of the person we desire To Olivia 2, and Daisy stanza x, he believed that love is stronger than fear; that God's love pursues fear and casts it out The Hound of Heaven 45.

Love is the Child of Beauty and Awe From the Night of Forebeing 132, a high summoner A Fallen Yew 61, and the brother of chastity Ad Castitatem 57. Love comes as a beggar Love's Almsman 1, a heavenly reaper House of Bondage 1, and a mighty noble in the palace of the heart The Heart 4. Daily love perfects itself and lust decays true love Marriage in Two Moods.

From these images we can see that Thompson believed that true love outlasts time, true love is eternal. Human love is evanescent unless it is founded on the love of God. There is always an element of wonder and beauty in human love. Thompson's love was refined and ennobled beyond the love of his fellow men; he recognized this fact (Sister Songs II 11-12)

and turned to the love of children. There is in Thompson no suggestion of anything sordid or in bad taste in his love imagery on the contrary, he emphasizes the difference between lust and true love. The body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost and human love should always be "Chaste and intelligent" (Manus Animam Pinxit 44).

CHAPTER III

ANIMAL IMAGERY

Francis Thompson had only a general knowledge of animals, birds, insects, and reptiles. His imagery from animal life is associated with illustration and pictures of natural life. The noblest use of animal imagery is, of course, the abstraction of the chase in The Hound of Heaven. The thought in Thompson's mind throughout the poem is the flight from God, the relentless pursuer of the human soul. In commenting upon the appropriateness of the image, Professor Wilkinson states:

"It is a daring symbol, and, in the hands of a merely talented poet, would become offensive. But Thompson was a genius, and, by putting his emphasis only on the noblest abstract qualities inherent in the nature of his symbol--on strength, and speed, and certainty of approach--he relieves it of all that might otherwise be distasteful and even lifts it, exalting the symbol by that which it symbolizes into a higher range of meanings and suggestions."¹

Outside of the magnificent imagery of the chase, and the urgency of God's love, repeated in the refrain at the end of each stanza, the remaining images from animal life are only descriptions. In very few images does the poet reveal any first hand acquaintance or experience with animals.

A very vivid and effective animal image is a comparison of the son to a lion leaping on the throat of his prey;

1. Connolly, Poems of Thompson, p. 422

Ode to the
Setting Sun
62

In another cosmic image, the sun roars after its frightened prey, the satellites and planets:

Orient Ode
59

In a far-fetched image, the poet compares the redness of a poppy to a lion's mouth as he devours the sun:

The Poppy

5

Thompson regards the sun as the giver of animal life:

Ode to the
Setting Sun
165

In another fanciful picture, the ocean reminded the poet
of a sleeping outstretched panther:

Song of the
Hours-39

The shapes of moving clouds brought different animals to Thompson's mind; they suggested snowy steeds, Song of the Hours, 109, a monster, Sere of the Leaf, 39, a hippopotamus Sere of the Leaf, 40, and a flock of sheep, Song of the Hours, 69.

The vividness of the next image strongly suggests that it is the description of a personal experience; perhaps Thompson saw this incident and a feeling similar to the one

that the image conveys shocked him:

"O God! Thou knowest if this heart of flesh A Holocaust
Quivers like broken entrails, when the wheel 13
Rolleth some dog in middle street."

In analyzing Thompson's animal imagery, one notices the absence of emphasis on any physical ugliness or repellent characteristics of animals. Except for the above image, which strongly suggests a personal experience, the poet abstracts from animals certain qualities that best seem to fit his descriptions.

Reptile images are more vivid descriptions of nature and its various manifestations; grass after a rainstorm resembles the back of a toad:

"The long, broad grasses underneath Sister Songs I
Are warted with rain like a toad's 10
knobbed back."

The redness of the sky at evening looks like a dragon spouting forth flame; this image carries a touch of humor that perhaps, the poet never intended:

"Day's dying dragon lies drooping his crest, A Corymbus
Panting red pants into the West." for Autumn-68

In a somewhat similar image, the sunset is compared to a dragon that:

"Crouches anon The Nineteenth
With nostrils breathing threat of smoke and flame, Century-6
Back to the lairing night wherefrom he came."

Thompson compares the physical changes in a child's body, wrought by the passing years, to a dragon emerging from behind

many doors; the dragon representing the child's consciousness of its sex powers may be a clue to the poet's own ideas on sex:

"In whom the mystery which lures and sunders, Sister Songs II
Grapples and thrusts apart, endears, estranges, 305
-The dragon to its own Hesperides-
Is gated under slow-revolving changes
Manifold doors of heavy-hinged years;-"

The next image is an eloquent description of Thompson's love for ideal beauty, personified by Monica Meynell. He compares his love to the first shaft of morning light striking a crocodile's back while the crocodile is stirring about in the mud of the Nile:

"Thou wert to me that earnest of day's light, Ibid.
When, like the back of a gold-mailed saurian 158
Heaving its slow length from Nilotic slime,
The first long gleaming fissure runs Aurorian
Athwart the yet dun firmament of prime."

There are two other reptile images, not very imaginative, describing the poet's heavenly raiment A Judgment in Heaven, 42, and another referring to Indian summer Sister Songs II, 553.

Thompson uses numerous images from bird-life. Falconry and bird-baiting seem to have held a particular interest for the poet. God trains the human soul by depriving it of its pleasures; this method is used by the hunter when he trains the falcon:

"From food of all delight
The heavenly Falconer my heart debars,
And tames with fearful glooms
The haggard to his call;" 'By Reason
of Thy Law
21

The poet asks for the strong will of the falcon that relentlessly pursues its quarry so that he may attain the goal of his quest, which is heaven, and never fall into sin and see his virtues wither:

"Ah, for a heart less native to high heaven,	The Dread
A hooded eye for jesses and restraint,	of Height
Or for a will accipitrine to pursue! -	89
The veil of tutelar flesh to simple livers given,	
Or those brave-fledgling fervours of the Saint,	
Whose heavenly falcon-craft doth never taint,	
Nor they in sickest time their ample virtue mew."	

In the brief sadness of earth, the poet looks ahead to the sweetness of eternity; in another image from falconry, his soul is steadfast despite the hourly changes of fortune:

"Firm is the man, and set beyond the cast	From the Night
Of Fortune's game, and the iniquitous hour,	of Forebeing
Whose falcon soul sits fast	362
And not intends her high sagacious tour	
Or ere the quarry sighted; who looks past	
To slow much sweet from little instant sour,	
And in the first does always see the last."	

Thompson's philosophy of pain is expressed by the next falcon image; it is significant to note that the poet shows no sympathy with birds, or any other type of animal life, but uses this imagery to express his thoughts. He believed that the greatest vision is given to him who willingly accepts the pain of our earthly existence, and does not lose sight of Paradise:

"That he who kens to meet Pain's kisses fierce	'By Reason of
Which hiss against his tears,	Thy Law'
Dread, loss, nor love frustrate,	5
Nor all iniquity of the forward years	

Shall his inured wing make idly bate,
 Nor of the appointed quarry his staunch sight
 To lose observance quite;
 Seal from half-sad and all-elate
 Sagacious eyes
 Ultimate Paradise."

The only other bird in which Thompson seems to have had an interest was the dove. In describing the dove's song, he creates an accurate emotional atmosphere:

"Sweet as the low note that a summer dove Sonnet II-2
 Fondles in her warm throat.

The rapid flight of pure thought towards God is like a carrier dove bearing its message homeward:

Orison-Tryst
 "She told me in the morning her white thought 1
 Did beat to Godward, like a carrier dove,"

Thompson explains his reason for not marrying by comparing himself, as poet, to a bird calling its mate. He declares that the song of the bird is sweetest when it is seeking a mate; if he, himself, did marry, his inspiration would fail him. The amount of truth in this metaphor is hard to ascertain, although one other writer, Henry James, seems to have held a similar view in The Lesson of the Master:

"In pairing time, we know, the bird Sister Songs II
 Kindles to its deepest splendour, 82
 And the tender

Voice is tenderest in its throat:
 Were its love, forever nigh it,
 Never by it,

It might keep a vernal note,

* - - - -
 Therefore must my song-bower lone be
 That my tone be

Fresh with dewy pain away.

Ibid.
 92

The remaining images are references to birds in general and they lack vividness and force. Thompson compares fame to a painted parrot My Lady the Tyranness, 75; other images are, perhaps, recordings of personal experiences: A Carrier Song, 5; July Fugitive, 59; Ibid., 19; A Corymbus for Autumn, 23; Song of the Hours, 29; and Heard on the Mountain, 63.

In the imagery from insect life, there is but a single involved image that merits our consideration. Thompson describes his emotions at the time of his first meeting with Monica Meynell; as flies scatter from a dead body, or vultures are frightened by some sound, so:

"Fled at thy countenance all that doubting spawn,	Sister
The heart which I had questioned spoke,	Songs II
A cry impetuous from its depth was drawn,-	197
'I take the omen of this face of dawn !"	

The remaining images are neither highly imaginative nor do they reveal anything peculiar to the poet's thoughts; the anger of a child is like the buzzing of a bee To Monica: After Nine Years 4; Ibid., 19; the melody was like a bee Sere of the Leaf, 62, and an atmosphere of laziness is conveyed by the notion of gnats in the autumn sun Contemplation, 43.

Thompson nowhere shows any sympathy with animals, birds, reptiles, or insects; he has only a superficial knowledge of their ways. Outside of the falcon imagery, he probably took suggestion from natural phenomena and incorporated them into his imagery. He knows nothing about the habits of animals nor does he have an insight into animal life in general.

CHAPTER IV

IMAGERY FROM TIME AND ITS DIVISIONS

Francis Thompson uses the figure of personification with much poetic success, almost exclusively in treating of 'time'. To incarnate abstractions meaningfully and effectively is a difficult task; Thompson executed it successfully. His sensitive mind registered all kinds of impressions from abstractions and insensate objects and he mixed the imaginative with some aspect of 'time' and produced some strange activity.

In the first image, the poet is conscious of the ravages on the human body made by the passing of time. His thought is that these wrinkles and blemishes of old age are beautiful; if looked at from the spiritual viewpoint, the inward beauty of the soul shines through the seeming ugliness of the body:

"Dark Time works hidden by its luminousness; And every line he labours to impress Turns added beauty, like the veins that run Athwart a leaf which hangs against the sun."	Her Portrait 49
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In one of his longest images, Thompson assails the permanence of the material universe. Against a graphic changing background, he draws a series of vivid pictures symbolic of the horrible transmutations of physical matter. The earth is the devourer of all things that live: the human body, all forms of animal life, nations, kings, cities, buildings, etc.:

"In a little dust, in a little dust, Earth, thou reclaim'st us, who do all our lives Find of thee but Egyptian villeinage."	An Anthem of Earth-259
---	---------------------------

Ibid.-268

Sister
Songs II-459

**Sister
Songs-I-280**

A Fallen Yew
1

The Hound of
Heaven-143

Whenever the seasons are personified, they are feminine. Thompson constantly compares the seasons of spring, summer, and autumn to lovely young girls. There are eleven images of this kind. At the return of Spring, all

nature decks itself in joyous, festive raiment:

"For, lo into her house	From the Night
Spring is come home with her world-	of Forebeing
wandering feet,	14
And all things are made young with young desires."	

Spring is a goddess surrounded by her attendants, a troop of young children:

"Spring, goddess, is it thou, desired long?	Sister Songs I
And art thou girded round with this young train?"	250

The background of running images describing Autumn is sustained by Thompson with great vividness in mood, color, and beauty. The poet compares the parts of Autumn's body to plants and flowers that grow in that season. This poem is one of Thompson's finest for sheer lyricism. Compared with Keats's To Autumn, Thompson's imagery moves more swiftly, in places it is more exotic, but it cannot compare with Keats's mastery of mood and flawless expression:

"Tanned maiden! with cheeks like apples russet,	A Corymbus for
And breast a brown agaric faint-flushing at tip,	Autumn
And a mouth too red for the moon to buss it.	
How are the veins of thee, Autumn, laden?	Ibid.-26
Umbered juices,	
And pulped oozes	
Pappy out of the cherry-bruises,	
Froth the veins of thee wild, wild maiden!	
With hair that musters in globed clusters,	
In tumbling clusters like swarthy grapes,	
Round thy brow and thine ears o'ershaden;	
With the burning darkness of eyes like pansies,..."	

The poet imagines that summer is captive in the prison of July:

"The Summer looks out from her brazen tower,	Ibid.-54
Through the flashing bars of July,"	

In a whimsical image from child-life, Thompson refers to winter, the teacher of the elements:

"Break, elemental children, break ye loose From the strict frosty rule Of grey-beard Winter's School."	From the Night of Forebeing-34
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The month of May seems to have been Thompson's favorite; also it is the month of our Blessed Mother whose aid Thompson invokes as his inspiration:

"Who guid'st the bare and dabbled feet of May; Be aidant tender Lady, to my lay!"	Sister Songs I 37
--	----------------------

In an image from the Apocalypse, Thompson pictures March as the Angel of the Judgment, awakening the dead:

"The great-vanned Angel March Hath trumpeted His clangorous 'Sleep no more' to all the dead."	From the Night of Forebeing-71
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There are images which leave the reader with a vague, or blurred impression of the poet's meaning. For example, there are images like the following, dull and uninspired:

"And dawn's grey eyes were troubled grey."	Dream Tryst-6
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Or sometimes, the poet sacrifices the thought and clarity of expression for an emotional effect which he fails to achieve:

"Peace as a dawn which flares Within the brazier of the barred East."	Peace-1
--	---------

In a magnificent cosmic image, the poet pictures Evening putting the grape, the sun, on her stained mouth, the western sky at twilight. While the meaning of such an image is trite, it does reveal the poet's tremendous powers of imagination by taking a common, every-day occurrence and making of it beautiful poetry:

"If Even burst yon globed yellow grape (Which is the sun to mortals sealed sight) Against her stained mouth."	Sister Songs I 353
---	-----------------------

Last of the divisions of Time are the hours. Thompson describes the hours in fanciful personifications of conventional ideas. There are twenty-three images in the same poem, Song of the Hours, that are philosophical musings about the passing of time. The hours are the children of light, 6, and the parents of the moments, 42; they are the moulted plumes on Time's wing, 21; the mouldering robes of life, 27; a cincture around Mortality's breast, 63; a mantle of waving rain, 58; and the columns in Time's hall through which mortal life hurrys, 127.

The remaining images are of the same type, ethereal imaginings with a philosophical thought. Two qualities of the poet's mind are found in his Time imagery; first, Thompson was conscious of the swift passing of life on earth; and second, he was appalled at the thought of the body's death. Most of the imagery repeats this idea, expressed in many different ways.

CHAPTER V

THOMPSON'S SENSES

It is hardly necessary to dwell upon the fact that Thompson's early poetry is rich in imagery that appeals to the senses of the eye and the ear. Practically the whole of the first half of Sister Songs is dominated by music and light imagery. The poet's reasoning faculty is next to nothing and the poem is sustained by Thompson's opulent imagination which holds the reader as image grows out of image and lapses into succeeding image.

This abundance of images from light and music has an onomatopoeic effect; it is inspired by sheer delight and exuberance and carries something of the poet's mood to the reader:

"Mark yonder, how the long laburnum drips Its jocund spilth of fire, its honey of wild flame!"	Sister Songs I 26
--	----------------------

It is difficult here to disengage the images as they build upon and depend on each other for the total effect of rapid motion:

"Some were borne half resupine On the aereial hyaline, Their fluid limbs and rare array Flickering on the wind, as quivers Trailing weed in running rivers; And others, in far prospect seen, Newly loosed on the terrene, Shot in piercing swiftness came, With hair astream like pale and goblin flame."	Ibid.--131
--	------------

And now the poet is caught in the network of his images; he divorces his poetry completely from thought and makes images for the sake of imagery--as if imagery were the aim of poetry itself.

This is the tragic flaw of Thompson's imagery upon which his contemporaries and subsequent critics have commented upon adversely; this series of images, and others like it, are indeed eloquent descriptions, without a foothold in reality:

"With some sweet tenderness they would	Sister Songs I
Turn to an amber-clear and glossy gold;	150
Or a fine sorrow, lovely to behold,	
Would sweep them as the sun and wind's joined flood	
Sweeps a greening-sapphire sea;	
Or they would glow enamouredly	
Illustrious sanguine, like a grape of blood;	
Or with mantling poetry	
Curd to the tincture which the opal hath,	
Like rainbows thawing in a moonbeam bath."	

The sound images are a conscious attempt for effect; in describing the dance of the Dryades, the poet achieves an onomatopoeic effect:

"As the cloud of their gliding veiling	Sister Songs I
Swung in the sway of the dancing-tune.	195
There was the clash of their cymbals clanging,	
Ringing of swinging bells clinging their feet;	
And the clang on wing it seemed a-hanging,	
Hovering round their dancing so fleet.-"	

Much of the imagery in Sister Songs continues in the same vein. It is therefore non-pertinent to the cognitive study of imagery. With reference to these images, however, they do suggest that after the bleak period of destitution in the London Streets, the poet's joy is reflected in the imagery of Sister Songs. He shuts his eyes from the weary weight of the "nightmare-time" and turns to the lovely Meynell children in an outburst of sheer lyrical enthusiasm. For those who complain of Thompson's earlier work, it would be gratifying to compare Thompson's

early work in Sister Songs with the tense, restrained beauty of Contemplation, or the Mistress of Vision. In both poems, especially the later, Thompson's interest in color, light, and sound, are subordinated to philosophical reflection. The growth of the poet's mind and ideas are reflected in the simple direct imagery of the later poems contrasted with the meaningless nuances and ornate luxuriations of Sister Songs. The vision which opens Contemplation expresses a deeper seriousness and more meaningful outlook than the pretty imagery of Sister Songs:

"This morning saw I, fled the shower, Contemplation-1
 The earth reclining in a lull of power:
 The heavens, pursuing not their path,
 Lay stretched out naked after bath,
 Or so it seemed; field, water, tree, were still,
 Nor was there any purpose on the calm-browed hill."

In the above image, Thompson's appeal is to intellectual insight, and not, as in his early poetry, to the physical senses. This change is significant in that it records not only a stylistic development but an awareness that imagery alone, is not the desired goal in fine poetry.

Freed from the excesses of a fulsome diction, Thompson's interest in light and sound combines to achieve rare and felicitous effects in tone vision. This combination of two senses is called 'Synaesthesia'. It is treated here from the literary standpoint alone, as the use of synaesthesia in psychology is outside the province of the present study. On this point, Professor Jordan remarks:

"Psychology as a science is not equipped to deal with the questions of the nature and function of imagination as it operates in literary and other aesthetic connections."¹

Synaesthesia may be generally defined as a concomitant sensation to a single stimulus. Or more specifically, it is an image produced by another sense than the one being stimulated. In Thompson's poetry, it usually is found in the combination of light and sound, or "color-hearing". In this type of imagery, the poet interprets sounds by means of light. Perhaps the most familiar example is the image wherein the spotless purity of the Mother of God is seen by the poet as her lovely body is encircled with rays of light which come from God. There is a hidden image in that God is here symbolized as the sun. (In Chapter VII, this symbolism - the sun symbolizing Christ - is treated exhaustively):

"There was never moon, Save the white sufficing woman: Light most heavenly-human - Like the unseen form of sound, Sensed invisibly in tune, - With a sun-derived stole Did inaureole All her lovely body round; Lovelily her lucid body with that light was interstrewn."	Mistress of Vision 28
---	--

Thompson's use of synaesthesia is usually connected with religious or philosophical thought. In his use of this

1. Jordan, E., Essays in Criticism, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1952, p. 88

light-sound imagery, Thompson compares favorably with Shelley and Keats. Almost every reader of poetry is familiar with Shelley's description of life:

"Life like a dome of many-coloured glass Adonais²
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
 Until Death tramples it to fragments."

Here Shelley's comparison of two orders of sensation is made more vivid by the personification of 'Death' and the potent use of 'tramples' with its implication of motion and the smashing of life.

Keats's use of synaesthesia is perhaps more effective poetically and artistically but less meaningful. Here he compounds the visual with the tactile; Porphyro's plan to gain access to Madeline's bedchamber is a thought that:

"...came like a full-blown rose, The Eve of
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart St. Agnes-136
 Made purple riot."

And the marvelous gustatory image:

"Lucent syrops tinct with cinnamon."³ Ibid.-267

2. deSelincourt, Ernest, The Poems of John Keats, London, Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1952, p. 180

3. In the class notes of the Rev. Carol Bernhardt S. J., I find the following interesting observation on this line: "Read the line slowly three times and you almost begin to taste the syrup."

CHAPTER V

The supreme enchantment of synaesthesia is nowhere more successfully used than in the powerful second stanza of the Ode to a Nightingale; the single unifying element is the poet's mind that wanders freely in the different orders of sensation and imposes a unity upon them:

	Ode to the Nightingale
"O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been	11
Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,	
Tasting of Flora and the country green,	
Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!	
O for a beaker full of the warm South,	
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,	
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,	
And purple-stained mouth;	
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,	
And with thee fade away into the forest dim."	

Thompson uses synaesthesia to express the unity of creation and God. As the next section will prove, the beauty of nature is but a reflection of the beauty of God. In an instantaneous fusion between the concrete vision and metaphysical reasoning, the poet blends the senses with his perception:

	From the Night of Forebeing
"The world's unfolded Blossom smells of God "	105
In another single-line image, he imagines that the stars are:	To Stars
"Bells that from God's great bell-tower hang in gold"	10

Using the sun as symbol for Christ, the poet sees the sign of God's own beauty in the sun:

	Orient
"God has given thee visible thunders	Ode
To utter thine apocalypse of wonders;"	136

Thompson believed that the sun, again a symbol for Christ, was the giver of wisdom:

"My fingers thou hast taught to con Ibid.
 Thy flame-chorded psalterion, 112
 Till I can translate into mortal wire-
 Till I can translate passing well
 The heavenly harping harmony,
 Melodious, sealed, inaudible,
 Which makes the dulcet psalter of the world's
 desire."

The Chinese nation dwells in a spiritual underground;
 the pagans fear the coming of Christ, the dawn, because they do
 not understand the beauty of Christianity:

"East, ah, east of Himalay, Mistress of Vision
 Dwell the nations underground; 72
 Hiding from the shock of day,
 For the sun's uprising sound:
 Dare not issue from the ground
 At the tumults of the day,
 So fearfully the sun doth sound
 Clanging up beyond Cathay.
 For the great earthquaking sunrise rolling up
 beyond Cathay."

As a prelude to a vivid series of personifications where in the
 different aspects of nature take part in the chanting of vespers,
 the setting sun's rays are likened to the sound of a gong:

"The calm hour strikes on yon golden gong, A Corymbus for
 In tones of floating and mellow light Autumn-81
 A spreading summons to even-song:"

In an image with a similar subject, the setting-sun, the poet
 achieves a fine artistic effect:

"Thy visible music-blasts make deaf the sky, Ode to the
 Thy cymbals clang to fire the Occident, Setting Sun-16
 Thou dost thy dying so triumphally:
 I see the crimson blaring of thy shawms!"

By using synaesthesia, the poet's images are much stronger
 than the pretty and florid imagery of Sister Songs:

"Yon cloud with wrinkled fire is edged sharp" Ibid. Afterstrain-25

The vision of ideal beauty is like an oasis that the weary desert wanderer sees in the distance:

"A green and maiden freshness smiling there," Sister Songs II
231

The poetry of Mrs. Meynell turns Thompson's thoughts
towards heaven:

"At the rich odors from her heart that rise, Her Portrait
My soul remembers its lost Paradise," 71

Two other images are similar in construction, Orient Ode, 49,
and Sere of the Leaf, 111.

Thompson's imagery from light and sound is significant in studying his poetic development. In his early poems, the poet seems chiefly concerned with fanciful and picturesque images for sense appeal alone. This tendency is severely modified in his later work; Thompson is concerned more with thought than picture and tinkling lines.

By using synaesthesia, the poet blends light and color simultaneously. As a principle in itself, synaesthesia is a device whereby he attains striking effects. By using tone vision as a means to an end, the poet dramatically illustrates thought and imposes order and harmony upon the discrete sense impressions of normal experience.

Thompson's ideas do not change throughout his poetry, however his presentation of them does. The study of sense imagery shows a marked difference between the images in his earlier poems and those in the latter. Thompson's artistic development

is very much in evidence in his light and sound imagery; his creative power arises from pretty color and musical sounds and we witness the change to a new attitude where imagery becomes not the goal, but a means to fine poetry.

CHAPTER VI

IMAGERY FROM NATURE

The greatest category of images in Francis Thompson's poetry is based on the world of nature, plants, flowers, and trees. All of the Romantic poets drew heavily upon nature for their imagery; Thompson was romantic in manner and attitude but not in belief. Romantic philosophy of nature, as seen in the poetry of William Wordsworth, was searching for truth but never arrived, as we shall see, at the positive declarations of Thompson.

Thompson's treatment of nature can be divided into three sections: first, ornamental and descriptive images which have very little evidence of the poet's thought, Second, nature viewed under the poet's own emotions; and third, Thompson's ideas of nature's meaning contrasted with Wordsworth.

Let us briefly examine one image from each category. As an example of the first, Thompson gives us this exquisite description of the rose in an image as lovely as the rose itself:

"Who made the splendid rose	Ode to the
Saturate with purple glows;	Setting Sun-128
Cupped to the marge with beauty; a perfume-press	
Whence the wind vintages	
Gushes of warmed fragrance richer far	
Than all the flavouous ooze in Cyprus' vats?	
Lo, in yon gale which waves her green cymar,	
, With dusky cheeks burnt red	
She sways her heavy head,	
Drunk with the must of her own odorousness;"	

In the second example, the poet tells us that those we love on earth vanish as quickly as the evanescent loveliness of the rose:

"The fairest things have fleetest end,
 Their scent survives their close;
 But the rose's scent is bitterness
 To him that loved the rose." Daisy-37

The poet always believed that signs in nature pointed to the existence of Almighty God; indeed, one of his dominant ideas was that the liturgy of Nature was similar to that of the Catholic Church (in Chapter VII). Here, in a tender invocation to the Mother of God at the beginning of Sister Songs, the poet using the idea of the "stem that nourishes the rose", he asks her to be our Mediatrix with Christ:

"Sweet stem to that rose Christ, who from
 the earth Sister Songs
 Suck'st our poor prayers, conveying them to Proem-38
 Him;"

1. Nature Imagery--Ornamental and Descriptive

Francis Thompson's observations of natural beauty and his delicate sensitivity to these myriad impressions is reflected in many images where he captures nature's moods and shows scenes that are true to experience. Thompson's treatment of natural beauty in this manner is sometimes very artistically conceived and presented; he is faithful in recording what he observes as he observed it, but these images, however, are essentially romantic outbursts and do not add to our knowledge of the poet's thought.

Thompson manifests no botanical or scientific knowledge of nature in his imagery. However, some images give us a fresh way of looking at things to which we have become accustomed. In this manner the poet heightens and intensifies the effect of an otherwise common description:

"Who girt dissolved lightnings in the grape? Summered the opal with an irised flush? Is it not thou that dost the lily drape, And huest the daffodily Yet who hast snowed the lily, And her frail sister, whom the waters name?"	Ode to the Setting Sun 104
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The personification of elements of nature and celestial bodies is commonplace in Thompson's poetry. In a magnificent description of the struggle between the gods and Titans, the poet conveys to us an idea of the immensity of the battle by comparing the stars to pebbles:

"The ranked gods dislock, Scared to their skies; wide o'er rout-trampled night Flew spurned the pebbled stars: those splendours then Had tempested on earth, star upon star Wounded in ruin,"	Ibid.-35
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Stars are like the jutting stones which support the mountain-climber; they aid the sight in climbing the distances of infinity. A cosmic image indicative of the poet's tremendous powers of imagination is found in:

"Bright juts for foothold to the climbing sight Which else must slip from the steep infinite."	To Stars 5
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Thompson's description of the brilliance of the stars is unexcelled for sheer poetic beauty; he imagines that the stars are jewels in the mine of night that sparkle with the luster and radiance of old Tartarian gems:

"Who dug night's jewels from their vaulty mine Ode to the
 To dower her, past an eastern wizard's dreams, Setting Sun
 When, hovering on him through his haschish-swoon, 84
 All the rained gems of the old Tartarian line
 Shiver in lustrous throbbings of tinged flame?"

In many images, Thompson attributed human life to different flowers; this series is part of the stream of fanciful lyricism that opens Sister Songs:

"In the new-sucked milk of the sun's bosom Sister Songs
 Is dabbled the mouth of the daisy blossom; 13
 The smouldering rosebud chars through
 its sheath;
 The lily stirs her snowy limbs,
 E re she swims
 Naked up through her cloven green,
 Like the wave-born Lady of Love Hellene."

The poet imagined that the sun was a maiden gathering flowers, the stars, at dawn:

"The Maiden of the Morn will soon An Arab Love-
 Through Heaven stray and sing, Song-4
 Star gathering."

Thompson liked to watch the sun set; to him no two sunsets were alike, In many images, he sees the sun as a symbol for Christ. Here, he records a scene at twilight, with the sun setting while one bird, the sign of peace and tranquility, sings that the day is done:

"The red sun, Ode to the
 A bubble of fire, drops slowly towards the hill, Setting Sun
 While one bird prattles that the day is done." Prelude-6

Using the same idea, the poet compares the setting sun to a sunken vessel:

"That perturbation putting glory on,
As is the golden vortex in the West
Over the foundered sun."

From the
Night of
Forebeing-280

The shapes of the clouds served as inspiration to eleven images; these images are simply a comparison of clouds to the first idea that came to the poet's mind. In this image, the clouds reminded him of a group of islands:

"Whether the mist in reefs of fire extends
its reaches sheer,
Or a hundred sunbeams splinter in an
azure atmosphere
On cloudy archipelagos."

A Sunset-4

Further along in the same poem, the poet compares the clouds to mountains overthrown in the aftermath of an earthquake, A Sunset, 28. In six other images, Thompson compares the clouds to animals (Chapter III). The clouds in the western sky at evening resemble a crocodile:

"Yonder, a mighty crocodile with vast
irradiant back,
Atriple row of pointed teeth?
Under its burnished belly slips a ray of
eventide,
The flickerings of a hundred glowing clouds
its tenebrous side
With scales of golden mail ensheathe."

A Sunset-20

The poet compares the graceful walk of a woman to a summer cloud moving slowly across the sky:

"Up she rose, fair daughter--well she was
graced,
As a cloud her going, stept from her chair,
As a summer-soft cloud in her going paced."

'Chose Vue'
1

The images in this section are primarily descriptive and ornamental. They reveal that the poet was fond of making images from his observation of the various manifestations of nature. Thompson's comparisons are evidence of his poetic powers, but here, they give no insight or penetration into his thought.

2. Nature and the Poet's Emotions

Thompson's images manifest a keen interest in nature, especially flowers. Usually his treatment of children is expressed by the imagery of flowers.

During the poet's days of dereliction in the London streets, he was befriended by a pathetic young girl who ministered to him in his need. When she discovered that his poetry was accepted and that he was on the road to success, she fled from him and he never found her again. In a beautiful application of flower imagery, her memory is immortalized in this splendid passage:

"Then there came past
A child; like thee, a spring flower; but a flower Sister Songs
Fallen from the budded coronal of Spring, 289
And through the city-streets blown withering.
She passed, - O brave, and, lovingest, tender thing!
And of her own scant pittance did she give,
 That I might eat and live:
Then fled, a swift and trackless fugitive."

This image is an expression of rare poetic genius and a revelation of Thompson's character. His treatment of the incident is almost paternal solicitude coupled with delicacy and right judgment.

Following his rescue from the London streets, Thompson was hospitalized and during his convalescence was uncertain of what the future held in store for him:

"With faint and painful pulses was I lying; Not yet discerning well If I had 'scaped, or were an icicle, Whose thawing is its dying."	Sister Songs II-165
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Monica Meynell was the child dearest to the heart of the poet; upon his recovery, he went walking with her one day through a field in Friston. She plucked a poppy and gave it to the poet; from that time forward, he associated the poppy with Monica. He records the incident in the poem of the same name:

"She turned, with the rout of her dusk South hair, And saw the sleeping gipsy there; And snatched and snapped it in swift child's whim, With- "Keep it, long as you live !" -to him."	The Poppy 17
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The poet was very much impressed by this impetuous expression of the girl's love; he did keep it in his own copy of Poems where it was found after his death. This is perhaps a record of the event:

"As where a flower has pressed a leaf The page yet keeps the trace and stains."	To Monica: After Nine Years-6
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In a poem written years later, Thompson identifies Monica with the poppy:

"Flaming like a dusky poppy
In a wrathful bloom."

To Monica:
After Nine
Years-6

And later in the poem expresses his love for her:

"But there's he-
Ask thou not who it may be-
That, until Time's boughs are bare,
Shall be unconsolated for her."

Ibid.-43

An echo of his love is found in Laus Amara Doloris, 44-48

Reminiscing about distant loved ones made the poet
sad as he thought of the beautiful lingering memories that
remained:

"As gale to gale drifts breath
Of blossoms' death,
So, dropping down the years from hour to hour,
This dead youth's scent is wafted me today:
I sit, and from the fragrance dream the flower."

Before Her
Portrait in
Youth-22

A similar image is found in Daisy, 37-42. This comparison
of children and flowers with the poet's own emotions, usually
leaves the poet contemplating his own heart and withdrawing
from reality:

"She looked a little wistfully,
Then went her sunshine way:-
The sea's eye had a mist on it,
And the leaves fell from the day."

Daisy-41

The effect on the poet intensifies in three stanzas and
culminates in the terrible lines:

"Nothing begins, and nothing ends,
That is not paid with moan;
For we are born in other's pain,
And perish in our own."

Ibid.-57

The poet's age—or rather the difference in age—between him-
self and Monica Meynell, leads him to sadness and not to joy:

"From cloud zoned pinnacles of the secret spirit Sister Songs
Song falls precipitant in dizzying streams; Proem-30
And, like a mountain-hold when war shouts stir it,
The mind's recessed fastness casts to light
Its gleaming multitudes, that from every height
Unfurl the flaming of a thousand dreams."

"A lonely man, oppressed with lonely ills,
And all the glory fallen from my song,
Here do I walk among the windy hills:
The wind and I keep both one monotoning tongue."

The Cloud's
Swan-Song-5

"My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream."

The Hound of
Heaven-122

"Some lone orb through your lonely window peeps
As it played lover over your sweet sleeps;
Think it a golden crevice in the sky,
Which I have pierced but to behold you by !"

To My
Godchild-44

3. Thompson's Philosophy of Nature Compared with William Wordsworth

As the writer has said before, Francis Thompson was inclined towards sentimentalism and the excesses of the romantic writers. He was romantic in mood and expression but not in philosophy. William Wordsworth is generally recognized as nature's prophet and high priest. However, when we study Wordsworth for a systematic philosophy of nature, we become lost for the simple reason that Wordsworth had no permanent convictions and abiding outlook towards nature.

More than any other poet, Wordsworth drew from nature practically all of his images. This should not lead us to the false generalization, however, that Wordsworth was merely describing objects and scenes for their own sake. Wordsworth sought to interpret nature, to show man's relation to nature, and the harmony of the universe.

Thompson, on the other hand, saw in the beauty of creation a reflection of the Creator. There is an infinite difference between Wordsworth and Thompson. Wordsworth tried to find all the answers in contemplating nature and failed. Thompson knew that nature's beauty was but a reflection of the beauty of God.

Thompson believed that nature could be understood only if man understood his relationship to God; he did not

flatter nature for itself; in fact, he derided poets who worshipped nature for itself:

"I am not of thy fools Who goddess thee with impious flatteries sweet."	Of Nature: Laud and Plaint-5
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Wordsworth tried to accommodate his whole being to nature; the dominant thought in his earlier poetry seems to lie in the lines:

"To every natural form, rock, fruits, or flower, Even the loose stones that cover the highway, I gave a moral life: I saw them feel, Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass Lay imbedded in a quickening soul."	The Prelude Book III-124
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This pantheism is at the heart of Wordsworth's nature images and is the key to his failure:

"To her fair works did Nature link The human soul that through me ran;"	Lines Written in Early Spring-5
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Wordsworth's error is that the universe is a oneness:

"In which all beings live with God, themselves
Are God, existing in the mighty whole."

The presence of God in the universe does not mean that God is a part of creation. That is the great difference between Wordsworth's pantheistic ideas and Thompson's belief in the omnipresence of God. Thompson's nature images show a love for God and the Liturgy of the Church but he does not identify God and nature. Thompson recognized a personal God beyond and outside of nature and his imagery carries us far beyond sense experience in his interpretation of nature.

From the sub-conscious daydreaming in the earlier poems, Thompson's love of nature merges with his love of God. In the imagery of the Orient Ode, he blends the liturgy of the Church with that of nature; the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is compared to the journey of the sun across the heavens (Cf. Chapter VII).

Visible creation dances with joy at the coming of Christ:

"God whom none may live and mark ! Borne within thy radiant ark, While the earth, a joyous David, Dances before thee from the dawn to dark."	Orient Ode-20
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Thompson's view of nature is at first essentially a happy one. He is delighted by the beauty of nature, because to him it reflects the beauty of God. The poet is aware that others do not look at nature with the eyes of faith:

"O Nature, never-done Ungaped-at Pentecostal miracle, We hear thee, each man in his proper tongue !"	From the Night of Forebeing-31
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Thompson believed that the world of natural beauty was alive with signs of its Creator; he did not identify God with nature, not did he "give nature a moral life", but saw that the perfection of a tiny blade of grass argues more wisdom than science can reveal:

"One grass-blade in its veins Wisdom's whole flood contains !"	All Flesh-5
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The world's beauty was a sign of the beauty of its Creator:

"The world's unfolded blossom smells of God,"	From the Night of Forebeing 105
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Wordsworth's early poems contain the idea that
Nature is a sufficing mother:

"....this prayer I make, Knowing that Nature never did betray The heart that loved her."	Tintern Abbey-121
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Thompson realizes that the worship of nature without God is
meaningless and ineffectual:

"Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;"	The Hound of
-	-Heaven-99
"Never did any milk of hers once bless My thirsting mouth."	Ibid.-103

The unity of song and sanctity was one of Thompson's
fundamental beliefs. Pagan literature gains from the coming
of Christ, and inspiration comes to the poet from the Christian
tradition, and not from the pagan Muses:

"Teach how the crucifix may be Carven from the laurel-tree, Fruit of the Hesperides Burnish take on Eden-trees, The Muses sacred grove be wet With the red dew of Olivet, And Sappho lay her burning brows In white Cecelia's lap of snows!"	To a Poet Breaking Silence-21
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The poet loved nature in youth; he did not see the coming
dread of death and the corruption of the body:

"....Thought I not Thou Sett'st thy seasons forth processional To pamper me with pageant,- thou thyself My fellow-gamester, appanage of mine arms ? Then what wild Dionysia I, young Bacchanal, Danced in thy lap ! Ah for thy gravity ! Then, O Earth, thou rang'st beneath me, Rocked to Eastward, Rocked to Westward, Even with the shifted Poise and footing of my thought !"	Ibid. 27
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Mature reflection leads the poet to sadness:

"In a little thought, in a little thought, Ibid.-70
We stand and eye thee in a grave dismay,
With sad and doubtful questioning..."

Like Wordsworth, he wants to understand the nature of man
and the physical universe; like Wordsworth he questions:

"What is this Man, thy darling kissed and cuffed, Ibid.-101
Thou lustingly engender'st,
To sweat, and make his brag, and rot,
Crowned with all honour and all shamefulness ?"

Man is mortal, and in the end is he but dust:

"And yet is he successive unto nothing Ibid.-107
But patrimony of a little mold,
And entail of four planks."

Nature has no mystery so inscrutable as the nature of man:

"Mother of mysteries ! Ibid.-122
Sayer of dark sayings in a thousand tongues,
Who bringest forth no saying yet so dark
As we ourselves, thy darkest !"

Here Thompson goes beyond William Wordsworth; after
questioning, believing and disbelieving, looking for proofs
and doubting, Wordsworth fails to understand nature because
he lacks faith. Thompson, on the other hand, learns from
nature all that he can believe, and accepts the rest on faith:

"In a little sight, in a little sight, An Anthem of
We learn from what in thee is credible Earth-128
The incredible, with bloody clutch and feet,
Clinging the painful juts of jagged faith."

Thompson finds life in decay, real order in apparent
confusion, and life rising from death in the natural order:

"Counts the sepulchre
 The seminary of being, and extinction
 The Ceres of existence: it discovers
 Life in putridity, vigor in decay;
 Dissolution even, and disintegration,
 Which in our dull thoughts symbolize disorder,
 Finds in God's thoughts irrefragable order," Ibid.-212

Fortified by the Catholic Faith, the poet sees beyond the physical universe; the changes in nature point to a Supreme Being. This idea leads him to an analogy in the supernatural order concerning the immortality of the soul:

"....Death dies on his own dart
 Promising to our ashes perpetuity,
 And to our perishable elements
 Their proper imperishability !" Ibid.-221

The poet cannot understand these changes in nature; nor can he understand himself. How then can he say that God does not exist:

"Then go I, my foul-venting ignorance
 With scabby sapience plastered, aye forsooth ! Ibid.-247
 Clasp my wise foot-rule to the walls o' the world,
 And vow - A goodly house, but something ancient,
 And I can find no Master ?

Death then, is not to be feared. Death is the bridge to the Triune God. It is one birth into immortal life:

"Pontifical Death, that doth the crevasse bridge Ibid.-348
 To the steep and trifid God; one mortal birth
 That broker is of immortality."

Wordsworth never approached the confidence of Thompson in expression though he was a nature-worshipper:

"....I, so long,
 A worshipper of Nature," Tintern Abbey-151

He lacked the faith of Thompson and belief in orthodox Christianity. In later life, Wordsworth realized that Nature was insufficient as a mother and teacher; he became disillusioned and sad:

"....For I have learned	Tintern Abbey
To look on Nature, not as in the hour	151
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes	
The still, sad music of humanity,"	

He knew that the human soul was distinct from nature and began to think of God as separate from his creation:

"The soul that rises with us, our life's star,	Intimations of
Hath had elsewhere its setting,	Immortality-60
And cometh from afar:	
Not in entire forgetfulness,	
But trailing clouds of glory do we come	
From God who is our home."	

Wordsworth's idea of God was not a Christian one, though he succeeded in freeing it at last from his former pantheistic beliefs. He did so because he became convinced of nature's inability to satisfy his longings and doubts:

"Blank misgivings of a Creature	Ibid.-145
Moving about in worlds not realized,"	

He contradicts his former belief expressed in The Prelude Book III, 124 and Tintern Abbey, 121; he does not understand that the longings of the human heart are for God but knows that there are desires in the human soul beyond the power of Nature that come from God:

"But for those first affections,	Intimations of
Those shadowy recollections,	Immortality-149
Which, be they what they may,	
Are yet the fountain lights of all our day,	
Are yet a master light of all our seeing."	

"Be they what they may" is Wordsworth's closest approach to a true understanding of man's relationship to Nature. Far from being a mother, Nature, without God, can make man forgetful of God and his eternal destiny:

"And, even with something of a mother's mind And no unworthy aim, The homely nurse doth all she can To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man, Forget the glories he hath known,	Intimations of Immortality-80
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Wordsworth ultimately fails to formulate a code of ethics. Although his poetry is filled with the minutest observations of nature and much reflective wisdom, he never properly understood the relationship between the inner life of man and the external world of nature.

Perplexed in the extreme, dragged down by doubts and questions of right and wrong, Wordsworth gave up searching for the integrating truth, lost his earlier convictions about nature and fell into despair:

"...I lost All feeling of conviction, and, in fine, Sick, wearied out with contrarieties, Yielded up moral questions in despair." ¹	The Prelude Book XI-302
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Thompson knew that nature obeyed God's laws; only man's will is free and seeks liberty in licence. Granted his every whim, man sees only discord and disintegration in the physical universe:

1. The immature worship of nature in the poems of Wordsworth is criticized by Alice Meynell:

"And one is love of Nature-love to tears- The modern passion of this hundred years."	Two Boyhood-7
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Her criticism of Wordsworth is perhaps overly simplified: Ibid.

"Lo, the Earth eased of rule: Unsummered, granted to her own worst smart The dear wish of the fool- Disintegration, merely which man's heart For freedom understands,"	From the Night of Forebeing 116
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Nature was created by God in the beginning; its beauty is known to man, but the age of the world is not known:

"Far-storied, lanterned with the skies, All Nature, magic-palace-wise, Did from the waters come: The angelic singing masons knew How many centuried centuries through The awful courses clomb."	Carmen Genesis-13
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The poet believed that man was a microcosm of the universe; created in the image of God, the nature of man is a mystery: unlike the visible loveliness of nature:

"And, last, Man's self, the little world Where was Creation's semblance furled, Rose at the linking nod: For the first world, the moon and sun Swung orb'd. That human second one Was dark, and waited God.	Ibid.-43
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Man's body was created out of the earth and after death must return to the earth:

"Indeed this flesh, O Mother, A beggar's gown, a client's badging, We find, which from thy hands we simply took, Naught dreaming of the after penury, In nescientness."	An Anthem of Earth-11
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Francis Thompson believed that nature could be properly understood only if one had faith in God; unlike Wordsworth, Thompson's philosophy of nature included all of Wordsworth's love of nature but he is superior to Wordsworth in that he knows the place of nature in the hierarchy of truth:

"For know, this lady Nature thou hast left Of whom thou fear'st thee reft, This Lady is God's Daughter, and she lends Her hand but to His friends."	Of Nature: Laud and Complaint 166
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Certainly, this is no enthusiastic dream or hopeful idealism but a precise statement of the role of Nature in creation. Most romantic poets, including Wordsworth, started with the dream; Thompson began with reality and then added his dream.

Wordsworth started to interpret Nature as it appeared to him; Thompson insists upon knowledge of God's presence in order to interpret the signs in nature correctly.

In a loose application of Thompson's words, it might be said that Wordsworth was the poet of the return to nature, and Thompson, the poet of the return to God.

Thompson saw signs of God's presence even in "the loose stones that covered the highway":

"Turn but a stone and start a wing!"	The Kingdom of God-14
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Wordsworth believed that "nature never did betray/
the heart that loved her;" Thompson knew that nature had
no heart. Man is greater than nature because he possesses
an immortal soul:²

"Lo, here stand I and Nature, gaze to gaze, And I the greater. Couch thou at my feet Barren of heart and beautiful of ways,"	Of Nature: Laud and Complaint 1
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2. "And one was Wordsworth; he
Conceived the love of Nature childishly
As no adult heart might." Ibid.-21

He realizes that on earth we have no lasting dwelling place;
whatever looks lovely to us is passing:

"Whatso looks lovelily
Is but the rainbow on life's weeping rain." Ode to the
Setting Sun 192

As a mature man, the poet is disillusioned, like Wordsworth,
and knows that 'man' not 'nature' determines man's life and
happiness:

"Hope not of Nature; she nor gives nor teaches; Of Nature;
She suffers thee to take Laud and
But what thine own hand reaches," Plaint-102

Nature is deaf to the pleas and entreaties of man; no solace,
nor word of consolation comes from the heart of nature:

"O heart of Nature ! did man ever hear Ibid.-111
Thy yearned-for word, supposed dear?--
His pleading voice returns to him alone;
He hears none other tone."

In a rebuke directed to those poets who are nature-worshippers,
Thompson bids them not to mislead others into errors that they
have fallen into. Nature is not as holy as they think; this
is a marked difference between Wordsworth and Thompson.

Wordsworth "endowed nature with a moral life", Thompson asks
the nature poets to:

"Tack back, O poets, your praises, little-wise, Of Nature:
Nor fool weak hearts to their unshunned distress, Laud and
Who deem that even after your device Plaint-116
They shall lie down in Nature's holiness:"

Thompson makes a distinction between nature-worship and love
of the beautiful in natural beauty:

"If thou wouldst bend in prayer,	Of Nature:
Arise, pass forth; thou must look elsewhere.	Laud and
Thy travail all is null;	Plaint-127
This gate is closed, this Gate Beautiful,-"	

In order to truly understand Nature, Thompson insisted that it was necessary to approach with the eyes of faith; only with supernatural faith, for nature is "God's Daughter", will the door of understanding be opened:

"Knock, tarry thou, and knock,	Ibid-156
Although it seem but rock:	
Here is the door where thou must enter in	
To heart of Nature."	

Thompson refers to Wordsworth in two images, but not by name:

"When that great mouth of Rydal ceased,"	Ibid.-8
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In the second image, he mentions the Lake Poets to which Wordsworth's name is usually associated:

"The holy poets sung her on her way:	The Nineteenth
The high, clear band that takes	Century-24
Its name from heaven-acquainted mountain-lakes;"	

Nature imagery in Thompson's poetry is very meaningful for an understanding of Thompson. There is a definite progression of understanding between the earlier poems and the later poems. Beginning with colorful and luxuriant descriptive imagery, Thompson shows his interest and delight in the world of external nature. The poet does not read meanings into nature, as Wordsworth did, but he does show his powers for capturing the beauty of creation in words. Several images may have been transcripts of actual experience.

Thompson uses the language of nature to describe his own feelings and to reminisce about events in his own life. One of his favorite comparisons is the conventional likening of children to flowers. In every case, the force of the image owes its power to the essential truth of its inspiration, and not to its poetic beauty or lack of it.

In comparing Thompson's philosophy of nature with that of Wordsworth, a marked difference between the minds of the two poets emerges. Thompson's imagery, strange to say, seems to answer some of Wordsworth's questionings and erroneous ideas about nature. Thompson, not Wordsworth, is the true philosopher of nature who stands as mediator between man's inner life and the world of nature. He points to the Catholic philosophy of life as the solution; Wordsworth offers none, as final answer, Wordsworth sinks into despair.

As Thompson's understanding of nature became more real and penetrating, his insight into the heart of nature became more profound; so, he resolved the problems of Wordsworth with Catholic philosophy. Here Thompson found answers that are widely divergent from those held by the Romantic poets. In the next chapter, the poet blends nature and the Catholic Faith into imagery of great loveliness and meaning, and rises to the full awareness of his poetic powers as the supreme poet of the Catholic faith, and the poet of "the return to God."

CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS IMAGERY

1. Sacred Scriptures

In this section, and in the next, it is the purpose to show that the Catholic faith was the basis of Thompson's poetic philosophy. For, from the riches of the Bible and the Catholic tradition, Thompson borrowed a wealth of illustration for his ideas and emotions. Very often the poet abstracts the Biblical event from its proper signification and uses it to describe some idea, thought, or emotion. The images vary in subject-matter and extend from the fall of Lucifer, in Genesis, to the description of the Angel of the Judgment in the Apocalypse of Saint John.

Thompson drew approximately seventy-five images from his knowledge of the Bible. The next image can be properly understood only by remembering Lucifer's struggle against the power of God:

"To adventure like intense
Assault against Omnipotence."

The After
Woman-22

In a general allusion, having no clear meaning, but referring to the creation of man:

"God breathes you forth as a bubble,"

Song of the
Hours-137

Thompson believed that chastity was the secret of happiness lost by the fall of Adam in the garden of Paradise. Elsewhere, as has been seen, the poet stresses the value and necessity of chastity in human love:

"For he saw what she did not see,
That--as kindled by its own fervency--
The verge shrivelled inward smoulderingly:
And suddenly 'twixt his hand and hers
He knew the twenty withered years--
No flower, but twenty shrivelled years."
The Poppy-25

The realization of the disparity in their ages makes the poet consider the futility of the situation:

"I am but, my sweet, you foster-lover,
Knowing well when certain years are over
You vanish from me to another;
Yet, I know, and love, like the foster-mother."
Ibid.-56

And in a splendid image, containing all we hope to know of the poet's longing for love and the aching knowledge that love had failed him, he takes from the little girl:

"This token, fair and fit, meseems
For me, - this withering flower of dreams."
Ibid.-62

From his observation of the countryside and its surrounding aspects, Thompson expressed his own moods in these images. There is a touch of Thompson's own feelings of nimbleness and gaiety at the coming of Spring:

"The leaves dance, the leaves sing,
The leaves dance in the breath of Spring,
I bid them dance,
I bid them sing."
Sister Songs I
1

In England, the flowering of the laburnum tree is looked upon as a sign of Spring:

"Mark yonder, how the long laburnum drips
Its jocund spilth of fire, its honey of
wild flame!"
Ibid.-26

This sight made an impression on the poet for he repeated the same image in Sister Songs II, 744.

"This was the secret of the great
And primal Paradisal state,
Which Adam and which Eve
Might not again retrieve."

Ad Castitatem
25

Dalila, the treacherous wife of Samson, cut off his hair, the source of his strength, while he slept; an image in Thompson's masterpiece is based on this event:

"I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep." The Hound of Heaven-115

The Hound of
Heaven-115

Samson died by pulling down the Philistinian temple around himself and the worshippers of Dagon; a Biblical fact is reflected in these lines:

"I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years-
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap."

Ibid.-118

The poet compares the avarice of the English nation for gold to Dalila:

"Resume the arms of thy false Dalila, gold,
Shameful and nowise fair."

Peace-36

When David saw the Ark of the Covenant, he danced with joy; in a rough figure, Thompson compares the earth to David, dancing before the sun, the symbol for Christ:

"God whom none may live and mark!
Borne within thy radiant ark,
While the earth, a joyous David,
Dances before thee from the dawn to dark."

Crident Ode-20

In the last image from the Old Testament, there is a clumsy adaptation from the Canticle of Canticles:

"Thy little breasts knew waxed great
Sister of the Canticle,
And thee for God grown marriageable."

The After Woman
31

The poet believed that the nativity of our Lord, His life and ultimate death are the model and inspiration of all mankind; in God's obedience to human beings, in His sublime humility and poverty, He showed us the path that we must follow to attain everlasting happiness:

Thompson liked to think of himself as the Magian of the sun, Christ; just as the wise men of old brought their gifts of gold, myrrhs, and incense to Christ, the poet brings his gift of song:

Thompson describes the nobility of human suffering in imagery woven from Christ's Passion and Death:

"Thy pall in purple sovereignty was dipt
Beneath the tree of Golgotha;
And from the Hand, wherein the reed was clipt,
Thy bare and antique sceptre thou dost draw.
That God-sprung lover to thy front allows,
Fairest, the bloody honour of His brows,
The great reversion of that diadem
Which did His drenched locks hem."

A beautiful analogy is drawn from our Lord's first public miracle, the marriage-feast at Cana, and His suffering on the Cross. Christ, thirsting for the love of man on the Cross, is given the blood of the martyrs, the wine of love, who welcome death for his sake. Another element in the image, also taken from the New Testament, is the unity of Christ with the martyrs in the idea that Christ is the Vine and the martyrs are the branches. Thompson describes the death-scene with consummate skill and artistry:

"Christ, in the form of His true bride,	Ode to the
Again hung pierced and crucified,	English
And groaned, 'I thirst!' Not still ye stood,-	Martyrs-29
Ye had your hearts, ye had your blood;	
And pouring out the eager cup,-	
'The wine is weak, yet, Lord Christ, sup!'	
Ah, blest! who bathed the parched Vine	
With richer than his Cana-wine,	
And heard, your most sharp supper past:	
'Ye kept the best wine to the last!'"	

There are five more images that are little more than pious phrasings of events in the New Testament; a reminder of Christ's sermon on the mount, A Holocaust, 9; Mary Magdalene washing the feet of Christ before the passion, Penelope, 7; Christ's agony in the garden of Gethsemane, A Holocaust, 17; the Resurrection, Assumpta Maria, 65; and From the Night of Forebeing, 298.

There are three images whose subject is the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles. The poet, in each instance, takes the gift of tongues as the point for comparison; pain

descends on mother and wife as the flames descended upon the
Apostles:

"Yea, on the brow of mother and of wife Descends thy confirmation from above, A Pentecostal flame."	Laus Amara Doloris-105
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Just as the Apostles heard each other speak in different
languages, Thompson believed that Love speaks to each man in
a different tongue:

"In how differing accents hear the throng His great Pentecostal tongue;"	The Poppy-42
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Thompson had a great love for his godson, Francis Meynell;
he tells him that in heaven, Eden, he will keep company with
the young:

"For if in Eden as on earth are we, I sure shall keep a younger company."	To My Godchild 54
--	----------------------

The poet drew three images from his knowledge of the story
of Noah; Noah prefigured Christ by making a wreath and plac-
ing it around his brow--an obvious symbol of Christ's crown
of thorns;

"Our first sailor made a twine Thereof for his prefiguring brows."	Mistress of Vision-85
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After the deluge, an olive-branch, the first sign of land,
was brought to Noah by a dove that he had sent out from the
Ark in search of land:

Sonnet I-1

"Dear Dove, that bear'st to my sole-laboring ark, The olive-branch of so long wished rest."
--

In another image, An Anthem of Earth, 177, the poet mentions
the same incident.

There is one image that recurs and that seems to have affected Thompson for some reason. In six images, the poet uses the substance of the following passage. The iteration of the same thought in different forms proves that this passage had a particular attraction for the poet; the ideas of "Winepress", "treading", etc., are used in an imaginative manner without a religious connotation. Here is the passage from Isais:

"I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with me: I have trampled on them in my indignation, and have trodden them down in my wrath, and their blood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my apparel.¹

Thompson describes the season of Autumn coming forth dressed:

"In vesture unimagined-fair,"	Corymbus for
- - - - -	Autumn-112
"As if she had trodden the stars in press,	
Till the gold wine spurted over her dress,	
Till the gold wine gushed out round her feet;	
Spouted over her stained wear	
And bubbled in golden froth at her feet,	
And hung like a whirlpool's mist round her."	

In an exquisite metaphor, almost as lovely as the flower itself, the poet describes the delicate fragrance of the rose:

"Who made the splendid rose	Ode to the
Saturate with purple glows;	Setting Sun-128
Cupped to the marge with beauty; a perfume press^	
Whence the wind vintages	
Gushes of warmed fragrance richer far	
Than all the flavorful ooze of Cyprus vats?"	

1. Connolly, Poems of Thompson, p. 343

In a similar image, Thompson describes Day as the vintager who treads the winepress of the East:

"If young Daytread, a glorious vintager,
The winepress of the purple-foamed East;" Sister Songs II
731

Here the original elements from the "winepress" image, Thompson refers to Mrs. Meynell as a follower of Christ and poet:

"As the vintages of earth
Taste of the sun that riped their birth,
We know what never-cadent Sun
Thy lamed clusters throbbed upon,
What plumed feet the winepress trod,
Thy wine is flavorful of God." To a Poet
Breaking
Silence-62

Two other images contain reminders of the ideas from Isaias; Ode to the Setting Sun, 160, and Song of the Hours, 113.

Thompson compared his dreams on the London embankment of the Thames to Jacob's Ladder. In brief, the story of Jacob is that he fell asleep on a stone and dreamed that he saw a ladder stretched between heaven and earth on which angles were ascending and descending. In his sadness, the poet sees the prospect of happier days:

"But (when so sad thou canst not sadder,
Cry; - and upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross." Kingdom of
God-17

Inspiration may come to a poet as the dream came to Jacob:

"The hardest pang whereon
He lays his mutinous head may be a Jacob's stone." Sister Songs II
397

In a rather far-fetched comparison between the soul of Mrs. Meynell and Jacob's Ladder, the poet fails to express his thoughts clearly:

"Her soul from earth to heaven lies,
 Like the ladder of the vision,
 Whereon go
 To and fro,
 In ascension and demission,
 Star-flecked feet of Paradise."

Scala Jacobi
 Portaque
 Eburnea-1

The Ten Commandments which were given by God to Moses were enshrined in the Ark of the Covenant; in the New Testament, Mary is spoken of as the Ark of the Covenant, an idea first found in the writings of St. Nersis:

"I, the Ark that for the graven
 Tables of the Law was made."

Assumpta Maria
 9

He compares the body of Madeline Meynell to the Ark, and her soul, to the cloud, the sign which guided the Israelite:

"Like the sign which led the Israelite,
 Thy soul through day or dark,
 A visible brightness on the chosen Ark
 Of thy sweet body and pure,"

Sister Songs I
 360

Her pure mind is like:

"A Gideon-fleece amid life's dusty drouth." Ibid.-352

Another image, based on the Ark of the Covenant is found in An Anthem of Earth, 325. Nature speaks to each man in his own tongue; to the poet she speaks in the strong, tongue of the Catholic Faith;

"O Nature, never-done,
 Ungaped at Pentecostal miracle,
 We hear thee, each man in his proper tongue!"

From the Night
 of Forebeing-31

Thompson's devotion to our Blessed Mother is a frequent subject for images; the Visitation is commemorated by the poet; he claims for Mr. Meynell's poetic inspiration the spirit of our Blessed Mother when she sang the Magnificat:

"Whose spirit sure is lineal to that
Which sang Magnificat."

Manus Animam
Pinxit-53

A reminder of the passion of Mary and her awful suffering at
the foot of the Cross:

"The soldier struck a triple stroke,
That smote thy Jesus on the tree:
He broke the Heart of hearts, and broke
The Saint's and Mother's hearts in thee."

The Passion
of Mary-9

To Thompson, the presence of our Blessed Mother at the foot
of the Cross made the awful suffering of Christ tolerable to
man by her gentleness and tenderness:

"Therefore, O tender Lady, Queen Mary,
Thou gentleness that dose enmoss and drape
The Cross's rigorous austerity,
Wipe thou the blood from wounds that
needs must gape."

Ode to the
Setting Sun
Afterstrain-17

The next image is a development of an adaptation from the
Stabat Mater, the hymn to our Blessed Mother at the foot of
the Cross. The poet applies the thoughts analagously; he
places Saint Monica at the foot of the Cross, weeping for
her sinful son, Saint Augustine:

"At the Cross thy station keeping
With the mournful Mother weeping,
Thou, unto the sinless Son,
Weepest for thy sinful one,"

Saint Monica-1

The final image describes the Assumption of our Blessed
Mother and her crown of glory:

"And He thou barest in thy womb
Caught thee at last into the day,
Before the living throne of Whom
The Lights of Heaven burning pray."

The Passion
of Mary-23

2. The Liturgy

Thompson's love of God was the outstanding characteristic of both the man and the poet. The many pictures, the ready illustrations from the Liturgy, the absolute ease with which Thompson handles these images, show that he was completely at home in the Liturgy and his intimate knowledge and felicitous use of liturgical imagery argues his love for God.

The sun as the symbol for Christ is the predominant and most artistic image that Thompson utilizes. In the primitive religion of Egypt, and also, in pagan Greece and Rome, the sun was worshipped as a god. The beams of the setting sun reflecting from the clouds at twilight, bring to Thompson's mind Christ's suffering on the Cross:

"Thou art of Him a type memorial,	Ode to the
Like Him thou hang'st in dreadful	Setting Sun-218
pomp of blood	
Upon thy western rood."	

The red sun at twilight is compared to our Lord's head covered with blood. The setting and rising of the sun are reminiscent of Christ's death and ascension:

"And His stained brow did vail like thine	Ibid.-221
tonight,	
Yet lift once more its light,	
And, risen, again departed from our ball	
But when it set on earth arose in Heaven."	

There is a beautiful image based on the comparison between the daily rising of the sun and the daily Sacrifice of the Mass. The last line of this image is the climax to all the praise

which Thompson has given, not to the sun, but to Christ, of Whose beauty and power, the sun has been a symbol:

"Thou, for the life of all that live Orient Ode-191
The victim daily born and sacrificed;
To whom the pinion of this longing verse
Beats but with fire which first thyself
 didst give,
To thee, O Sun, - or is't perchance to Christ?"

The Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is figured in a cosmic sun image which is one of the best and most admirably sustained images in Thompson's poetry. Also, this image is clear proof wherein Thompson's inspiration and genius are a development of his Catholic training. The celebrant of Benediction is the priest, Day, who lifts the sacrament, the Sun, from the sanctuary of the East, and carries it in the monstrance, the West, and finally is helped by the altar-boy, twilight, in unvesting:

"Lo, in the sanctuaried East,
Day, a dedicated priest
In all his robes pontifical exprest,
Lifteth slowly, lifteth sweetly,
From out its Orient tabernacle drawn,
Yon orb'd sacrament confest
Which sprinkles benediction through the dawn;
And when the grave procession's ceased,
The earth with due illustrious rite
Blessed, - ere the frail fingers featly
Of twilight, violet-cassocked acolyte,
His sacerdotal stoles unvest-
Sets, for high close of the mysterious feast
The sun in august exposition meetly
Within the flaming monstrance of the West."

In order to appreciate the sublime beauty and originality of such an image, one must be familiar with the ritual of the Catholic Church.

The comparison between the ritual of the Church and that of nature is one of Thompson's favorite themes. The earth is likened to a censer swung by the sun, whose chain is light:

"We, while the sun with his hid chain swings Like a censer around him the blossom- sweet earth."	Song of the Hours-49
--	-------------------------

In a sustained and more elaborate image, the priest Night, kneeling on the sanctuary-stair of the East, is served by the acolytes, the clouds, and swings the earth as a censer before the throne of God:

"See how there The cowled Night Kneels on the Eastern sanctuary-stair.	A Corymbus for Autumn 84
--	--------------------------------

What is this feel of incense everywhere?
Clings it round folds of the blanch-amiced clouds,
Upwafted by the solemn thurifer
The mighty Spirit unknown,
That swingeth the slow earth before the embannered
throne?

Thompson's fondness for the censer is shown in the repeated use of this type of image. Changing the ideas a little, he compares the sun to a censer, and the sun's rays to incense, Mistress of Vision, 37; again, the sun is compared to a censer and the sun's rays to incense, Sister Songs II, 739. In the last image, the poet's heart is a censer swung by the unrest of his soul, fed with the incense of pain, Sere of the Leaf, 111.

The earth appears to the poet at night like a dead body beneath the candles of heaven, the stars:

"Round the earth still and stark
 Heaven's death-lights kindle, yellow spark by spark
 Beneath the dreadful catafalque of the dark."

A Corymbus
 for Autumn-102

In a similar image, evening, an angel, lights up the tapers
 the stars, around the dead things of the day:

"I was heavy with the Even,
 When she lit her glimmering tapers
 Round the day's dead sanctities."

The Hound
 of Heaven-84

There are thirty-two images which refer, either in
 their proper religious use or in an imaginative manner, to the
 Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. There are images which are poeti-
 cally dull in themselves but they give evidence of the poet's
 thoughts. For example, the oft-repeated idea of nature's lit-
 urgy being similar to that of the Church is conveyed by the
 metaphorical use of the single word 'sacerdotal'. In the first
 image, the poet compares nature to a priest:

"All Nature sacerdotal seems,"

A Corymbus
 for Autumn-30

The same metaphor is applied to the sun:

"Admit the sacerdotal sun,"

Ad
 Castitatem-10

This type of image, indefinite in meaning, general enough,
 does give us some idea of the poet's trends of thought and
 the workings of his mind.

Twelve images are formed from the priestly vestments
 of amice, maniple, cincture, and stole. Thompson uses these
 vestments in an imaginative manner and not in their proper
 religious setting.

The amice is the oblong-shaped piece of linen which
 the priest places on his head for a moment and then allows it

to drop upon his shoulders where it rests during the Mass. Thompson is reminded of the color of the amice by looking at the clouds:

A Corymbus
for Autumn-87

"What is this feel of incense everywhere?
Clings it round folds of the blanch-amiced clouds,"

The maniple symbolizes the joys of the priest's eternal reward. Very appropriately, Thompson compares it to the rainbow:

Ode to the
Setting Sun-10

"The passing shower that rainbows maniple,"
The transition from paganism to Christianity is expressed
in the following image. The unity of song and sanctity
is one of the poet's fundamental beliefs:

To a Poet
Breaking
Silence-22

"Teach how the crucifix may be
Carven from the laurel tree."

There are three images based on the cincture, the symbol of chastity, the cord which is worn around the waist of the priest. Thompson refers to it in rather vague pious phrasings, A Fallen Yew, 67; A Judgment in Heaven, 7; and Song of the Hours, 63.

There are four fanciful allusions to the stole; Thompson emphasizes the unity between the liturgy of the Church and that of Nature, From the Night of Forebeing, 303. The omnipresence of Christ is revealed by the signs in nature, Orient Ode, 196; and also, there are two metaphorical uses of the word "stole" in A Judgment in Heaven, 38 and 43.

The pall is the covering for the chalice. Whether or not the poet used this word with its religious meaning in

mind cannot be ascertained from the images that he forms. There are possibly five images, of little meaning, in the Making of Viola, 9; A Sunset, 47; A Corymbus for Autumn, 130; Song of the Hours, 42; and Assumpta Maria, 80.

Thompson uses the chalice once in a religious image. It is a reminder of our Lord's suffering in the garden of Gethsemane; the poet asks that he be spared in the future the agony which he experienced in the past:

"Let pass the chalice of this coming dread, Grief's
Or that foredrained O bid me not re-drain!" Harmonics-16

In three other images, Thompson uses the chalice in a metaphorical sense; Sere of the Leaf, 86; An Anthem of Earth, 42; and The Hound of Heaven, 70.

Finally, Thompson uses imagery formed from parts of the Mass; taking these in the order of the Mass, the first metaphor reminds us of the prayer before the Gospel:

"Lo, my suit pleads Orient Ode
That thou, Isaian coal of fire, 152
Touch from yon altar my poor mouth's desire."

Using the sun as the symbol for Christ, Thompson addresses in the words of the Nicene Creed:

"Light out of Light!" Ibid.-127

There is a reminder of the consecration in Laus Amara Doloris, 107. And, as Christ is the life-giver to the soul at Communion, the sun is the life of the material universe:

"Thy proper blood dost thou not give," Oriend Ode
165

"Art thou not life of them that live?" Orient Ode-167
 Yea, in glad twinkling advent, thou dost dwell
 Within our body as a tabernacle!"

From the last Gospel, the poet adapts the symbolism of
 St. John the Evangelist:

"Resplendent and prevailing Word Ibid.-128
 Of the Unheard!"

And in the final image is a metaphorical application of
 the words:

"The light is in the darkness, and Grace of
 The darkness doth not comprehend." the Way-25

The images in this and the preceding section are
 conclusive evidence, close to direct proof, of the fact that
 Francis Thompson was inspired by the Catholic Faith. The
 impression that one might receive from studying Thompson's
 religious imagery is threefold; first, that the poet had an
 intimate knowledge of Sacred Scriptures and the Liturgy;
 the truth of this statement is proved by the cumulative effect
 of these images. In the second place, it has been found that
 whenever Thompson is motivated by profound thought or in-
 tense emotion, he invariably falls back on his knowledge of
 the Bible or the Liturgy of the Church to express or illustrate
 the deep thought or emotion. Lastly, Thompson's use of so
 many images, drawn from the Bible and the Liturgy, show a
 constant preoccupation and personal love for his religion.

Each poet tends to draw the majority of his images
 from the things he knows best or in which he is most interested.

In other words, this incessant stream of pictures, the many and varied Biblical images, the pictures, illustrations of ideas, and fanciful applications of the Liturgy, are in themselves one proof of the fact that Thompson was a religious man. Indeed, the Catholic faith was so much a part of his life, that some of his most vivid images have for their source the Liturgy of the Church.

CHAPTER VIII

DERIVATIVE IMAGERY

For the most part, Francis Thompson's imagery is highly original in conception. However, in reading his poetry, it appears that some images bear a resemblance, whether conscious or unconscious, to images in the writings of other poets. This statement can be extended, of course, to include, to a certain degree, every poet and writer.

Originality is an excellence of the poetic mind, but no poet is completely independent of other poets. Thompson himself tells us that "really original imagery is a thing so rare as can hardly be too highly treasured."¹

The purpose here is to demonstrate that one of Thompson's sources of inspiration for the making of images was the writings of other authors. Thompson's indebtedness to Crashaw, Shelley, Patmore, and Keats, can be shown in almost parallel images; his indebtedness to Coleridge, Blake, and Byron is less evident but noticeable. It is not fair to conclude that Thompson was a conscious plagiarist or deliberate imitator of the writings of other poets. Adopting Thompson's own ideas on this subject, it would be more charitable and equally just to say that:

1. Connolly, Terence L., Literary Criticisms by Francis Thompson, New York; E. P. Dutton and Co. Inc., 1948, p. 456

"The majority of instances, no doubt, which pass for deliberate imitation, are the mere result of unconscious cerebration; but even when the imitation is conscious, there is no necessary stigma attending it. For the precious metals of the mind are capable of transmutation; and the silver of one writer becomes the gold of another."²

The purpose is not to expose Thompson to a charge of plagiarism. He was a man of rare genius and his imagery is the true product of a rich inner experience. However, some images closely resemble images in the writings of other poets. These similarities are sometimes in form, in development, in vocabulary, in meaning, or in mood.

To decide whether an image has been derived or not is, of course, an arbitrary and inconclusive judgment at best. For no one can truly follow the workings of another's mind, especially the complexities of the creative imagination. In studying Thompson, it has been a habit to take certain things for granted which cannot meet the demand of rigid proof. In every image that has been included therefore, at least three similarities between Thompson's image and its source exist.

In each image the likenesses are readily apparent and in no way depend upon a highly subjective interpretation. The comparative method has many advantages, but in discussing an image out of context, the omitted lines sometimes would strengthen the impression that the image was derived by

2. Connolly, Terence L., Literary Criticisms by Francis Thompson, E. P. Dutton and Co. Inc., New York, 1948, p. 451

Thompson. Especially is this true of Patmore's imagery which does not resemble Thompson's imagery in vocabulary but has the same meaning in many parallel passages. It is impossible to follow this interesting examination at length because the conclusion that Thompson took suggestion from Patmore cannot be resolved.

However, we can be certain that Thompson approved of literary borrowings. The poet does offer some evidence against himself. In speaking about the attention called to the similarity of *Dark Rosaleen* by Clarence Mangan to its Celtic source, Thompson defends Mangan:

"If attention had not been called to the fact, the two poems might conceivably be read without suspicion of their common origin. But poetry is a rootedly immoral art, in which success excuses well nigh everything. That in the soldier is flat blasphemy which in the captain, the master of his craft, is but commendable daring. Exactly as a great poet may plagiarize to his heart's content, because he plagiarizes well (since Spartan law holds good in literature, where stealing is honorable, provided it be done with neatness and dexterity)..."³

This is indeed a startling conclusion! Thompson believes that it is perfectly legitimate to borrow--or to use his own word "plagiarize"--from the writings of other poets if it can be done successfully. The classical dogma on this point is that any literature worthy of the name is to be achieved only through creative imitation. The implications of Aristotle's

3. Connolly, Criticisms by Francis Thompson, p. 336

definition of mimesis plus the fact that great literature was always considered as common property by the ancients would seem to be what Thompson meant.

Thompson's definition of "Spartan Law" is found in his criticism of Ernest Henley's Burns:

"Spartan law holds good in literature, where to steal is honorable, provided it be done with skill and dexterity: wherefore Mercury was the patron both of thieves and poets."⁴

Thompson's humor should not obscure the point! Thompson believed that it was an acceptable tenet in writing poetry to "turn the silver of another writer" to the "gold" of his own. Keats depended on Spenser and Cristoph Wieland's Oberon; Coleridge's sources have been studied by John Livingston Lowes; Shakespeare depended upon Holinshed's Chronicles of English History for many incidents in his dramas. There is a wide difference between slavish copying and correct use of source material.

The method here is too well known to require comment; in each case the original source is given and then compared with Thompson's image. The best evidence comes from the texts themselves and not from any interpretation or gratuitous inference.

It is significant to note, at the outset, that Thompson never attempted to conceal indebtedness. In the one certain image that we have of Thompson's unconscious

4. Connolly, Criticisms by Francis Thompson, p. 172

plagiarism, he openly acknowledges his debt to Patmore.

Patmore wrote four odes corresponding with the seasons of the year; in the first of these nature odes he describes the coming of Spring in the following image:

"O, Baby Spring, That flutter'st sudden 'neath the breast of Earth, A month before the birth,"	Saint Valentin's Day--11
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The "Proem" of Sister Songs begins with a joyous outburst at the coming of Spring; Thompson employs the following image:

"Through dreams she stirs and murmurs at that summons dear: From its red leash my heart strains tamelessly, For Spring leaps in the womb of the young year!"	Sister Songs 13
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The similarity was called to the poet's attention and he acknowledged it in the Preface of the first edition with the following note:

"One image in the Proem was an unconscious plagiarism from the beautiful image in Mr. Patmore's St. Valentine's Day. Finding I could not disengage it without injury to the passage in which it is imbedded, I have preferred to leave it, with this acknowledgment to a poet rich enough to lend to the poor."⁵

This gracious note is the one instance wherein Thompson admitted deriving an image. There is a single example from Lord Byron's song The Isles of Greece which bears a strong resemblance in form to Thompson's Daisy. We know for certain that Thompson was acquainted with Byron's poem (Cf. Patriotism and Poetry in Literary Criticisms by Francis Thompson). The third stanza of Byron's poem begins:

5. Connolly, Poems of Coventry Patmore, p. 151.

"The mountains look on Marathon- And Marathon looks on the sea; And musing there an hour alone, I dreamed that Greece might still be free;"	The Isles of Greece-13
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The second stanza of Thompson's Daisy bears resemblances in form and in meaning to Byron:

"The hills look over on the South, And southward dreams the sea; And with the sea breeze hand in hand Came innocence and she."	Daisy-5
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The first three lines of both stanzas begin with the same words "The", "And", "And"; the word "hill" may have been substituted by Thompson for its synonym "mountain". In both stanzas, the verb "look" is the same in the first verses of both stanzas. The preposition "on" also appears in the first verses of both stanzas. If we read Thompson's "South" for Byron's "Marathon", our belief that the image was transposed is strengthened because the two words recur as the second word, in each stanza respectively, in the second verse, as "southward" and "Marathon"; both second lines end with the same two words "the sea". Byron repeats the verb "looks", Thompson chooses the more poetic "dreams", but the meaning is similar. If the Plains of Marathon are, as a matter of fact, in a southerly direction from the mountains the reason for the choice can be inferred with reasonable justification. The third verses of both stanzas begin with the word "And"; it is also important to note that Thompson indented his lines in the manner of Lord Byron.

John Keats wrote a fragment of a poem of seven and one-half lines on the margin of the manuscript of The Cap And Bells; the intensity of his love and its hopelessness are expressed to Fanny Brawne:

"This living hand, now warm, now capable	Untitled
Of earnest grasping, would, if it were cold	Fragment by
And in the icy silence of the tomb,	Keats-1
So haunt thy days and chill thy dreaming nights	
That thou wouldst wish thy own heart dry of blood	
So in my veins red life might stream again	
And thou be conscience-calm'd - see, here it is -	
I hold it towards you."	

The dominant ideas in the above fragment are the dead hand reaching from beyond the grave to a loved one; before examining an image of Thompson's based on Keats's fragment, there are a few more lines found in another poem by Keats which may strengthen the impression that Thompson derived his image; throughout the poem Fancy, Keats personifies "Fancy" and compares her to a "Bird". Here is the pertinent image:

"Break the Mesh	Fancy-89
Of the Fancy's silken leash	
Where she's tethered to the heart.	
Quickly break her prison string	
And such joys as these she'll bring."	

In Chapter VI, the similarity in tone between Thompson's Sister Songs and Keats's earlier poems has been pointed out. The following image, in which Thompson addresses the Meynell children Monica and Madeline, was probably derived from a synthesis of the ideas in the foregoing images of Keats:

"Now pass your ways, fair bird, and pass your ways	Sister
If you will;	Songs I-
I have you through the days!	746
And flit or hold you still,	
And perch you where you list	
On what wrist,-	
You are mine through the times!	
I have caught you fast forever in a tangle of sweet rhymes.	
And in your young maiden morn	
You may scorn,	
But you must be	
Bound and sociate to me;	
With this thread from out the tomb my dead hand shall	
tether thee!"	

In Thompson's image the ideas are present but concealed; both poets are addressing loved ones: Keats is speaking to Fanny Brawne and Thompson, to the Meynell children. In both images of Keats the ideas "bird", "tied to a string", "love scorned" and "the dead hand", "reaching from the tomb" are important. The exact same ideas are found in Thompson's image. In the first seven lines of Thompson's image, the imagery is from bird life; the bird may fly where it pleases. That is the nascent idea; Keats's "silken mesh" becomes Thompson's "thread" which means the same thing. The most striking similarity, however, is the use of the word "tethered"; at the moment of poetic creation, the ideas from Keats merged into the expression of a continuous thought and feeling. Although the images have no relationship in form, they are parallel in thought and meaning.

This combination of old ideas in a new setting expresses in an original manner was a praiseworthy method of

composition. Indeed, the ancient writers of Rome merely adapted the Greek plays into Latin; this was not looked upon with disapproval. The Classical dramatists of Rome derived much of their inspiration and ideas from Greek sources; open avowal of imitation was a major point in classical literary theory. (Cf. Aristotle on the definition of mimesis.)

In his poem Robin Hood, Keats describes the passing of time in the following image:

"And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years." Robin Hood-3

Using the same viewpoint in The Hound of Heaven, Thompson depicts the passing of his life:

"I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years- The Hound of
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap." Heaven-120

Thompson's image is an example of what he called taking the "silver" of another poet and turning it into his "gold". Both images are similar in the nascent idea: both are concerned with the passing of time. In Keats's image, the minutes are buried under the mounded dust of decayed leaves; in Thompson's image, his youth stands amid the dust of the mounded years, buried beneath the heap (of decayed leaves). It is reasonable to infer that Thompson derived this image from Keats.

In the following image from Sister Songs, the critic Shane Leslie was reminded of the arrow-shaped hands of the clock in Covent Garden; to Father Connolly the image called to mind the painting of the martyrdom of St. Sebastian:

"Forlorn, and faint, and stark,
 I had endured through watches of the dark
 The abashless inquisition of each star,
 Yea, was the outcast mark
 Of all those heavenly passers scrutiny;
 Stood bound and helplessly
 For Time to shoot his barbed minutes at me;
 Suffered the trampling hoof of every hour
 In night's slow-wheeled car;
 Until the tardy dawn dragged me at length
 From under those dread wheels; and, bled of strength,
 I waited the inevitable last."

Sister Songs I-
277

In Keats's poetic drama Otho the Great, there is an image with essentially the same ideas:

"O, unbenignest Love, why wilt thou let
 Darkness steal out upon the sleepy world
 So wearily, as if Night's chariot-wheels
 Were clogg'd in some thick cloud? O thoughtful Love
 Let not her steeds with drowsy-footed pace
 Pass the high stars."

Otho the Great
IV ii-39

The dominant idea in both images is the "chariot"- "moving slowly" - "drawn by steeds". The word "hoof" in Thompson's image establishes the connection. Hours do not have "hoofs" unless they are drawing the "slow-wheeled car of Night" which is another way of saying "Night's chariot-wheels" which are drawn by the "steeds with drowsy-footed pace".

Another similarity to Keats is seen in Thompson's description of Indian summer:

Sister Songs II
553

"When the snake summer casts her blazoned skin
 We find it at the turn of Autumn's path,
 And think it summer that rewinded hath,
 Joying therein;"

Keats's image contains the same thought--a snake shedding its skin in Autumn:

And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin;
While the Autumn breezes sing."

Fancy-57

Corresponding words in both images are "the snake", "cast", "skin", and "Autumn"; the thought is substantially the same in both images.

There are many echoes and reminders of Keats in Thompson's imagery; for example, the purity and lofty chastity of Thompson's love as expressed in Manus Animam Pinxit is similar in viewpoint to Keats's imagery:

"In that same void white Chastity shall sit,
And monitor me nightly to lone slumber.
With sanest lips I vow me to the number
Of Dian's sisterhood; and, kind lady,
With thy good help, this very night shall see,
My future days to her fame consecrate,"

Endymion IV-
883

This may be a casual likeness though because there are not many correspondences in words. The two words that are similar are "Dian" and "consecrate". In Thompson's image, he asks for an intense and pure love for the poet, Alice Meynell:

"...with what purging thoughts have laved
This love of mine from all mortality."

Manus Animam
Pinxit-64

"Your beauty Dian, dress and contemplate
Within a pool to Dian consecrate!"

Ibid.-70

In comparing the sun to Christ, Thompson found precedence in Coleridge:

"Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:"

The Rime of
the Ancient
Mariner-97

In Thompson's image, there is almost a re-statement of Coleridge's thought:

Ode to the
Setting Sun-

"Thou art of Him a type memorial.
Like Him thou hang'st in dreadful pomp of blood 217
Upon thy Western rood;
And His stained brow did vail like thine tonight,"

It is more probable to think, however, that Thompson derived his ideas from the poetry of Crashaw. The sun is the symbol for Christ as hinted in this image:

Acts V-3

"Thy shadow Peter, must show me the Sun,"

The reference to the "sun" is, of course, to Christ. In Thompson's Ode to the Setting Sun this idea is developed by reviewing the glories of the sun, although in reality, he is writing about Christ.

Another image from Crashaw in which he sings the glories of the sun, Christ; he advises a young woman not to accept any love less than the love of God:

Counsel to a
Young Gentle-
woman-54

"Your wise soul, never to be won,
Now with a love below the Sun."

At the Nativity of our Lord, Crashaw compares the journey of the wise men to Christ, as seeking the true "Orient" the light of the world:

Sospetto
D'Herode-135

"Three kings, or what is more three wise men went
Westward to find the world's true Orient,"

Another image of Crashaw's which strongly echoes ideas in Thompson's imagery is this comparison of the rising sun to Christ:

In the Holy
Nativity-19

"The Babe look't up and show'd his Face,
In spite of darkness, it was Day.
It was the day sweet and did rise
Not from the East, but from thine Eyes."

In the Name of Jesus, Crashaw again compares the sun and Christ;

"The Ruby windows which enricht the East, Of Thy so oft repeated rising."	Name of Jesus-223
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In the nativity of Christ, there is a reminder of the rising sun; just as the sun rises and dissipates the shades of darkness, the nativity of Christ dispelled the darkness of paganism:

"We saw thee in thy Balmy Nest, Bright Dawn of our Eternal Day; We saw thine eyes break from the East, And chase the trembling shades away:"	Hymn of Nativity-29
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Crashaw's "sun imagery" bears strong resemblances to Thompson's use of the same ideas. Many traits of Crashaw are found in Thompson's imagery. Knowing that Thompson read Crashaw and admired his poetry, the possible source of inspiration for his "sun-Christ" images was probably Crashaw. There are many corresponding words in other images which prove that Thompson derived them from Crashaw.

In speaking about the Incarnation of Christ, Crashaw states that he became subject to his own laws:

"And further, that the Law's eternal Giver, Should bleed in his own law's obedience."	Sospetto D'Herode-193
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Thompson's image contains the same idea:

"For supreme Spirit subject was to clay, And Law from its own servants learned a law."	Sister Songs II 348
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In both images, the subject is Christ; Christ became man and "obeyed" or "learned" a law from man. Christ, the eternal lawgiver became subject to the laws of his own servants.

In Crashaw the word "Law" refers to Christ the first time that it occurs, and similarly in Thompson. In one of his first poems on childhood, Thompson expresses his mood at the child's departure:

"She left me marvelling why my soul Was sad that she was glad; At all the sadness in the sweet, The sweetness in the sad."	Daisy-49
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The imagery may perhaps have been inspired by Crashaw's stanza:

"Sadness all the while She sits in such a throne as this, Can do naught but smile, Nor believes she sadness is. Gladness itself would be more glad To be made so sweetly sad."	The Weeper- 49
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In the same poem by Crashaw, the image recurs more closely to Thompson's derivation:

"Nowhere but here did ever meet Sweetness so sad, sadness so sweet."	The Weeper- 59
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There is another unconscious plagiarism from Crashaw; in his apostrophe to the great Saint Terese, Crashaw uses the image:

"Bowls full of richer blood than blush of grape."	Apology Hymn to Saint Teresa-33
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Thompson adopts the ideas fancifully but there are three similarities to Crashaw:

"Radiate surge of colour came, Diffusing blush-wise, palpitant,"	Sister Songs- 147
"Or they would glow enamouredly Illustrious sanguine, like a grape of blood;"	Ibid.-155

The words "blush", "grape" of "blood" are corresponding; the "richer blood" "blushing" of Crashaw has the identical meaning of Thompson's "glow" "Illustrious sanguine". Thompson's image from the winepress was, of course, derived from the Bible; it may have been suggested by Crashaw's use of the ideas from Isaias:

"Let the King
Me ever into his cellars bring:
Where flows such Wine as we can have of none
But Him, who trod the Wine-press all alone."

Apology Hymn
to St. Teresa-
37

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Thompson used the ideas in this image for six images of his own.

Many echoes of The Hound of Heaven are found in the next image from Crashaw:

"By thee the one doth changing Nature through
Her endless labyrinths pursue,
And th'other chases woman, while he goes
More ways, and turns, then hunted Nature knows."

On Hope-67

As a possible source of inspiration for images in The Hound of Heaven, this image by Crashaw is rich in suggestion. The first verse may have inspired the pursuit of nature instead of God in The Hound of Heaven. The "endless labyrinths" possibly suggested the "labyrinthine ways" of the mind. The pursuit of woman is also found in Thompson's poem. And "hunted nature" suggest the imagery of the chase. Further along in Crashaw's poem occurs an image that could have been developed by Thompson in his masterpiece:

"True Hope's a glorious Huntress, and her chase
The God of Nature in the field of Grace."

On Hope-89

Whether Thompson actually took suggestion from Crashaw or not, we have no way of knowing; the imagery of the chase, the pursuit of God's love, and the implications of Crashaw's imagery certainly bears a striking coincidence to Thompson.

Crashaw advised the Countess of Denbigh to set aside her fears and convert to the Catholic faith. In telling her to "yield" the "fort of her fair self", he uses imagery that suggests Thompson's A Fallen Yew. In this poem Thompson makes the heart a "fortress" that cannot be "yielded" except by the "keys hung at the cincture of God" (line 67). With regard to Thompson's image, there is a single similarity to Crashaw, i.e. the heart compared to a fortress, and this may be a casual likeness because the form and meaning of the images differ. There is a similarity in meaning between lines 17-21 of Crashaw's To the Countess of Denbigh and lines 64-66 of Thompson's A Fallen Yew. Another similarity exists between Crashaw's A Song, lines 13-17, and the meaning of Thompson's twentieth stanza in The Mistress of Vision. The imagery of Thompson in Any Saint strongly suggests Crashaw's Death's Lecture at the Funeral of A Young Gentleman. Both poems are a development of the theme that man is a creature possessing a body and soul; in expression, there are paradoxes between man's greatness and nothingness. There are also several parallel images that Thompson may have derived from Crashaw:

"Come man;
Hyperbolized Nothing! Know thy span;
Take thine own measure here: down, down, and low;
Before thyself in thine idea; thou
Huge emptiness! Contract thyself; and shrink
All thy Wild circle to a Point. O sink
Lower and lower yet; till thy lean size
Call heav'n to look on thee with narrow eyes.
Lesser and lesser yet; till thou begin
To show a face, fit to confess thy Kin,
Thy neighborhood to Nothing."

Death's
Lecture-10

Thompson derived the following images from this passage:

"Not to this man, but Man,-
Universe in a span;
Point
Of the spheres conjoint;"

Any Saint-54

The line "Universe in a span" reads "Eternity shut in a span" in Crashaw. "Contract thyself; and shrink/ All thy wild circle to a point" becomes in Thompson's poem "Point/ of the spheres conjoint;" Crashaw's "Know thy span;/ Take thine own measure here" is the same in meaning as Thompson's "Trope that itself not scans/ Its huge significance,"; "Hyperbolized Nothing" may have been transposed to "O secret metaphor". "Great arm-fellow or God! To the ancestral clod/ Kin,/ And to Cherubin;" is similar to Crashaw's lines 18 and 19. The word "kin" appears in both images.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was the subject of Thompson's brilliant and penetrating essay; in the beautiful prosody of the Essay on Shelley, Thompson reveals not only a deep admiration of Shelley, but what is even more significant, his own similarity, especially in imagery, to Shelley. The essay

from Thompson but there are four similarities in the imagery.

The description of the storm of death in Alastor strongly suggests an image in Sister Songs:

"The waves arose, Higher and higher still Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge."	Alastor-393
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In the Witch of Atlas, there is another image that may have inspired Thompson:

"And whilst the outer lake beneath the lash Of the wind's scourge, foamed like a wounded thing, And the incessant hail with strong clash Ploughed up the waters, and the flagging wing;"	The Witch of Atlas- 393
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Thompson's image may be a synthesis of Shelley's ideas:

"As Thunder writhes the lash of his long lightnings About the growling heads of the brute main Foaming at mouth, until it wallow again In the scooped oozes of its bed of pain; So all the gnashing jaws, the leaping heads..." * _ _ _ _ _	Sister Songs II- 670
"I scourge beneath the torment of my charms"	Ibid.-679

Corresponding words in Thompson and Shelley are "lash", "writhe", "foaming" for "foamed", the "main" for the "waves", "brute" for "fierce", "scourge" is the same. Parallel ideas in the images are that a storm is taking place, the water is being lashed, the white-caps are heads of brute or fierce animals, and those that are being scourged are writhing in pain. From these similarities in words and meanings, it may be inferred that Thompson derived this image from Shelley.

Another image in Sister Songs was probably derived from Prometheus Unbound; Shelley tells us:

itself is outside the province of the present study, but it is significant in the light that it throws upon Thompson's debt to Shelley. For Thompson believed that Shelley was a true poet, "a singer", but lamented the fact that "song and sanctity" were divorced.

There are twenty-three images that resemble images in Shelley's poetry; it appears that seventeen of these images may have been derived by Thompson from Shelley.

The similarity between Shelley's "hours" in the first part of Prometheus Unbound to Thompson's Song of the Hours has been commented upon by Father Connolly and others. Mr. Lewis felt so strongly about Thompson's source of inspiration for this poem that he wrote; "This is pure Shelley, even to plagiarism".⁶ Writing to Emilia Viviani, Shelley likens her to a bird in a cage; she was immured in a convent when she refused to marry an elderly man:

"Poor captive bird! who, from thy narrow cage, Epipsychidion-
 Pourest such music, that it might assuage 5
 The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee,
 Were they not deaf to all sweet melody."

In Thompson's images, the same elements are used: "bird" in a "cage", "sweet music"; both poems are addressed to absent loved ones. Shelley was infatuated with Emilia Viviana, and Thompson's love for Mrs. Meynell is the subject of many of his poems as well As A Carrier Song. The mood of Shelley differs

6. Connolly, Poems of Thompson, p. 418

Thompson's image has no association whatever in meaning, but there are similarities in vocabulary:

Identical words are "lakes", "bubbles", "water-flowers", "paving" for "paved", and "floor" which is suggested by "bottom" and means the same thing; the nascent idea in both images is also the same, though the final meanings differ.

"There was never moon, Save the white sufficing woman: Light most heavenly-human-- Like the unseen form of sound, Senses invisibly in tune,-- With a sun-derived stole Did inaureole All her lovely body round."	Of 28	Vision-
---	----------	---------

"A lovely lady garmented in light
From her own beauty."

The Witch
of Atlas-33

Another reminder of Thompson's image from Shelley is The
Cloud, lines 45-46.

Thompson's Buona Notte opens in a very similar manner to Shelley's With a Guitar to Jane; Jane was Jane Williams with whom Shelley was carrying on a love affair up to the time of his death:

"Ariel to Miranda: -Take This slave of Music, for the sake Of him who is the slave of thee, And teach it all the harmony"	With a Guitar to Jane-1
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The title of Thompson's poem was derived from a note that Jane Williams had written to Shelley in which the last words were "Buona Notte";

"Ariel to Miranda: -Hear This good-night the sea-winds bear; And let thine unacquainted ear Take grief for their interpreter"	Buona Notte-1
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The theme of the poem is that Shelley, who was drowned in the Bay of Spezzia, answers the note of Jane Williams.

In the final stanza of the lovely elegy on the death of John Keats, Shelley compares him to a star:

"The breath whose might I have invoked in song Adonais-486
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
The massy earth and sphered skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully afar;
Whilst, burning from the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are."

The foregoing lines are not only about Keats, but also contain a prophecy of Shelley's death; the pertinent image occurs in lines 492-493. Shelley compares the soul of Keats to a star. In Thompson's image, he compares Shelley to a star:

"And he
That like a star set in Italian sea."

The Nineteen
Century-27

The image, of course, refers to Shelley's death; its source and stimulus seems to have been Shelley's image.

Transposing the ideas in Shelley's image:

"Behold the Nereids under the green sea,
Their wavering limbs borne on the wind-like
stream,
Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming
hair,"

Prometheus
Unbound III
ii-44

Thompson could have very easily derived his image:

"The Nereid tiptoe on the scud o' the surge Ode to the
With whistling tresses dank athwart her face, Setting Sun-
And all her figure poised in lithe Circean grace?" 172

The subject of both images is identical; in the two images "streaming hair" can be closely associated with "whistling tresses", the Nereids are in the "green sea" and "on the scud o' the surge"; both images convey the feeling of rapid motion.

Other images in Shelley's poetry which are echoed in Thompson's imagery are The Cloud, lines 6-9, to Sister Songs, lines 612-615; The Cloud lines 45-46, to Ode to the Setting Sun, line 147; Queen Mab VI, line 19-21, to Sister Songs I, 50-65; and Alastor, lines 233-235, to The Hound of Heaven, lines 149-150.

An interesting example of the absurdities into which the study of derivative imagery can lead may be found in Mr. Richard Megroz's comment on Thompson's Dream Tryst:

"...a mixture of Shelley and Poe (first stanza), Coleridge and Shelley (second stanza), Blake (the Blake of Poetical Sketches) and Poe (third stanza)."⁷

Coventry Patmore's influence on Thompson is most evident in the structure of the Odes, especially By Reason of Thy Law, The Dread of Height, Orient Ode, etc. Commenting on Thompson's poetry, Everard Meynell stated:

"In all poetry belonging to the period of The Mistress of Vision Patmore is the master of vision. He leads the way to 'deific peaks' and 'conquered skies' the Virgil of a younger Dante."⁸

The proof of Mr. Meynell's criticism is the fact that Thompson dedicated his second volume of poems to Coventry Patmore. Thompson had a very high regard for the older poet though they were dissimilar in many ways. The philosophy of Patmore centers around the symbolism of marriage as seen as a reflection of divine love. Thompson's treatment of love differs in expression from Patmore but springs from the same basic philosophy. As we have seen in Chapter VI, Thompson's earlier poems abound in ornate and luxuriant imagery. The later Odes, which were influenced by Patmore's style are more cold, measured, and restrained.

In Thompson's imagery there are many reminders of Patmore, and also, several derived images. Patmore's image describing man's insignificance and value to God:

7. Connolly, Poems of Thompson, p. 443.

8. Ibid., p. 550.

"Mean Man,
Darling of God..."

Legem Tuam
Dilexi-51

Is echoed in Thompson:

"...Ay, Mother! Mother!
What is this Man, thy darling kissed
and cuffed."

An Anthem of
Earth-100

The brief ode Beata by Patmore may have been the source of the broken light imagery that Thompson uses in the poem Lines for a Drawing of Our Lady of the Night; in both poems the broken colors of light as reflected from a prism form the nascent ideas:

"She bears on her front's lucency
The starlight of her purity:

Lines for Our
Lady-3

For as the white rays of that star
The union of all colours are,

She sums all virtues that may be
In her sweet light of purity."

Thompson's poem Love and the Child strongly resembles Patmore's The Toys; the latter poem is apparently the love of a father for his son and in reality, the love of God, the Father of mankind, for his children. Thompson's poem is apparently an older person, presumably the poet himself, who wants the love of an unwilling child; the conclusion in both poems is an appeal to God to forgive us for neglecting His love:

"To the tender God I turn:-
'Pardon, Love most High!
For I think those arms were even Thine,
And that child was even I.'"

Love and the
Child-11

Patmore understood the forces that held a pebble together were the compulsion of divine law:

"But for compulsion of strong grace, The pebble in the road Would straight explode, And fill the ghastly boundlessness of space."	Legem Tuam Dilexi-18
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Thompson expresses the same idea in a slightly different image:

"No stone its inter-particled vibration Investeth with a stiller lie;"	Contemplation- 31
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The subject of both images is the same in meaning, if we read "Stone" for "pebble" which means the same thing; both images are the same in thought.

The imagery of Thompson about the "fierce kiss of Pain" By Reason of Thy Law, line 5, is also found in Patmore's poem on Pain, line 51. Many of Thompson's ideas on pain, the necessity of suffering and sacrifice, and devotion to Our Blessed Mother, can be studied in parallel passages from Patmore's poetry. Some of these associated passages are St. Valentine's Day, lines 44-50, to From the Night of Forebeing, lines 87-92; Peace (Patmore), 1-14, to Peace (Thompson), 54-91; Peace (Patmore), 11-12, to Cecil Rhodes Passim; Crest and Gulf, lines 32-35, to The Kingdom of God, lines 13-16; Victory in Defeat, lines 11-12, to Insentience, 5-9; and A Child's Purchase, lines 155-162, to Motto and Invocation, lines 14-19.

In the last chapter of this study, we shall see that Thompson had a very high opinion of Patmore's poetry and treasured his friendship.

Although the influence of Coleridge on Thompson's poetry is hinted at in many images, especially in The Mistress

of Vision; there is an image that combines the music and verbal magic of Coleridge in an atmosphere of enchantment like Christabel. Thompson's dream vision of Monica Meynell is not unlike the charming description in Christabel:

"Like a maiden Saxon, folden, As she flits, in moon-drenched mist; Whose curls streaming flaxen-golden, By the misted moonbeams kist, Dispread their filmy floating silk Like honey steeped in milk: So, vague goldenness remote, Through my thoughts I watch thee float."	Sister Songs II-545
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Thompson's image is strongly suggestive of Coleridge's "bright lady, surpassingly fair":

"There she sees a damsel bright, Drest in a silken robe of white, That shadowy in the moon light shone: The neck that made that white robe wan, Her stately neck and arms were bare; Her blue-veined feet unsandaled were, And wildly glittered here and there The gems entangled in her hair."	Christabel-58
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Both images have an atmosphere of dreaminess and enchantment; "A maiden" dressed in "moon-drenched mist" appears the same to an observer as "A damsel" dressed "in a robe of white" that "shadowy in the moonlight shone". There are two correspondences in vocabulary "moonlight" and "sil~~k~~(en)". Thompson's dream of Monica Meynell as a grown lady may have been suggested by Coleridge's picture of Geraldine as she appeared to Christabel.

Everard Meynell has suggested that Thompson may have derived an image from Coleridge. In writing to his godson, Francis M. W. Meynell, Thompson asks him to look for him in

"the nurseries of Heaven":

"Pass the crystalline sea, the Lampads seven:- Look for me in the nurseries of Heaven."	To My Godchild-66
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Coleridge uses a similar image in the last lines of his poem:

"Revealed to none of all the Angelic state Save to the Lampads Seven That watched the Throne of Heaven."	Ne Plus Ultra-
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Thompson's debt to Blake is evident in the poem The Kingdom of God and also in To A Snowflake. The latter poem bears many similarities to Blake's The Lamb. The Kingdom of God was probably suggested by Blake's Auguries of Innocence and Milton.

The exact relationship between Thompson and Blake is difficult to discern without the complete text of these poems:

"Little Lamb, who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee? Gave thee life, and bid thee feed By the stream and o'er the mead; Gave thee clothing, wooly, bright; Softest clothing, of delight, Gave thee such a tender voice, Making all the vales rejoice? Little Lamb, who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee?"	The Lamb-1
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The first stanza of Thompson's poem, like Blake, is simple in theme, apparently playful, develops by considering the attributes of the snowflake, and the poet looks beyond the externals and suggests the presence of the Creator:

"What heart could have thought you?"- To a Snowflake-1
 Past our devisal
 (O filigree petal !)
 Fashioned so purely,
 Fragilely, surely,
 From what Paradisal
 Imagineless metal,
 Too costly for cost?
 Who hammered you, wrought you,
 From argentine vapour?"

Blake's second stanza is a response to the first; the lyrical metaphors are the result of profound reflection and present eternal truths in terms of earthly symbols:

"Little Lamb, I'll tell thee, The Lamb-11
 Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
 He is called by thy name,
 For he calls himself a Lamb.
 He is meek, and he is mild;
 He became a little child.
 I a child, and thou a Lamb,
 We are called by his name,
 Little Lamb, God bless thee!
 Little Lamb, God bless thee!"

Thompson's second stanza is also a response:

"God was my shaper. To a Snowflake-11
 Passing surmised,
 He hammered, He wrought me,
 From curled silver vapour,
 To lust of His mind:-
 Thou could'st not have thought me !
 So purely, so palely,
 Tinily, surely,
 Mightily, frailly,
 Insculped and embossed,
 With His hammer of wind,
 And His graver of frost."

Both poems are the same in development, theme, and purpose. There is the same question, in different words, and the same answer in both poems. The position of the words "hammered" and

"Wrought" are the same in The Lamb and To A Snowflake. Blake develops his theme by enumerating the attributes of the lamb; likewise, Thompson elaborates the details of the snowflake. The second stanzas are alike in that they both teach the same truth. There is a slight shift in viewpoint in Thompson's stanza; instead of keeping the soliloquy form, he personifies the snowflake.

The paradoxes of faith expressed by Thompson in the next image strongly suggest the influence of Blake:

"O world invisible, we view thee,	The Kingdom of
O world intangible, we touch thee,	God-1
O world unknowable, we know thee,	
'Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!'	

Blake begins one of his more famous poems with a series of paradoxes:

"To see a world in a grain of sand	Auguries of
And a Heaven in a wild flower,	Innocence-1
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,	
And Eternity in an hour."	

The idea of "Christ walking on the waters of the "Thames" may have been suggested by an image used by Blake:

"And did those feet in ancient time	Milton-1
Walk upon England's mountains green?	
And was the Holy Lamb of God	
On England's pleasant pastures seen?"	
* _ _ _ _ _	
"I will not cease from mental fight,	Ibid.-13
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,	
Till we have built Jerusalem	
In England's green and pleasant land."	

Taking the ideas of Blake, concerning the presence of Christ in England, Thompson's image can be easily derived:

"And lo, Christ walking on the water Kingdom of God-23
Not of Gennesareth, but of Thames."

Remembering that one of the two books which Thompson read in the period of destitution was a copy of Blake's poems, the similarities suggest unconscious plagiarism rather than literary coincidence. Thompson's poem on the Child Jesus Ex Ore Infantium, contains many reminders and echoes of Blake's A Cradle Song.

Thompson's borrowings from Sacred Scriptures, his adaptations from the Liturgy, and the Office of the Church, have been seen in the previous chapter. An interesting image which reveals Thompson's attitude toward literary borrowings comes near the end of a poem addressed to Our Blessed Mother which is almost entirely taken from the Office of Our Lady:

"Remember me, poor Thief of Song" Assumpta Maria-100

CHAPTER IX

THE INFLUENCE OF CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY UPON THOMPSON'S IMAGERY

The interest in classical mythology and the inspiration that Thompson drew from ancient Greece and Rome is manifested in one hundred and thirty-six images. In some of these images, the poet uses ideas from pagan religion to reveal Christian truth; in others, he uses the name of a pagan deity as an adjective for want of a better. Compared with Milton, Thompson's range of mythological learning is narrower, but his adaptations from the classics are as poetically effective and meaningful.

Up to his nineteenth year, a part of Thompson's education consisted of the ancient languages of Greek and Latin; for six years, he studied medicine. It would appear that his knowledge of medicine would be wider and that therefore a larger number of images would be drawn from his years spent in medical college. Thompson's lack of interest in his medical studies, even a dislike and distrust in the conclusions of science, is manifested in less than six images. The knowledge of medicine and the experiences of his years at Owens College were of little importance to the poet. If it is true that a poet tends to draw images from the departments and categories of reality in which he is most interested in, or thinks about, then the very large number of images, one hundred and thirty-

six, based on classical mythology, contrasted with, possibly five, drawn from science and medicine, would reveal the poet's interest in the classics, and his lack of interest in science and medicine.

Thompson's attitude towards the pseudo-scientists who believe that the material universe holds the answers to all things is revealed in a satirical image:

"Science, old noser in its prideful straw,	An Anthem of
That with anatomising scalpel tents	Earth-202
Its three-inch of thy skin, and brags 'All's bare'--"	

The poet had little sympathy with people who considered purely scientific knowledge of prime value; Thompson ridicules that belief:

"Thereon a name writ new,	The Nine-
'Science,' erstwhile with ampler meanings	teenth
known;	Century-44
And all the peoples in their turns	
Before the blind worm bowed them down."	

Thompson compares scientists to worms in the sense that they do good in-spite of themselves; just as a blind worm bores through the ground making it fertile, the discoveries of science though they have caused temporary evil in the present, the evil will pass, and the good will remain:¹

"The eyeless worm, that, boring, works	An Anthem of
the soil,	Earth-205
Making it capable for the crops of God;"	

The next image is merely a description of the powers of the microscope:

1. There is a development of the thought in these lines in Thompson's essay In Darkest England.

"Him whose enchanted windows give The Nineteenth
 Upon the populated ways Century-91
 Where the shy universes live
 Ambushed beyond the unapprehending gaze:
 The dusted anther's globe of spiky stars;
 The beetle flashing in his minute mail
 Of green and golden scale;
 And every water-drop a-sting with writhing wars."

Thompson's biographer sees a reflection of the poet's walks through the Manchester museum during the days of his medical studies:²

"Thou hast devoured mammoth and mastodon, An Anthem of
 And many a floating bank of fangs, Earth-375
 The scaly scourges of thy primal brine,
 And the tower-crested plesiosaure."

Thompson's attitude towards mythology and paganism was essentially a Christian one; there is no doubt of this whatever for he states:

"Lord, Lord, be nigh unto me in my want! Ad Castitatem-66
 For to the idols of the Gentiles I
 Will never make me an hierophant:-

Thompson will not make himself an expounder of the pagan religion, he will not praise false gods, because he knows the infinite difference between paganism and Christianity, error and truth:

"Their false-fair gods of gold and ivory, Ibid.-69
 Which have a mouth, nor any speech thereby,
 Save such as soundeth from the throat of hell
 The aboriginal lie."

2. Meynell, Life of Thompson, p. 37, quoted by Connolly, Poems of Thompson, p. 510.

"Let them that serve them be made like to them, Ad.Castitatem
Yea, like to him who fell 76
Shattered in Gaza, as the Hebrews tell,
Before the simple presence of the Ark."

"For in very deed that beautiful mythology has a beauty beyond anything it ever possessed in its worshipped days; and that beauty came to it in dower when it gave its hand to Christianity. Christianity it was that stripped the weeds from that garden of Paganism, broke its statue of Priapus, and delivered it smiling and fair to the nations for their pleasure ground. She found Mars the type of brute violence, and made of him the god of valor. She took Venus, and made of her the type of beauty,- Beauty, which the average heathen hardly knew."3

"There is no more striking instance of the poetising influence exerted on the ancient mythology by Christianity than the contrast between the ancient and modern views of this goddess(Venus). Any school-boy will tell

3. Thompson, Francis, A Renegade Poet: And Other Essays, Boston, The Ball Publishing Company, 1910, p. 54.

you that she was the goddess of love and beauty.
 "Goddess of Love" is true only in the lowest sense,
 but attitude towards Venus, and would be hard to
 support from the ancient poets."⁴

Thompson continues this very interesting discussion by reminding his readers that to the average pagan, Venus was the symbol of "the generative principle in nature"; the abstract conception of beauty was a later addition superimposed upon the pagan goddess by Christianity.

In Thompson's imagery, the goddess of love is mentioned in four images and referred to in two other images. In an involved and complex image, the meaning seems to be that Thompson's love of Alice Meynell as expressed in his poetry, is as if the statue of Venus were to be appraised by her missing arms:

"But when I my veiling reaised-	L. I. D. L.
The Milonian less were crazed	Pro.-lll
To talk with men incarnately:	
The poor goddess but appraised	
By her lacking arms would be."	

In the child's soul, the powers of sex are hidden like
 Aphrodite, was hidden beneath the seas, before birth:

"The antenatal Aphrodite,	Sister Songs II-
Caved magically under magic seas;	313
Caved dreamlessly beneath the dreamless seas."	

Referring to the birth of Venus (the name "Aphrodite" means literally "foam-born"), Thompson compares the lily to the birth of the pagan goddess:

4. Thompson, Francis, A Renegade Poet: And Other Essays, Boston, The Ball Publishing Company, 1910, p. 55-56

"The lily stirs her snowy limbs,
 Ere she swims
 Naked up through her cloven green,
 Like the wave-born Lady of Love, Hellene;"

Sister Songs I-
 16

Another image is very similar, the subject is changed from the "lily" to "song", the informing idea is the same:

"Does not Song, like the Queen of radiant Love, Sere of the
 Hellene,
 Float up dripping from a bitter sea? "

Leaf-95

At the end of a long apostrophe to Earth, personified as a woman, Thompson calls her "Anadyomene" or "from the sea", one of the surnames of Aphrodite, From the Night of Forebeing, 163. There is an allusion to Aphrodite, as well as to Hera and Athene, in an image which recalls their dancing before Paris who decided that Aphrodite was the loveliest:

"Who sang those goddesses with splendours
 bare
 On Ida hill before the Trojan boy;"

Victorian Ode-
 28

Perseus, the son of Zeus and Danae, made a promise to Polydeites to kill the gorgon Medusa. The locks of Medusa were snakes; so horrible was her countenance that the beholder was turned to stone. Armed with three magic powers, Perseus looked at her reflection in his shield and with one stroke, cut off her head. Thompson's love for Monica Meynell is like the shield of Perseus because it keeps him safe from other unworthy loves:

"Thou Perseus' Shield wherein I view secure
 The mirrored Woman's fateful-fair allure !"

In Thompson's view of the poet's vocation, he believed that death to self was essential; the sufferings of the poet are turned to joy, but in his happiness there is always an element of sadness:

"Oh, this Medusa-pleasure with her stings \ Ode to the Set-
This essence of all suffering which is joy !" strain-29 ting Sun-After-

In his description of the moon among the clouds, the poet is reminded of the head of Medusa:

"The stranded moon lay quivering like a Sister Songs-I-
lustrous 28
Medusa newly washed up from the tide,"

When the poet can face Pain and conquer the fear of suffering, he will then have attained a like conquest to Perseus:

"When thy song is shield and mirror Mistress of
To the fair snake-curved Pain, Vision-156
When thou dar'st affront her terror
That on her thou may'st attain
Persean conquest; seek no more,"

The nine inspirational deities were called the Muses; in five images, Thompson invokes their aid for his poetry (song). There is no other discernible meaning in line 1, Proemion, line 131, Love in Dian's Lap; line 56, Her Portrait; line 154, and again in line 157, An Anthem of Earth. It is not only the pagan Muses that inspire Thompson, but also his love for our Blessed Mother, symbolized by Alice Meynell. He prays to the Mother of God to teach him the ways of her poetry and the identity of song and sanctity:

"Too ~~wearily~~ had we and song,
 Been left to look and left to long,
 Yea, song and we to long and look,
 Since thine unacquainted feet forsook
 The mountain where the Muses hymn
 For Sinai and the Seraphim."

To a Poet Break-
 ing Silence-1

Mrs. Meynell was instrumental in saving Thompson both physically and spiritually. He was inspired to write poetry after he read her volume of Poems. After three years as an outcast on the London streets, the poet was deeply touched by the spirituality and womanly graces of this extra-ordinary lady. He calls her the personification of poetry, charm, and spiritual loveliness:

"In her alone to reconcile agrees
 The Muse, the Graces, and the Charities;"

Her Portrait-34

The identity of Song and Sanctity was one of the poet's fundamental beliefs; nowhere is this better expressed than in the following image. The thought in these lines is analagous to that expressed in the commentary on the Christian re-interpretation of pagan mythology:

"Fruit of the Hesperides
 Burnish take on Eden-trees,
 The Muses' sacred grove be wet
 With the red dew of Olivet,
 And Sappho lay her burning brows
 In white Cecilia's lap of snaws!"

Ibid.-22

There are also several comparisons of Mrs. Meynell to the Greek goddess, Diana; the deity of chastity, the hunt, and the moon goddess. Thompson identifies her with Mrs. Meynell in the sequence Love in Dian's Lap. The tone of the love in these poems was lofty and pure; in Thompson's phrase "passionless passion, wild tranquillities" (line 168, Her Portrait).

Although Thompson uses the name of the mythological deity, it is evident that he employs it with the idea of "white Cecilia's lap of snows."⁵ In two images, Thompson identifies Alice Meynell with Diana, in line 70, and again in line 72, Manus Animam Pinxit; there is a descriptive image in line 515, Sister Songs II that refers to Diana as the moon-goddess.

One of the most effective and poetic images in this series is the reference to the column of Memnon. This gigantic column still stands near Thebes; when the first rays of the sun struck the column, it gave forth a musical sound. It was believed to be Memnon's greeting to his mother, Aurora, the goddess of dawn; Thompson compares the poetry of Alice Meynell, passing through the uncomprehending lips of her child, to this phenomenon:

"Thy nescient lips repeat maternal strains.
 Memnonian lips!
 Smitten with singing from thy mother's East,
 And murmurous with music not their own:"

In another image, with a very similar meaning, Thompson refers to Mrs. Meynell's poetry:

"And, parting from her, in me linger on Manus Animam
 Vague snatches of Uranian antiphon." Pinxit-77

To her son Francis, Thompson's godchild, the poet asks him to look for him among the children in heaven and not among the sage elders of heaven:

5. Connolly, Poems of Thompson, p. 340

"Turn not your tread along the Uranian sod To My Godchild-52
Among the bearded counsellors of God,"

The poet refers to the Ten Commandments as the "Uranian tables of the primal Law", An Anthem of Earth, 326. In Thompson's poem Against Urania, the heavenly one, there is a complaint against Urania for not sustaining him through the arid days when his inspiration failed him.

Likewise whenever Thompson uses the "Titan" or "Titanic" ideas in his imagery, the meaning seems to be derived from the great size of the Titans of old; in mythology they were the children of Gaea, the earth, and Uranus, heaven. In his masterpiece, he refers to the terrifying profundities of fear, in the only mythological image:

"Up vistaed hopes I sped; And shot, precipitated, Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,"	The Hound of Heaven-6
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The noise of the thunder is compared to a Titan:

"When that drunken Titan the Thunder Stumbles through staggered Heaven,"	The Song of the Hours-73
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In five other images, Thompson refers to the strength and the size of the Titans: the liturgy of nature is compared to the great liturgy of the Church, "Of this Titanian, primal liturgy, 98, Corymbus for Autumn; the strength of the Titans is mentioned in 115, Ode to the Setting Sun. There is a reference to the Titan, Prometheus, who was chained to the side of a mountain in "We know the Titan by his champed chain", 339, Sister Songs I, and two images which refer to the size of the Titans in 40, Ode to the Setting Sun, and 14, Ultima.

Bacchus, the god of wine, was the deity of luxuriant fertility; each year the Dionysian rites were celebrated amidst great festivity and mirth; the bacchantes, or maenads, were men and women who joined in the Dionysian festival. Thompson's poem A Corymbus for Autumn is filled with revelry and rejoicing at external nature. The title "Corymbus" suggests the Latin meaning a cluster of flowers or fruit such as were used in crowning Bacchus. The opening lines reveal Thompson's love and delight in singing about the loveliness of external nature:

"Hearken my chant, 'tis
As a Bacchante's,"

A Corymbus
for Autumn-1

He uses the adjective "bacchic" in line 46, A Corymbus for Autumn, "His Bacchic fingers disentwine/~~His cornnal~~/At thy festival;" and again in line 2, A Question, "O bird with heart of wassail,/ That toss on Bacchic branch". The poet compares the earth to a Maenad in line 166, An Anthem of Earth. Circe, the wife of Bacchus, is mentioned in line 1, The Dread of Height, and again in line 174, Ode to the Setting Sun. An image expressive of Thompson's cosmic powers of imagination and his joy in living employs the Dionysian festival as the informing idea:

"Then what wild Dionysia I, young Bacchanal,
Danced in thy lap! Ah for thy gravity!
Then, O Earth, thou rang'st beneath me,
Rocked to Eastward, rocked to Westward,"

An Anthem of
Earth-31

Two other images are based on the Dionysian rites; in line 37, Ode to the Setting Sun, Thompson describes the battle of the

gods and mentions Dionysius; in line 734, Sister Songs II, there is a reference to the drunken Bacchantes.

The Naiads were inferior deities who guarded waters: rivers, streams, brooks, lakes, and fountains; they were the daughters of Nereus; sometimes the name appears as Nereids. In Thompson's poetry there are seven images, all descriptive with no special significance. The poet tells us that the song was in his heart like a Naiad in her pool, line 60, Sere of The Leaf; this same image is repeated with a slight variation in meaning in line 63 of the same poem. The hours float down like Nereids, in line 127 Sister Songs I; the motions of the Naiads and Nereids are described in lines 167-174, Ode to the Setting Sun; Naiads pass through the air, in line 687 Sister Songs II; and desert the fountains, in lines 16-17, In Her Paths.

Other sea-nymphs mentioned are the Hyades, in line 9, Threatened Tears; the Oreads in line 172, Ode to the Setting Sun; and the nymphs in line 168, Ode to the Setting Sun. The Dryades were nymphs who inhabited trees and watched over their growth; there are two images that are fanciful imaginings in line 172, Sister Songs I, and in line 4, A Fallen Yew; one image is a beautiful expression descriptive of the child's unawareness of its sexual powers:

"Wild Dryad, all unconscious of thy tree
 With which indissolubly
 The tyrannous time shall one day make
 thee whole;"

Sister Songs-294

More numerous and meaningful than any other group of mythological images, the nineteen images drawn from the Greek god of the sun, refer, in the last analysis, not to the sun or the pagan deity, but to Christ, of Whom the sun is only a symbol. Apollo was the god of light, the sun-god, the life-giver, the god of manly youth and beauty, and of poetry and music; in later times, he was identified with Helios. The name "Phoebus" means "bright-one", or "light-giver"; in Thompson's imagery, Phoebus is the sun personified.

Thompson does not worship the pagan deity as he was worshipped in Rome and Greece; the poet's song is the new song of Christianity--a daring and dark mystery for the Greeks and Romans:

"Fling from thine ear the burning curls, and hark	Ode to the
A song thou hast not heard in Northern day;	Setting Sun
For Rome too daring, and for Greece too dark,"	Prelude-29

The sun is only an image of the Creator, Who set the sun in the firmament before Greece called him Apollo:

"Thou dost image, thou dost follow	Ibid.-214
That King-Maker of Creation,	
Who, ere Hellas hailed Apollo,	
Gave thee, angel-god, thy station;"	

It is not the sun, but God who created the sun, whom Thompson addresses in the image:

"Yet ere Olympus thou wast, and a god!	Ibid.-58
Though we deny thy nod,	
We cannot spoil thee of thy divinity."	

The crucifixion of Christ, not the pagan god, Apollo, is symbolized by the sun:

"Thou art of Him a type memorial.	Ode to the
Like Him thou hang'st in dreadful pomp of	Setting Sun-
blood	218
Upon thy Western rood;"	

Thompson frequently thought of himself as the magian of the sun; here he thinks of himself as a Scythian, a nomad, of Christ, symbolized by Apollo, wandering from place to place. While Thompson always had a place to dwell in, he never had a home after he left his father's house in his twenty-sixth year:

"Of my wild lot I thought; from place to place,	The Cloud's
Apollo's song-bowed Scythian, I go on;	Swan-Song-37
Making in all my home, with pliant ways,	
But, provident of change, putting forth root in none."	

In a cosmic image, the poet compares the planets to buds that whirl around the hair, the rays, of the sun; this is an unusual illustration of a scientific truth:

"The earth and all its planetary kin,	Sister Songs
Starry buds tangled in the whirling hair	II-109
That flames round the Phoebean wassailer,"	

Apollo, the sun-god and song-god, was frequently depicted as playing a lyre; in an imaginative picture, Thompson uses the mythological elements as if the sun's rays were the strings of Apollo's lyre:

"And as yon Apollonian harp-player,	Ibid-681
Yon wandering psalterist of the sky,	
With flickering strings which scatter melody,"	

Employing an image, rich with Oriental allusiveness, Thompson imagines Phoebus, a Sultan dressed in brightly colored robes, with the Janizars, the clouds, or guards of the sultan surrounding him:

"So Sultan Phoebus has his Janizars."

Sister Songs II
143

Thompson alludes to the chariot of the sun which travels daily across the heavens in a strikingly beautiful description of the rising sun:

... "The westering Phoebus' horse
Paws i' the lucent dust as when he shocked
The East with rising;"

An Anthem of
Earth-299

The name Phoebus is used as a synonym for the sun in line 174, An Anthem of Earth; and again, in line 155 of the same poem, Thompson thinks of himself as the magian of the sun. Apollo, as the god of poetry, is the subject of two images, in line 1, Beneath a Photograph, and in lines 8 and 13 of Daphne. As a synonym for the sun, Phoebean, appears in line 86, Of Nature: Laud and Plaint.

The Heliades were the daughters of the sun god, Helios, the god of music and poetry. In an image of fine lyrical beauty, Thompson describes the palace of his poetry and says that only he who can "wind the horn of might"... "Aright", "The horn of dead Heliades", Sister Songs II, 609-632, can enter into the "high tenement" of his poetry. In other words, only those who are sympathetic with his poetry can truly understand it, line 632 Sister Songs II.

Thompson's development of The Ode to the Setting Sun and the Orient Ode reveals some dependence upon classical mythology as a source of inspiration, but it is clear from the context that it is really Christ, and not the pagan deity,

that is his inspiration. (Cf. lines 1-4, Afterstrain, Ode to the Setting Sun; lines 78-80, Orient Ode; and lines 12, 35-39 Retrospect.)

Tellus was the goddess of earth; in the writings of Ovid, she is worshipped as the goddess of death who summons all living creatures back to her bosom. Thompson disliked the democratic form of government; he did not believe that the common man had the intelligence to govern himself; only in death are men really equal:

"What's he that of The Free State argues? Tellus bid him stoop Even where the low hic jacet answers him; Thus low, O Man! there's freedom's seignory Tellus' most reverend sole free commonweal,"	An Anthem of Earth-307
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In a fanciful image, Tellus, the earth, is the daughter of the sun, and the dawn; Ode to the Setting Sun, 74; the earth is compared to a ship, "Tellurian galleon," To My Godchild; the land is compared to the mantle of earth, "Tellus' purpled tunic", Sister Songs II, 643.

Ceres was the goddess of the harvest and fertility; Thompson sees new life in decay, and vigor in putridity:

... "And extinction The Ceres of existence..."	Ibid.-213
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Since the fall of Adam, man has had the power of doing evil as well as good:

"Iron Ceres of an earth, where since the Curse, Man has had power perverse Beside God's good to set his evil seed!"	Laus Amara Doloris-132
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The allusion to "Uranian" means heavenly; each time that the image in which it appears recurs, the meaning is the same; addressing Mrs. Meynell, the poet tells her that the tone of her writings always turns his thoughts heavenward:

"Thy mien bewrayeth through that wrong
The great Uranian House of Song!"

To A Poet
Breaking
Silence-60

There is an echo of this image in line 9-10, A

Double Need. The goddess of dawn, Aurora, or Eos, is referred to in two images. He compares young Monica Meynell to the first ray of light that runs like Aurora across the dark heavens:

"Upon the ending of my deadly night
(Whereof thou hast not the surmise, and slight
Is all that any mortal knows thereof),
Thou wert to me that earnest of day's light,

Sister Songs II
155

"The first long gleaming fissure runs Aurorean" Ibid.-161

In a passage reminiscent of his early poems on childhood, the poet expresses sorrow that he is old and his loved one has the "Eoan dew" of youth upon her:

"Wert thou a spark among dank leaves, ah ruth!
With age in all thy veins, while all thy heart
was youth;
Our contact might run smooth,
But life's Eoan dews still moist thy ringed hair;"

Ibid. II-511

The daemons were minor deities, worshipped by the ancients as guardian spirits. Poetry is described as a possessive spirit that overwhelms Thompson's own desires until he yields himself completely to it:

"Implacable sweet daemon, Poetry, What have I lost for thee! Whose lips too sensitively well Have shaped thy shrivelling oracle. So much as I have lost, O world, thou hast, And for thy plenty I am waste;"	Laus Amara Doloris-1
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The surrender of self to the daemon of poetry will bring about the creation of beauty, but never personal joy; it is a one-sided contentment, a love "bitter-sweet":

"The impitiable Daemon Beauty, to adore and dream on, To be Perpetually 'Hers, but she never his? He repeth miseries; Foreknows His wages woes."	To the Dead Card.-117
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Daedalus was the builder of the Cretan labyrinth, in which he and his son, Icarus, were later imprisoned. Seeking a way to escape out of the tortuous passages of the labyrinth, they made wings of feathers and attached them to their bodies by means of wax; but Icarus flew too near the sun, the wax of his wings melted, and he was drowned in the sea. Thompson recoils in fear before God, symbolized by the sun, and fears that his poetry will fall, like Icarus:

"O dismay! I, a wingless mortal, sporting With the tresses of the sun? I, that dare my hand to lay On the thunder in its snorting? Ere begun, Falls my singed song down the sky, even the old Icarian way."	Mistress of Vision-100
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There is another image based on the story of Icarus in line 13,
The Way of a Maid.

Pan was the Greek deity of woods, flocks, and shepherds; he had the head of a man and the body of a goat. In a playful lyrical image, Thompson asks that his inspiration may not fail him. He would become a pitiable object like Pan, if his inspiration failed him:

"Though Pan may have delicious throat,	L. I. D. L.
'Tis hard to tolerate the goat.	Proemion-116
What if Pan were suddenly	
To lose his singing, every note?—	
Then pity have of Pan, and me!"	

In an unpublished pastoral play by Thompson, there is an excerpt which has been included among his poems. It seems to be a merry, light-hearted piece which begins:

"Pan-imbued	Pastoral-1
Tempe wood,	
Pretty-player's sporting-place;	
Tempe wood's	
Solitude's	
Everywhere a courting place."	

Like his romantic predecessors, Shelley and Keats, Thompson's attempt to write drama was unsuccessful.

Hermes was looked upon by the ancients as the god of poetry and medicine; in Egyptian mythology he was called Thoth, to the Romans he was known as Mercury. He was descended from Zeus, the father of the gods, and May, or Maia, the oldest of the Pleiades. Thompson refers to the descent of Hermes as one of:

"The children knowest of Zaus and May,"	Orient Ode-107
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He speaks about his own poetry as being like Hermes-like, in line 63, An Anthem of Earth; there is a development of Hermes

the poet and prophet, his descent from Zeus and Maia, and his identification with truth in the sonnet, Hermes:

... "Behold, with rod twy-serpented, Hermes-1
Hermes, the prophet, twining in one power"...

... "His lineage strange Ibid.-7
From Zeus, Truth's sire, and maiden May--the all
Illusive Nature."...

Ibid.-13
"Both parents clasp; and from the womb of Nature
Stern truth takes flesh in shows of lovely feature."

Terminus was the Roman god of boundaries; Thompson's knows the limits of his own poetry and he expresses this thought by using mythological images:

... "All changeful Hermes The Cloud's
Is Terminus as well. Yet we perturb Swan Song-82
Our souls for latitude, whose strength in bound
and term is."

Thompson believed that his mind marked the boundaries of his poetic ambition:

Epilogue Poet's
"Our minds make their own Termini, nor call Sitter-28
The issuing circumscriptions great or small;"

In four images, there is evidence that Thompson read the Odyssey of Homer. Penelope was the faithful wife of Odysseus and was courted by more than a hundred suitors during her husband's wanderings; she demanded time to finish weaving a shawl for her father before deciding which suitor to accept, but every night unravelled the work of the day. Thompson uses these ideas in an image with an analogous meaning:

Penelope-22
"For, wild Penelope, the web you wove
You still unweave, unloving all your love."

The hero of Homer's Iliad, Achilles, was the Greek model of masculine beauty, strength, and courage. He was invulnerable except for his heel; he was fatally wounded there by Paris. Thompson appropriates the idea, and makes death the:

... "skull-housed asp	An Anthem of
That stings the heel of kings,"	Earth-343

In another image, there is a comment on the Odyssey:

"Thereon my foundering mind	All Flesh-7
Odyssean fate can find."	

The title of Sister Songs was originally Amphicypellon:

Wrought and Upbrimmed for Two Sisters, with an Inscription.

It refers to the drinking-cup which Hephaestus took around to the gods. The title was later changed to Songs Wing to Wing: an Offering to Two Sisters; the publishers, Mathews and Lane gave the poem the title, Sister Songs. The Homeric title was abandoned by Thompson before the poem was published. There is a single image reminiscent of Sophocles Oedipus Tyrannus; Oedipus was the son of Laius and Jocasta, the king and queen of Thebes. At his birth, an oracle prophesied that he would kill his father and marry his mother. The prophecy was fulfilled. When Oedipus realized that he was living with his mother-wife, he took her dagger, cut out his eyes, and wandered into exile with his daughter Antigone. In a descriptive image, relieved of the Sophoclean terror, Thompson imagines the stars as guides to the blinded heaven:

"Meek guides and daughters to the blinded heaven To Stars-
In OEdipean, remitless wandering driven;" 12

The deities of the underworld appear eighteen times in Thompson's imagery. In describing the pleasant lea where "Spring sat amidst her minstrelsy," Thompson's thoughts move in mythological imagery:

"Where the shade is Sister
Sheen as Enna mead ere Hades' Songs I-
Gloom fell athwart Persephone." 219

Pesephone was abducted by Pluto and carried off to Hades; she became queen of the nether world. Pluto, Hades, and Dis are synonymous; the three names refer to the ruler of the lower world. Acheron was the river that joined the earth to Hades, the river of sorrow. Lethe was the river of forgetfulness, a sluggish, slow-moving stream.

When the yew tree, that stood in the playing field of Ushaw was cut down, it reminded Thompson of man's bodily life and death; "Is this the life of man?" the poet asks. The answer:

"Never! - To Hades' shadowy shipyards gone, A Fallen
Dim barge of Dis, down Acheron Yew-25
It drops, or Lethe wan.

Stirred by its fall-poor destined bark of Dis!
Along my soul a bruit there is
Of echoing images."

Tartarus is described in the Iliad as situated far below Hades as heaven is above the earth; by later writers it was used synonymously with Hades. Thompson claims his inspiration from the two young Meynell sisters; without it, his poetry would be "pale as the flowers of Tartarus" (Sister Songs, Insc.)

Erebus was the gloomy passage to Hades; "All the gloom of Erebus" line 6, A Captain of Song, cannot dim the fame of the poet's friend, Coventry Patmore.

Eurydice, the wife of Orpheus, died and went to Hades. Her husband, a Thracian poet and musician, descended into the lower regions and so pleased Pluto by his music that the god allowed him to lead her back to earth on the condition that he should not look behind him. Orpheus did look around and Eurydice vanished among the shades. Thompson uses the elements of the Orphic myth in a fanciful image. When the sun has set, the earth is left a corpse in our arms, like the body of Eurydice in the arms of Orpheus:

... "Must ye fade-	Ode to The
O old, essential candours, ye who made	Setting Sun-181
The earth a living and a radiant thing-	
And leave her corpse in our strained, cheated arms?	
Lo ever thus, when Song with chorded charms	
Draws from dull death his lost Eurydice,"	

Thompson "foreloathed" the coming of the god of death, "the abhorred spring of Dis", line 89, To the Dead Cardinal of Westminster; the poet refers to the dead as "the silent citizens of Dis," line 289, An Anthem of Earth. The classical word for heaven "Elysium" is used in a single image, wherein the poet describes the beauty of Monica Meynell as a "heavenly vision," in line 235, Sister Songs II.

The letter which Jane Williams wrote to Shelley, referred to in Chapter VIII, had a postscript in which she asked

Shelley if he was going to join his friend Plato. The spirit of Shelley supposedly makes answer:

"'Go'st thou to Plato?' Ah, girl, no! Buona Notte-27
It is to Pluto that I go."

Thompson meant that Shelley died, not that he went to Hades.

(cf. Essay on Shelley)

The western, or evening star, was called "Hesperus" by the Greeks and Romans; Thompson uses the name as an adjective meaning "twilight" or "evening" in line 240, Sister Songs II and in line 181, Scala Jacobi Portaque Eburnea. Likewise he uses "Favonian" the adjective for Favonus, the west wind, in line 65, A Corymbus for Autumn. The Romans' chief deity and god of the sky was Jove; Thompson refers to the stars as "the gold-tesserate floors of Jove."

Mount Olympus was the mythical abode of the gods; Thompson refers to it with that meaning in three images in line 5, To A Poet Breaking Silence, in line 39 and again in line 51, Ode to the Setting Sun.

The Roman god of war and brute force was Mars; Bellona was the goddess of war. Thompson refers to "hot Mars" in line 20, Retrospect, and to the end of the Boer War in lines 169-174, The Nineteenth Century.

Athena was the Greek goddess of wisdom, often called Pallas Athena; Thompson's description of his poetry recalls to his mind the familiar statue of Athena with straying locks and the aegis to which the gorgon's head is fastened--the symbol of death:

"This wisdom sings my song with last firm breath, Ultimum-36
 Caught from the twisted lore of Love and Death,
 The strange interwoven harmony that wakes
 From Pallas' straying locks twined with her
 aegis-snakes:"⁶

The Roman god of medicine, Aesculapius, is mentioned in line 9, the Proem, Sister Songs; Saturn, the god of seeding and growth, in line 20 Retrospect and again in line 668, Sister Songs II; the vestal virgins are referred to in line 156, An Anthem of Earth, and Nemesis, the goddess of retributive justice, in line 283, From the Night of Forebeing.

The deities of divine and human love, Anteros and Eros, are used by Thompson in an imaginative manner suggesting the Incarnation of Christ:

"Man's own heart was one; one, Heaven; Both within my womb were laid. For there Anteros with Eros, Heaven with man, conjoined was."	Assumpta Maria-11
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This image recurs four times, in lines 25, 37, 61, and 85 of Assumpta Maria; in each image the meaning is the same: it refers to the Incarnation of Christ, "Heaven with man, conjoined was."

Classical writers suggested by Thompson's use of mythological imagery are Homer, Virgil, Ovid, and Plato. The platonic ideas in Thompson's poetry and his dependence on Shelley have been pointed out by George Ashton Beacock.⁶

6. Beacock, George Ashton, Francis Thompson: A Literary And Metrical Estimate of His Work Poetry, Borna-Leipzig, Publishing House of Robert Noske, 1912.

Thompson's imagery reveals his dependence upon the mythology of Greece and Rome as a source of inspiration. It is also a strong indication that Thompson was more interested in his classical studies than in his medical or scientific studies. A poet tends to draw the greater number of images from the departments of life in which he is interested; one hundred and thirty-six images are drawn from classical mythology; five images are reminders of Thompson's medical and scientific studies.

Thompson kept a copy of Aeschylus during his days of destitution, although his medical books and instruments were first to be sold, in his efforts to raise money with which he bought laudanum.

The poet utilizes mythological images in four ways; first, Apollo is the symbol for Christ--this is the dominant motif of mythological imagery; second, the poet uses mythology to illustrate one of his leading ideas, the unity of song and sanctity; third, he appropriates elements from mythology to illustrate other ideas; and fourth, he often used a mythological name as an adjective where the adjective itself can be used. In no image is there the least suggestion or implication that the poet believes in any of the ancient mythology, but rather, the opposite is true. Thompson's use of mythology is evidence of his classical studies.

CHAPTER X

THE FINE ARTS

Thompson manifests an intense interest in poetry, especially the fate of his own poetry. The three images from painting are poetically effective. The poet's knowledge of scripture, music, and architecture, and the images drawn therefrom are generally imaginative personification and less meaningful.

His interest in music appears in several images that have an onomatopoeic effect such as: lines 61-65, Sister Songs I; 197-198, Ibid.; lines 1-4, Prelude, Ode to the Setting Sun; and lines 35-37, A Hollow Wood; also line 737, Sister Songs II. There are two imaginative personifications of music:

"Music as her name is, a
Sweet sound of Viola!"

The Making
of Viola-41

And again in line 6, Sonnet IV, the poet refers to the birth of "Music in a Master's soul."

There are three images which suggest the organ or piano; in the first Thompson attributes his poetic inspiration to young Monica Meynell:

"For we do know
The hidden player by his harmonies,
And by my thoughts I know what still hands thrill
the keys."

Sister Songs
Inscription

22

The soul of Mrs. Meynell shines through the loveliness of her body:

"God laid His fingers on the ivories
Of her pure members as on smoothed keys,"

Her Portrait
99

There is a suggestion of the organ's lowest note in the image where Thompson calls death, "being's drone-pipe", in line 345, An Anthem of Earth.

"Organ-stops" is used in line 692, Sister Songs II, and "pianissimo" meaning 'softly', in line 20, My Lady the Tyranness.

The titles of four poems are reminders of the art of painting: Before Her Portrait in Youth, Manus Animam Pinxit, Her Portrait, and Epilogue to the Poet's Sitter.

Two images are based on painting; the artist uses a spray on charcoal sketches to make them indelible, so too, the poet's tears at his first sight of Monica Meynell have fixed her image forever upon his mind:

"The heart which I had questioned spoke, A cry impetuous from its depth was drawn,- 'I take the omen of this face of dawn!' And with the omen to my heart cam'st thou. Even with a spray of tears That one light draft was fixed there for the years."	Sister Songs II-199
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The necessity of suffering is the subject of the next image. Just as the painter must burn his pencil to make charcoal, God, the Infinite Designer, tries the human soul by suffering:

"Ah ! must- Designer infinite !- Ah ! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?"	Hound of Heaven-133
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There are no images from architecture, unless we admit "the mansion of the body" lines 1-3, A Hollow Wood; "the high tenement of poetry", lines 606-609, Sister Songs II; a palace

of Occident", line 611, Ibid.; and "desert-drowned sepulchres" referring to the pyramids in line 6, House of Bondage II.

In five images, the art of the sculptor is the element of comparison. Time is a sculptor who fashions the body of a child as it develops into a young woman, 459-461, Sister Songs II; the mind stands like a passionless statue, 368-367, Sister Songs II; Love is personified as a statue, line 15, Love Declared; and a statue comes to life, a reminder of Pygmalion and Galatea, in lines 107-108, Proemion, Love in Dian's Lap; purities gleam like white statues in the eyes of an innocent child, lines 273-275, Sister Songs II.

Thompson predicted his own high position among the English poets. He was interested in the fate of his poetry, and while mankind might forget him, he felt that the position of his poetry would be secure. In his moments of loneliness, when he withdrew sadly into himself, he was buoyed up by the knowledge that he had made a significant contribution to English poetry, "treasure-galleon of my verse", line 586, Sister Songs II. Thompson, like Keats, thought of himself as a poet of the beautiful, "Beauty's eremite", line 56, Sister Songs II; but unlike the younger poet, perceived that true beauty could only be had by an appreciation of the spiritual beauty and the unity of song and sanctity, To a Poet Breaking Silence, Lines 21-28.

Thompson framed his poetic credo in his imagery in a hap-hazard manner; speaking with Monica Meynell, he becomes sad and withdraws into his own consciousness. He knows that he will be deprived of the joys of human love and can only be a "foster-lover", line 56, The Poppy, and suddenly:

"I hand mid men my needless head,
And my fruit is dreams, as theirs is bread:
The goodly men and the sun-hazed sleeper
Time shall reap, but after the reaper
The world shall glean of me, me the sleeper." The Poppy-68

Thompson states with calm confidence, that after his death he will be recognized for his poetry, With regard to these lines Mr. Wilfred Whitten quoted them in the obituary notice of the poet's death and remarked:

"When Francis Thompson wrote these versés, he did not indulge a fitful or exalted hope; he expressed the quiet faith of his post-poetic years. Thompson knew that above the grey London tumult, in which he fared so ill, he had hung a golden bell whose tones would one day possess men's ears. He believed that his name would be symphonised on their lips with Milton and Dryden and Keats. This he told me himself in words too quiet, obscure, and long ago for record. But he knew that Time would reap first."¹

The second image is the same in meaning as the first; Thompson knows that his poetry will survive his death:

"Love! I fall into the claws of Time:
But lasts within a leaved rhyme
All that the world of me esteems-
My withered dreams, my withered dreams." The Poppy-77

1. Connolly, Poems of Thompson, p. 305

Thompson's confidence in the imperishability of his poetry is reflected in an image wherein he knows and recognizes his own poetic stature; as Thompson is often the critic of his own poetry:

...'"Pale not, come with me]	L. I. D. L.
I will escort thee down the years,	Proemion-23
With me thou walk'st immortally.'"}	

In creating a poem, Thompson cannot tell how it will turn out, nor does he fully understand the final meaning of what he has written:

"Thou canst foreshape thy word;	Sister Songs II
The poet is not lord	23
Of the next syllable may come	
With the returning pendulum;"	

and:

"We speak a lesson taught we know not how,	Ibid.-377
And what it is that from us flows	
The hearer better than the utterer knows."	

The poet insists upon the necessity of suffering in a series of paradoxes that are meaningful only if we look upon pain and suffering with the spirit of Christ:

"Pierce thy heart to find the key;	Mistress of
With thee take	Vision-125
Only what none else would keep;"	

This thought continues from line 128 to line 143, The Mistress of Vision; to learn to accept life's pain and sorrow; this life is but a dream compared to eternity, the fears of this life are nothing in comparison to the fear of God, plough the barren rock of the soul until it bears forth the fruit of faith;

when these things have been done, only then will the poet come to the land of holy song, poetry. These are the essential thoughts in Thompson's view of poetry. Thompson gives up everything, even the joys of marriage for his art; a bird in mating-time sings sweetly to its beloved:

"Were its love, for ever nigh it,
Never by it,
It might keep a vernal note," Sister Songs II-88

The poet must give up the joys of marriage in order to devote himself completely to his art:

"Therefore must my song-bower lone be,
That my tone be
Fresh with dewy pain alway;" Ibid.-92

In view of Thompson's passionate and pure capacity for love, there is perhaps a taint of exaggeration in this statement. His renunciation of love is perhaps not altogether voluntary. (Cf. Chapter II.)

Thompson believed that Keats and Shelley died before their inspiration failed; had they lived longer, their poetry, like Wordsworth's, would not have matured:

"I thought of Keats, that died in perfect time,
In predecease of his just-sickening song;
Of him that set, wrapt in his radiant rhyme,
Sunlike in sea, Life longer had been life too long," The Cloud's Swan Song-29

Most critics hold the contrary opinion: that Keats would probably have rivalled Shakespeare, and that Shelley's poetry would have matured.

Thompson lived with the cares of mortal men and felt "immortal pain" in writing because he suffered in producing "immortal fruits", poetry:

"A double life the Poet lived,
And with a double burden grieved;
The life of flesh and the life of song,
The pangs to both lives that belong;
Immortal knew and mortal pain,
Who in two worlds could lose and gain,
And found immortal fruits must be
Mortal through his mortality."

Epilogue
A. J. I. H.
38

The contrast between Keats, Shelley, and Thompson is significant; Shelley rejected love of God and the deity for humanitarian idealism, and later became a poet of "intellectual beauty." Keats was a lover of sensuous beauty, in nature and in life, and in his last years, endeavored to grasp the reality of things and formulate a philosophy. Thompson, remained from first to last, conscious of his sufferings for his poetry, aware of the pain, yet calm and completely assured that his poetry was immortal, because it drew its greatest inspiration from truth and his own poetic powers.

CHAPTER XI

A. CLASSES OF PEOPLE

There are no images that reveal Thompson's interest in or sympathy for the working man and his problems. The poet has seven trivial images wherein he mentions a pedlar, line 29, Cheated Elsie; a sick toiler, line 11, Lines for a Drawing of Our Lady of the Night; a reaper, line 67, The Poppy; spinning, line 1, The Making of Viola; weaving, line 7, Ibid.; brick-layers, line 6, Her Portrait: these images are imaginative and do not show any knowledge or interest in the trade or the worker.

In a fanciful dialogue, the pedlar sells a heart to a young, flighty girl; "sick toiler" is referred to in passing, it cannot be connected with any trade or profession. "Time, the reaper", is an imaginative personification; the imagery of The Making of Viola is taken from spinning and weaving, but these two images show no detailed or specific knowledge of the trades, they are used with reference to the Mother of God and the angels. The "brick-layers" refers to "Babel's brick-layers" and is, in reality, a Biblical derivation.

There is also an absence of imagery from the professions unless we accept such images as "an anchorite", in line 60, Sister Songs II; "a key-bearer" for treasurer in line 65, Laus Amara Doloris; and the image describing the human body as "a beggar's gown, a client's badging" implying the terminology of the law in line 12, An Anthem of Earth.

Thompson was not an observer of the work-a-day world; there are no images from people in action, town and country life, nationalities, daily life, and human beings going about their everyday tasks. There are literary allusions to "bearded counsellors", in line 53, To My Godchild; a "pigmy", in line 322, Sister Songs II; "Venetians", in line 90, Ode to the Setting Sun; and an "Arab" in line 214, Sister Songs II. These images are imaginative personifications and cannot be attributed to Thompson's knowledge of real people.

Family relations in Thompson's imagery are likewise inconsequential. Thompson left home as a young man and never married. His images from family relations, ages, and sexes, are literary and do not refer to persons with whom the poet was acquainted. Examples are: "the brother of the sun", in line 1, Grace of the Way; "foster-mother", in line 59, The Poppy; "singing brothers", referring to the angels in line 11, The Making of Viola; listen to my baby talk", in line 45, To My Godchild; the bare and dabbled feet of May", in line 37, The Roem, Sister Songs.

The remaining images are the same type. They reveal no interest in family life, not to persons that Thompson knew. The "hours" (personified) were like "faint daughters", in line 141, Sister Songs I; "mother's East, in line 365, Ibid. II; the idea of "mother" is applied to the earth, or mother nature

in line 18, An Anthem of Earth. "Father" is applied to God the Creator in line 44, To My Godchild, and "Mother" to Our Blessed Mother, in line 2, Saint Monica. In two images, the poet uses ideas from trades to express other meanings; the inspiration for his poetry comes from Monica Meynell, suggesting the blacksmith's work, the poet states:

"Thou swing'st the hammers of my forge;"

Sister Songs II
260

Salvation comes to men individually, not collectively; there is no way to "pack and label" men for God, employing the terminology of the shipping room, the poet expresses this fundamental truth:

"There is no expeditious road
To pack and label men for God,
And save them by the barrel-load."

Epilogue
A. J. I. H
22

There is a reference to the builders of Jerusalem who worked with the "trowel" in their hands in line 60, Peace.

No images from streets and roads, or people walking along streets; there is a descriptive image wherein a deserted street is compared to a corpse:

"Night; and the street a corpse beneath the
moon,"

Victorian Ode
1

Money and banking are not mentioned in Thompson's imagery; the coining of money is referred to in line 52, The Proem, Sister Songs, wherein the poet refers to the Mother of God as the holy one who "coin'st" thyself "to beauty for the world"; and again in describing the kisses of a maiden:

"Maiden gold!
Clipping bold
Here the truest mintage is;"

Pastoral
45

B. THE HUMAN BODY PERSONIFIED AND HUMAN ACTIONS IN THE ABSTRACT

The noblest use of imagery based on the limbs of the human body is found in Thompson's masterpiece. In the Divine pursuit of the human soul, the "tremendous Lover", God Incarnate, cannot be imagined; instead, as man's soul hurtles headlong through hope and gloom, he hears the trepidant footfalls "From those strong Feet that followed, followed after", in line 9, The Hound of Heaven. He hears the Voice of God beating closer to his heart than the approaching Feet, in lines 13 and 14, *Ibid.*; this refrain is repeated in lines 49-50, 108-109, 157; complete surrender to God's love wins salvation and victory for the soul of man:

"Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"

The Hound of
Heaven-176

The problem of human suffering and its final resolution are depicted in a magnificent expression of God's love and his toleration of suffering:

"Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?"

The Hound of
Heaven-177

Another prominent use of imagery from the human body is found in Thompson's descriptions of Alice Meynell. Thompson was very devoted to Mrs. Meynell and was a great admirer of

her poetry. In the sequence Love in Dian's Lap, Thompson asks Mrs. Meynell to hold him in her "spirit's arms against---the ravening of hell", in lines 2-4, Manus Animam Pinxit; her "plumed feet" have trod the winepress with Christ, in lines 63-66, To a Poet Breaking Silence; in speaking of Mrs. Meynell's purity, the poet says "Her body is a Temple of God", in line 2, Domus Tua. Her physical beauty, especially her face, attracted the poet; "Hers is the face whence all should copied be", line 143, Her Portrait, he speaks of her "Dream-dispensing face", in line 13, Scala Jacobi Portaque Eburnea, and the "Heaven in your face, Sweet!", in line 86, A Carrier Song; also the exaggerated sentiment that the "heavens look sweet,/ And they do but repeat/ The heaven, heaven, heaven of her face!" lines 12-14, In Her Paths. Mrs. Meynell's hair was probably a dark brown; the poet speaks of the "night waters of thine hair" in line 13, Gilded Gold, and her "dusk hair", in line 35, *Ibid.*

In his personification of the celestial bodies and the earth, Thompson reveals a yearning for love. He uses the organs and functions of human love in the strangest places; thus we have the daisy, a flower, being nourished by the sun's milk (rays):

"In the new-sucked milk of the sun's bosom Is dabbled the mouth of the daisy-blossom;"	Sister Songs I 13
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In a like comparison, the earth is the child of the sun:

"Thou genitor that all things nourishest! The earth was suckled at thy shining breast, And in her veins is quick thy milky fire."	Ode to the Setting Sun 78
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As a mother lies down beside a sick child:

"Eve no gentlier lays her cooling cheek On the burning brow of the sick earth,"	Sister Songs II 250
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Thompson imagines himself as a child risen from the bosom
of its mother:

"But breathing warm of thee as infants breathe New from their mother's morning bosom. So I, Risen from thee,..."	An Anthem of Earth-60
--	--------------------------

There is an empathetic image in which the poet reveals the
emotions of a woman's body and not those of a man:

"O youngling Joy carest! That on my now first-mothered breast Pliest the strange wonder of thine infant lip, What this aghast surprise of keenest panging, Wherefrom I blench, and cry they soft mouth rest? Ah hold, with-hold, and let the sweet mouth slip!"	From the Night of Forebeing 286
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Other images which refer to parts of the human body and reveal
the poet's longing for love are "earth's bosom bare", line 1,
The Poppy, "the year's young bosom bare", in line 19, The Proem,
Sister Songs, "the Dawn unfolds her rosy bosom to the married
sun", lines 87-88, Of Nature: Laud and Plaint, the beauty of
"women's cheeks", line 123, Her Portrait, "the all-kissing sun",
in line 312, Sister Songs I, the kisses of children in line 320,
Ibid., "childish lips" unvalued precious brush", the "bosoms
prest, of the king-cups", line 85, Sister Songs I, and the
"lucid breasts" of flowers in line 145, Ibid.

Personifications of objects in nature are found in
"the necks of the unheeding hills", line 70, Sister Songs II;
"the fair lakes of thine eyes", line 275, Ibid.; "Earth's

countenance", in line 182, Ibid.; "lambent-footed sun", line 47, The Proem, Ibid.; "earth's furrowed face", line 25, Daisy; "sea's eye", line 43, Daisy; "earth's ear", line 11, The Proem, Sister Songs, "the sun's hand", line 18, Ibid.; the burning curls around the sun's ears in line 29, Prelude, Ode to the Setting Sun; the dusky cheeks of the rose, line 135, Ibid.; the moon's "gleaming chin", lines 126-127, Sister Songs II; air sleeps and "tosses its limbs in breeze", line 304, Sister Songs II; "the lily's snowy limbs", in line 16, Ibid.; "the fluid limbs" of flowers in line 133, Ibid.; the "heads" of flowers, line 188, Ibid.; and "snapdragon's dreadful jaw", line 94, Ibid.; also, "the burnt mouth of the poppy", in line 5, The Poppy; and "white-handed light", in line 356, Sister Songs I.

There is one image reminiscent of Christ's sufferings, his crown of thorns and the piercing of his side with a spear.

"They wounded all My brow, and they smote Me through the side, My hand held no sword when I met their armed horde."	Veteran of Heaven-6
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The remaining images are imaginative personifications of "the tongue of Death", line 79, The Making of Viola, "the lips of Death", lines 59-61, Ibid.; "the jaws of Time" which devour all things, line 171, Orient Ode; "Winter's head", line 1, Sere of the Leaf; "Spring's feet", line 225, Sister Songs I, "Day's glance", line 46, Ibid.; "the (eye)lids of truth", line 54, Ibid.; "Heaven's eyes", line 310, Ibid.; "the lips of Night", line 144,

and the "cheek of Night", line 145, Song of the Hours; "the hands angelical", line 7, The Making of Viola, and the "angels' tongues", in line 2, Her Portrait.

Most of Thompson's images are abstractions with very little meaning; the human body is dismembered and associated with practically all divisions of nature and insensate objects. Nowhere does Thompson refer to the human body performing its own proper functions: --the eyes, cheeks, face, mouth, etc, are strewn through the infinite distances of space.

His inability, or perhaps, the complete absence of imagery from real personalities suggests a lack of interest in his fellow human beings and no observation or painting of human beings in everyday life. Except for his deep devotion to Our Lord, his pure love for Mrs. Meynell, and his own craving for the love of a woman, the limbs of the human body are employed imaginatively.

CHAPTER XII

MISCELLANEOUS CATEGORIES

A. POLITICS, GOVERNMENT, AND WAR

The only political opinion expressed by Thompson is a denunciation of the democratic form of government:

"What's he that of
The Free State argues. Tell us, bid him stoop, An Anthem
Even where the low hic jacet answers him;" of Earth-307

The poet believed that the attempt of the English nation to seize territory was childish; he compares the English quest for territorial aggrandizement to a small boy kneading a lump of clay:

"Behold the broad globe in their hands comprest, The XIX
As a small boy kneads a pellet." Century-63

There are no images from government, rulers or statesmen. Thompson was very apprehensive at his first meeting with Wilfrid Meynell; he compares his feelings to a man who stood "before a despot's gate" knowing not "whether kiss or dagger" wait, lines 169-171, Sister Songs II. "Heaven's Queen" and "Regina mi" are used in reference to the Mother of God in lines 53 and 57 respectively of A Carrier Song. The Catholic Church is compared to the "Lily of the King" in the poem Lilium Regis. Rulers of past generations are mentioned like "Caesars", "Napoleons", "Pharaohs", "Arsacidæ", and "Rameses", in lines 283, An Anthem of Earth, and lines 20, and 23, An Echo of Victor Hugo. These images do not show any knowledge of government or interest in the English form of government; they are the informing ideas of other thoughts and have an entirely different meaning.

"When the nations lie in blood, and their kings
a broken brood,
Look up, O most sorrowful of daughters!"

"Tarry awhile, lean Earth, for thou shalt drink,
The draught thou grow'st most fat on; hear'st
 thou not
The world's knives bickering in their sheaths?
 O patience!
Much offal of a foul world comes thy way,
And man's superfluous cloud shall soon be laid
In a little blood."

An Anthem
of Earth
289

"Yet let it grieve, grey Dame,
Thy passing spirit, God wat,
Thou wast half-hearted, wishing peace, but not
The means of it. The avaricious flame...(of war)
Thou'st fanned, which thou should'st tame;"

The XIX
Century
147

"Young Century, born to hear
The Cannon talking at its infant ear-" Ibid.
175

And the treaty of peace which concluded the Boer War and the shedding of blood is reflected in the next image:

"Ended, the long endeavour of the land:	Peace
Ended, the set of manhood towards the sand	16
Of thirsty death;"	

This peace is only a temporary respite from war; it is not
Christ's peace, another and greater war will come ere long:

"God has made heart thy heart;	Peace
Thou hast but bought thee respite; not surcease.	51
Lord, this is not Thy peace !"	

B. SPORTS AND GAMES

Cricket is the only sport mentioned in Thompson's imagery. The poet does not participate in the sport but reminisces sadly about a cricket match that he saw in his youth. He is sad because he remembers, with affection, the carefree joy of the days of his boyhood, and the players of long ago:

"And a ghostly batsman plays to the bowling	At Lord's
of a ghost,	6
And I look through my tears on a soundless-	
clapping host	
While the run-stealers flicker to and fro,	
To and fro:-	
O my Hornby and Barlow long ago !"	

C. DOMESTIC IMAGERY

There are no images from home and hearth. Whenever the poet mentions a door or a house, it is always used in a highly imaginative connection; for example:

"Cast wide the folding doorways of the East,"	From the Night of Forebeing-1
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- "And troubled the gold gateways of the stars" The Hound of
Heaven-260
- "And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon," Ibid.-29
- "Who did upon the scaffold's bed" Eng. Mar.-43

D. FOOD AND DRINK

Thompson was not particular about his choice of food; he shows no preferences or aversions in taste in eleven images. The imagery from "wine" recurs frequently and is associated with the Liturgy; "wine" as a beverage is used fancifully in "the Eastern conduits ran with wine.", line 8, The Poppy; "undelirious wine", in line 303, Sister Songs II, and "the Circean wine", in line 1, The Dread of Height. In the other images, food is used imaginatively as "milky fire", in line 80, A Corymbus for Autumn; the color of Monica Meynell's hair is like "honey steeped in milk", line 550, Sister Songs II, the stars remind the poet of a scrambled egg, "a beaten yolk of the stars", line 45, Ibid.; the poet compares lust to a person who eats "one daily fruit, in line 3, Marriage in Two Moods. There is an imaginative development of a feast or dinner in the next image:

"Here cushioned ivies you invite
To fall to with appetite.
What for my viands?-Dainty thoughts.
What for my brows?-Forget-me-nots.
What for my feet?-A bath of green.
My servers?-Phantasies unseen.
What shall I find for feasting dress?-
Your white disused childlikeness."

A Hollow
Wood-17

At the end of two stanzas, Thompson repeats the refrain that Monica Meynell used while she was playing at selling chocolate to her elders:

"'A cup of chocolate,
One farthing is the rate,
You drink it through a straw.'"

To Monica Thought
Dying(repeated in
35 line 50)

None of these images suggest that Thompson had any preferences or aversions in taste. The abstract and fanciful development of his "banquet", line 11, A Hollow Wood, 17-23, Ibid., reveal peculiarities of diction and ethereal imaginings, uncomfortable and meaningless. There are no images directly related to eating food, nothing whatever of mealtime, or people dining in public restaurants or homes. Thompson's food and drink images are literary and reveal no interest or special taste for any kind of food or drink.

E. CLOTHING

Whenever Thompson mentions an article of clothing, it is invariably a woman's garment used in an imaginative manner. The poet reveals no interest in being a well-dressed man, nor does he show any appreciation of fine silks, brocade, textiles, or the habiliments of others. Men's clothes are confined to clothing used by priests in saying Mass such as cowl, maniple, cincture, stole, etc, (Cf. Chapter VII).

Women's clothing is used in an imaginative manner;
the rose is dressed in a "cymar", a loose-fitting robe worn

by women, line 134, Ode to the Setting Sun; the hair of a child is like "filmy floating silk", in line 547, Sister Songs II; the poet and Monica Meynell walked on "the skirts of eventide", in line 14, The Poppy; poetry is like a "mantle," 157, Sister Songs I; rain is compared to a "mantle", line 58, Song of the Hours; and the sky is compared to Our Blessed Mother's mantle in lines 9-19-14, Lines for a Drawing of Our Lady of the Night.

Other fanciful images based on clothing are in "gloom-ing robes purpureal", line 150, Hound of Heaven; the poet's soul was like "sackcloth", line 14, Grief's Harmonics; "the garment of a grace" is mentioned in line 55, To Daisies, and the body is like "a beggar's gown", in line 12, An Anthem of Earth. Remembering Thompson's unkempt and dishevelled appearance when he first met Wilfrid Meynell, (described on page 70, Life.), and the few imaginative uses of clothing in his poetry, it is possible to conclude that the poet had no interest in being a well-dressed man; he was not fastidious in his own dress, nor did he observe the clothing of others with admiration.

F. NAVIGATION

There is no evidence to indicate that Thompson was ever aboard ship or traveled to distant places. In four images, he used "navigation" imagery in a figurative manner, but these images reveal a common knowledge and do not suggest that the poet was a seafaring man.

In the first image, there is a comparison of the earth swinging in its orbit around the sun to an anchored ship that breaks its cable; the poet uses the word "galleon" which refers to the sailing ships of the Fifteenth century:

"This labouring, vast, Tellurian galleon,	To My
Riding at anchor off the orient sun,	Godchild
Had broken its cable, and stood out to space	1
Down some froze Arctic of the aerial ways;"	

In a similar image, the poet compares the German and English struggle for supremacy which made the world seem:

"...like a ship	Cecil
It swung, whileas the cabined inmates slept,"	Rhodes-35

Thompson thought of his poetry as a "treasure-galleon", "cared with cadent rhyme", lines 587-588, Sister Songs II.

The poetry of Mrs. Meynell is an image of her soul, like the wake of a ship which has passed:

"Even as I list a-dream that mother singing	Sister
The poesy of sweet tone, and sadden while	Songs II
Her voice is cast in troubled wake behind	489
The keel of her keen spirit."	

These images are only lyrical comparisons and do not suggest that the poet had any detailed knowledge of seafaring and navigation; nor do they prove that Thompson traveled or visited distant lands and countries.

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF THE EVIDENCE OF THE IMAGERY

The object of this study has been to catalogue and to evaluate the subject-matter of Francis Thompson's images, and thereby, to arrive at a knowledge of the poet's thoughts and interests, his beliefs and opinions, and his sources of inspiration, insofar as they lie revealed in the images.

Each writer's images are bounded by his own experience of life. The dominant categories in Thompson's poetry are imagery from natural beauty, both descriptive and philosophical, religious imagery: scriptural and liturgical, derivative imagery, classical imagery, love of women and girls, animal imagery, imagery from Time and its divisions, imagery based on the poet's senses, classes of people, the human body, and imagery based on the poet's knowledge of the fine arts. The minor categories are politics, government, and war; the game of cricket, domestic imagery, food and drink, clothing and navigation.

Leading motives or prominent and recurring meanings in the images are love of God, love of the Church, the unity of song and sanctity, a passionate and pure love for Mrs. Alice Meynell and her daughters, nature as the handmaid of God, interest in the fate of his poetry, the poet's shyness, his love for children and childhood innocence, the sun as a symbol for Christ, nature suggests the omnipresence of God, keen sensory observation, especially in the light-sound imagery, the horror

of physical death, love of God for the human soul, the swift passing of Time, the two great mysteries of birth and death, the limitations of scientific thought, the similarity between the liturgy of the Church and the liturgy of nature, human love is a reflection of divine love, philosophical musings on the nature of man, sacrifice of self is necessary for poetic creation, the paradoxes of faith, and the knowledge of the classics.

Thompson was primarily inspired by his love of God, the Bible, Our Blessed Mother, the Saints, Mrs. Meynell, the Meynell children, love of children in general, his observation of nature and natural beauty, his knowledge of the classics, and reading the writings of other poets, especially Keats, Shelley, Crashaw, and Patmore; to a lesser degree by Byron, Blake, and Coleridge. Other sources of inspiration are the sun, poetry, Queen Victoria, the English Martyrs, the accomplishments of Cecil Rhodes, the writers of the nineteenth century, the assassination of Elizabeth, Empress of Austria, and a slight love-affair during the poet's residence at Pantasaph.

In the preceding chapters, the purpose has been to give an accurate, though not complete representation, of the range of Francis Thompson's imagery. In making the following observations on Thompson's character and personality, his philosophy and attitudes of mind, his tastes and interests,

these conclusions have been based solely on the evidence of the images. These characteristics and impressions have been drawn from the study of the categories of Thompson's images. In forming these conclusions, the writer has in no way relied on known biographical data.

The scholarly definitive biography of Thompson by Everard Meynell is well known to students and scholars; an interesting experiment, in proof of the validity of the thesis, is the corroboration of the main trends in Thompson's imagery by the facts of his life. That the poet's life substantiates the conclusions made on the evidence of the imagery, in the main arguments, is adequate proof, of the study of imagery as one way of arriving at a poet's thoughts, interests, aversions, and philosophy.

In the first chapter, an effort has been made to compare two poets, Coventry Patmore and John Keats, who, as a matter of fact, are unlike in philosophy, imaginative qualities and expression. The purpose of the comparison has been to discover the imagery through which each poet expresses his philosophy. Although the choice is arbitrary, the purpose being to discover trends in the imagery, not to study the poets themselves, Patmore and Keats were chosen because they influenced Thompson in his writing.

The dominant image in Patmore's poetry through which he expresses his philosophy, thoughts, and interests, is the

"marriage image." From first to last, the undertone of Patmore's art is Christian marriage as a type of Christ's love for the Church. His love of women is inspired, like Thompson, by the love of the perfect woman, the Mother of God. John Keats, on the other hand, had an insight into the problems of life, especially the problem of "good and ill" and connected the great problem with his own sufferings. Thompson based his philosophy on the Catholic faith; Keats did not live long enough to arrive at a philosophy of life. Keats was devoted to "Beauty;" he longed to flee from the world and the pain and suffering that he saw around him. Death is not a terrible end but something that will "ease" his sufferings. He wants a sleep full of sweet dreams and quiet breathing; indeed that is his first definition of the beautiful. He passes from "quiet breath" to a youth "pale and spectre-thin" who "gasps with despair" and grows "day by day" more "gaunt and ghostly" and "dies" without "stay or prop" but his own "weak mortality." These images are Keats's images, they could not be Patmore's or Thompson's; for each writer has a range of images peculiar to his own experience of life.

Eleven chapters of this study deal with Thompson's imagery and his sources of inspiration. The arrangement of these chapters is arbitrary; in commenting upon them, each chapter has been treated as a unit.

In the second chapter, the imagery is based on human love. Thompson's love imagery may be divided into two sections, his love for children, especially the Meynell children, and his love for women, personified by Mrs. Meynell. Ultimately his love for women is in reality his love for the Mother of God. Thompson's incurable shyness, his empathetic feelings for children and childhood innocence, and his interest in his own poetry, deprived him of having any lasting relationship with any woman. An omission from "childhood imagery" is any reference to boys and their actions. The reason for this is suggested by an entry in one of Thompson's notebooks which reveals his shyness, sensitivity, and intense nature, even as a schoolboy. Alice Meynell and her children, Monica, Madeline, Olivia, and Francis Meynell, are the chief sources of inspiration for the greater part of Thompson's early poems. In six images, the poet reveals his great love of childhood innocence. The thought of purity as an essential attribute of love is another repeated idea in Thompson's imagery. Francis Thompson's ideas on love are wholesome; there is not a single vulgar, indecent, or morally offensive image in all his poetry. The "night-mare time" which he describes so poignantly in Sister Songs I, 275, left no mark on his imagery. It is a tribute to the poet's high ideals that he never descended into the sordid and evil ways of life that he had known during his outcast days.

In using imagery from animal and bird-life, in the third chapter, Thompson's predominant and most artistic symbolism is the abstraction of the chase in his masterpiece. All other images from animal life suggest that Thompson was a day-dreamer. He was often in the habit of comparing the cosmic bodies, flowers, and the shapes of moving clouds to animals. Nowhere does he show any first hand knowledge or observation of animals; the knowledge of animal husbandry, domestic animals, pets, and other animals is not in evidence in the imagery. Thompson did not keep an animal for a pet, he shows no sympathy for animals or birds. The images from bird-life are drawn from birds in general; they reveal nothing about Thompson's knowledge of ethnology or the habits of birds. Thompson had some knowledge of falconry and bird-bating; in his imagery he uses the terms proper to the training of the falcon such as "jesses," "accipitrine," "restraints," and "a hooded eye." The falcon is the only bird mentioned in recurring images with an accompanying thought. Many images are descriptive personifications which lack vividness, force, meaning, and poetical effectiveness. Animals then, interested the poet; he drew upon a limited number of ordinary animal characteristics, chiefly for purposes of illustration and description.

In the imaginative personifications of "Time," "Death," and related ideas, in the fourth chapter, several attitudes and beliefs of the poet are evident in the imagery. Thompson was preoccupied with the thought of death and the corruption

of the body; also, the swift passing of life on earth is another repeated idea in his imagery. Most of the images iterate these same thoughts; sometimes, we find ethereal imaginings with an accompanying philosophical thought. The death of the body is like the fall of the old yew tree at Ushaw; death is a sieve that cleanses the muddied wine of life, it is the pure water that flushes the cumbered gutters of humanity, the moon that controls the tide of human life, the deepest note on the organ, and the true Fount of Youth. Thompson's thoughts on physical death are contained in a vivid series of personifications in The Anthem of Earth. Thompson characteristically personifies "Time" as a destroyer; whatever else "Time" does, his chief function is as a ravager of beauty and destroyer of youth. Although Thompson was particularly sensitive to the physical changes wrought by death, he faced it with the inward calm of a true Christian.

The subject-matter of the fifth chapter is the images based on Thompson's senses, especially the visual and auditory senses. In his earlier poems there is an abundance of imagery that appeals to the eye and ear. The first part of Sister Songs is filled with almost meaningless descriptions, whose outstanding quality is the music and light imagery. These images have an onomatopoeic effect. The critics in Thompson's day, deplored the fulsome effect of the ornate, rich images.

After the poet's days of dereliction on the London streets, these images reflect his buoyant spirits and the end of the "night-mare time." In his later poems, Thompson uses synaesthesia, the concomitant sensation of two senses to a single stimulus. In his later poems also, the tendency is for meaningful images, rather than decorative illustrations.

Like Shelley and Keats, Thompson was interested in rich, luxuriant imagery, but unlike Shelley and Keats, Thompson's finest images are energized by thoughts and philosophical reflections unknown to the other poets who wrote in the romantic manner. Thompson was romantic in attitude and expression, but not in philosophy and faith. Shelley, for all the "soaring" qualities of his verse, never left the earth; Keats saw the beauty of life but never gives the least philosophical thought to anything supernatural. Thompson's ideas do not change throughout his poetry; however, there is a marked difference in his presentation between the images in his earlier poems and those in the latter. The mastery and power of the tense restrained odes contrasted with the lovely, colorful descriptions in Thompson's early poetry reveal the development of the artist. Imagery becomes not the goal, but the means to fine poetry. The study of sense imagery is invaluable for observing the growth of Thompson's poetic powers.

In the sixth chapter, we look at nature through Thompson's imagery. The images in this chapter are the most

numerous of any other category. First, there are lyrical images of exquisite beauty in which the poet describes or illustrates fanciful ideas; these images reveal very little, save the interest in color and music, about the poet himself. Second, nature stimulates the poet into the expression of his own feelings; and third, there are those images which contain Thompson's philosophy of nature. The contrast with Wordsworth is appropriate because Wordsworth is universally recognized as the great seer and poet of nature. Thompson had an insight into nature's mysteries and penetrated more profoundly into the depths of truth than Wordsworth. Indeed, in some images, Thompson seems to be answering Wordsworth.

Thompson's observations of nature are very artistically presented; like Keats, he captures "nature's wilful moods" and portrays them with inspired originality. Thompson shows no botanical knowledge of nature, nor anything that would lead us to believe that he knew any more about trees, plants, and flowers than the casual observer.

The personification of elements of nature and the celestial bodies is commonplace in Thompson's poetry. The poet was fond of making images from his observation of the various manifestations of nature. These images are evidence of his poetic powers but, in the first section, they reveal nothing about Thompson himself.

There is a record of one of Thompson's most heart-rending experiences during his outcast days. He records the

tenderness and solicitude of a pathetic young girl in an image that immortalizes the memory of her gracious kindness. After the poet was rescued by the Meynells, his apprehensiveness, gratitude, and love, is revealed by the nature imagery. The comparison of children with flowers is a common, repeated idea. A strange effect of Thompson's childhood imagery is that whenever the poet contemplates children, he usually thinks of their innocence and withdraws into his own heart of pain. The poet describes his lack of poetic inspiration by means of nature imagery.

William Wordsworth, the poet of nature, had no philosophy of nature. He tried to find a philosophy, or rather, to impose a philosophy upon creation and failed because he did not start with the Creator. Thompson saw in nature a reflection of the beauty of God. He believed that nature could be understood only if man understood his relationship to God. He believed that nature "was God's daughter," and did not worship nature for itself; Wordsworth tried to accommodate God, Man, and the harmony of the physical universe to nature. His religion was pantheism; later, He evolved towards an idea of the true God. Thompson believed that the world of natural beauty was alive with signs of its Creator. He did not identify God with nature, nor did he consider nature a "mother," but saw in the minutiae of creation, laws that pointed to the existence of the Creator. The worship of nature without God

is meaningless and ineffectual. The similarity between the liturgy of nature and the liturgy of the Church was one of the poet's fundamental beliefs. Wordsworth never approached the forthright candor of Thompson in expression though he was an avowed nature-worshipper. At the last, Wordsworth was not convinced of his youthful ideas of nature; he never understood what every Christian accepts, that the longings of the human heart are for God, though he ultimately realized that there are desires in the human soul that come from a power outside of nature. The overwhelming majority of Wordsworth's images are based on nature, but he never truly understood the relationship between God, mankind, and the world of reality.

Thompson believed that nature could be properly understood only if man had faith in God. The omnipresence of God is an infinite difference from Wordsworth's pantheism. God is present in all places; that is not the same as all things are God. Thompson's view of nature is essentially a happy one; he glories in the beauty of creation, because, seen with the eyes of faith, it mirrors the beauty of God. Thompson professes certain faith in God beyond and outside of the God of sense experience in Wordsworth. His love of nature is elevated to a spiritual plane by imposing the liturgy of the Church on the world of external reality. Thompson made a distinction between nature-worship and love of the beautiful in nature. Wordsworth believed that nature never betrayed the

heart that loved her; Thompson knew that nature had no heart, man is greater than nature--"barren of heart"--because he possesses an immortal soul. Man's will, not nature, according to Thompson, determines man's actions and life. Nature is deaf to the pleas of man; no consolation ever came from the heart of nature. Thompson rebukes the nature-worshippers, he bids them not to lead others into the errors into which they have fallen. Thompson points to the Catholic philosophy of life which answers the questions that man cannot solve by reason alone. Wordsworth attempted a Herculean task in trying to formulate a philosophy of nature by the use of reason alone. He failed because it is impossible to succeed in such an undertaking. Thompson started with the vision of truth and saw nature through the eyes of faith. Wordsworth's empiricism was a sane application of human intelligence to superhuman knowledge; Wordsworth employed common words, ideas, and elementary truths, but did not have the vision inspired by the eternal verities which rings clearly in every philosophical nature image that Thompson uses. Thompson's mind was made up in the beginning, Wordsworth sought an answer in the wrong place.

In the seventh chapter, Thompson's religious imagery is divided into two parts; first, imagery based on his knowledge of the Bible, and second, the liturgical imagery. The Catholic faith is the dominant motive in the imagery. From beginning to end, the undercurrent of religious thought is found throughout the poetry of Francis Thompson.

A misfit in the world of reality, the poet sensed intuitively that love of God was the only truly great subject of poetry. He transformed the commonplace with his vision of the truth. Whenever he expresses great thought or emotion, very often, that thought is dressed in imagery based on the Bible or the liturgy of the Catholic Church. Francis Thompson's philosophy conforms in every respect with Catholic dogma and faith. His knowledge of the Bible and the liturgy is extensive. The liturgical imagery echoes almost every ceremony and act of worship of the Catholic Church. Traces of ideas from Creation in Genesis to the Apocalypse of St. John are found in the Biblical imagery. The reference to our Blessed Mother, the saints and angels, St. Francis de Sales, the great St. Francis, the English Martyrs, St. Thomas More, St. John Fisher, St. Monica, and the litany of saints that Thompson calls upon in his Motto and Invocation reveal that Francis Thompson was a deeply religious man. This is the first noticeable and outstanding quality of the poet and therefore the man.

Thompson's religious ideas do not change or evolve. The magnificent vision which opens his first great poem The Ode to the Setting Sun immediately draws from the truths of Catholic philosophy. The same truths inform his serious poetry in repeated images from beginning to end. He borrows a wealth of illustration for his ideas and emotions from the riches of the Bible and the Catholic tradition. Sometimes, the religious

idea is abstracted from its proper meaning and used imaginatively. The sun as the symbol for Christ appears frequently in Thompson's imagery. There is no doubt that the poet means Christ, though he calls upon the sun for his inspiration. The beams of the setting sun reminded Thompson of our Lord hanging on the cross. The sun's rays in the sky at twilight reminded the poet of Christ's terrible crown of thorns. What sun ever died and rose again like Thompson's image, in line 221-224, Ode to the Setting Sun?

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is depicted in a cosmic image at the opening of the Orient Ode, lines 1-18, that unites the liturgy of the Church with the movements of the heavenly bodies. This is one of Thompson's favorite and oft-repeated ideas. The priestly vestments are metaphorically applied to objects in nature.

Religious imagery in Thompson's poetry is proof of three impressions about the poet himself. First of all, the cumulative effect of this incessant stream of images is evidence of the poet's knowledge of the Bible and the liturgy of the Church; in the second place, Thompson's serious thoughts, and even less profound observations, are expressed in terms of religious imagery; thirdly, the exaltation and mood of joy in the imagery, Thompson's use of so many images, show an intense and personal love for God, His Blessed Mother, the saints, and his religion.

Thompson's best work is in the field of religious lyricism. His masterpiece, The Hound of Heaven, is universally recognized and acclaimed as a monumental contribution to Catholic letters. When Thompson came to work for Merry England, it had for its motto the statement, "We shall try to revive in our own hearts and in the hearts of others, the enthusiasm of the Christian Faith." Thompson's poetry, in the main, reflects the "enthusiasm of the Christian Faith" and certainly has revived that enthusiasm in the "hearts of others." As Archbishop Kenealy of Pantasaph once said, "The intellect of the world is stagnate, the antidote is Francis Thompson!" Extensive critical analyses of Thompson's poetry, from many divergent viewpoints, all agree on the authenticity of his vision and his kinship with truth. The poet-teacher certainly has become, in our time, the "poet of the return to God."

The eighth chapter is an attempt to study the imagery of Thompson in the light of the imagery of other poets that it closely resembles. Thompson, like Coleridge, has suffered from a great deal of adverse criticism in his literary borrowings.

Thompson states that he approves of borrowing "the silver" of another writer and turning it into the "gold" of his own. This, in an analogous comparison, is the classic doctrine of "mimesis" as expressed by Aristotle in the Poetics.

During the past seven years, the writer has noticed casual similarities between some of Thompson's images and the writings of others. In some images the similarity is obvious and needs little elaboration or proof; in others, there is a likeness in thought, or in mood that strongly suggests the influence of another writer. Certain critics, notably R. L. Megroz and Everard Meynell, have pointed out similarities between Thompson's poetry and that of other writers. In this thesis a norm has been established. Three similarities, either in vocabulary, thought, form, mood or development must be seen before suggesting that an image has been derived. In every image that has been included, there are at least three similarities between Thompson's image and its probable source. Casual likenesses are not derived images. In forming these conclusions, we can only arrive at a probable degree of certainty. It is not possible to study the creative imagination, or to unravel the complexities of the poetic mind in the strict sense. However, where so many resemblances do exist, between Thompson's imagery and that of other writers, it seems reasonable to conclude that one of Thompson's sources of inspiration was the writings of other poets; especially, since Thompson himself admitted "unconscious plagiarism" in his letter to Patmore and also approved of literary borrowings.

The purpose is not to charge the poet with plagiarism, nor that his indebtedness to other writers is the result of

deliberate imitation. The poet was a man of high ideals and lived a life noteworthy for its absorption with spiritual attitudes towards all people. It is inconceivable that these similarities were other than "unconscious cerebration."

No poet is completely independent of other poets; Shakespeare was indebted to Holinshed's chronicles for many of the scenes in his historical plays. Thompson himself defends Coleridge from a charge of plagiarism. If we accept the thesis of Professor Beyer, Wieland's Oberon was one of Keats's major sources. Literary borrowings should not be looked upon with any feeling of shame; nor is there any stigma attached to the judicious use of sources. The charge of plagiarism can be made only when a writer consciously appropriates the material of another writer and makes it his own. The incidents in Shakespeare's historical plays are substantially the same as those in Holinshed's Chronicles; every school child reads Shakespeare, only the scholarly few are aware of Holinshed's Chronicles.

Without doubt, Thompson was familiar with the poetry of Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Patmore, and Crashaw; his knowledge of the writings of Blake, Byron, and Coleridge is less noticeable but evident.

In discussing the imagery, the method used is the comparison of Thompson's image to its probable source. Forty-one images have been completely omitted because the similarities

are strongly suggestive but not logically demonstrable. There are many reminders of Patmore in Thompson's imagery, especially in meaning, but there is a very small number of derived images.

It is not possible, in this limited space, to reiterate the evidence in the eighth chapter. Two conclusions, however, can be drawn from Thompson's derivative imagery; first, the poet believed in literary borrowings and did depend on other writers as a source of inspiration; and second, some of these writers were Shelley, Keats, Patmore, Crashaw, Coleridge, Blake and Byron.

The ninth chapter is a catalogue of the imagery taken from classical mythology and also contains five images based on Thompson's medical studies.

The poet reveals no interest in medicine and manifests a dislike for science. In the first image, Thompson's biographer sees a reflection of the poet's walks through the Manchester Museum; the second image is a description of the powers of the microscope; and in three images, the poet ridicules the pseudo-scientific theories current in Victorian times.

Thompson's knowledge of the classics is shown in upwards of one hundred and twenty-five images in which he illustrates his ideas with the terminology of ancient Greek and Roman mythology. One difficulty of classical imagery is its obscurity; the modern reader does not always comprehend the implications of a classical allusion. For him, the image

becomes an enigma; instead of clarifying the thought, the image obscures it. If there is an obscurity in the understanding of Thompson's classical imagery, the cause is the lack of knowledge in the reader, not the poet's misunderstanding of the image itself.

The influence of Christianity upon pagan mythology is evident in Thompson's imagery. One of the poet's reiterated thoughts in the classical imagery is the unity of song and sanctity. The imagery based on the sun-god is used more frequently and is more meaningful than the other groups of images in this category.

Classical authors suggested by Thompson's use of mythological imagery are Homer, Virgil, Ovid, and Plato. The poet utilized mythological images in four ways; Apollo, the sun, is the symbol for Christ--this is the leading idea in the mythological images; second, Thompson uses mythological imagery to illustrate one of his leading ideas, the unity of song and sanctity; third, he appropriates elements from mythology to illustrate other ideas; and fourth, he often uses a mythological name as an adjective where the adjective itself can be used. In no image is there the least suggestion that the poet believes in any of the ancient mythology, but rather, the opposite is true. Thompson's mythological images are evidence of his studies in the languages of ancient Greece and Rome and manifest his interest and poetic power in drawing upon his classical knowledge as a source of inspiration.

Imagery based on the poet's knowledge or interest in the fine arts is the subject-matter of the ninth chapter. Thompson personifies the word "Music" several times; he speaks of his poetry as "song." He mentioned some musical instruments in his imagery and achieved an onomatopoeic effect by imitation their sounds. There are no images that show that Thompson had any interest in opera, symphonic, or any formal type of music. "The trumpet that sounds/ from the hid battlements of Eternity" is the only meaningful image in this section (lines 144-145, The Hound of Heaven).

The imagery based on Thompson's knowledge of statuary and architecture is lyrically beautiful, poetically effective, and contains some characteristic ideas of the poet, passing of time, purity is essential to love, etc., but does not show any evidence of Thompson's interest in sculpture and architecture. Two images are drawn from the poet's knowledge of painting; in both images the nascent idea is charcoal; the artist must burn the wood to get charcoal, just as the Infinite Designer, God, tries the human soul by suffering; secondly, the spray which an artist uses to make charcoal sketches indelible is like the poet's tears at the first sight of young Monica Meynell which have fixed her image forever in his mind.

Thompson was interested in the fate of his poetry and predicted that it would live immortally. He expressed this idea with calm confidence in many images. The necessity of suffering and complete sacrifice of love is another requisite

of the poet's vocation. One of Thompson's happiest thoughts was that he felt that he had made a significant contribution to English poetry. Thompson was an optimist who saw the reflection of God's glory in everything that happened. His poetic credo was stated in his own words; he wanted to be "the poet of the return to God." This world is decaying and passing; only Christ's love holds any promise of salvation. Amid the trials and sufferings of life, man must not forget that he is the "bread of the worm and the Deity." This life is but a dream compared to eternity; renounce what others take up, keep, what other men throw away. In the paradoxes of faith, what is valuable in God's sight is scorned by the world; only if man gives up the world for love of God will he attain true and lasting happiness "in the land of Luthany, in the region Elenore," line 133, The Mistress of Vision.

Francis Thompson loved children very much; we have seen that the poet thought of himself as a child and identified himself with children. The candor and innocence of children is a theme which recurs many times in his imagery. However, Thompson can never be said to have known men and women as Dante or Shakespeare knew them. He love mankind as a whole, but not real men and women; consequently his lack of imagery, in chapter eleven, about men and women and his lack of insight into the feelings of others is something to be deplored. There is an absence of imagery from daily life, working men and their

problems, town and country life, and human beings going about their everyday tasks. Thompson never married; his imagery from family relations, are therefore inconsequential and literary.

The poet treated the parts and functions of the human body in an imaginative manner. The noblest use of imagery based on the limbs of the human body is found in Thompson's masterpiece. He invariably associated the parts of the body with objects in nature; thus the earth is the mother of man, the sun is the eye of the sea, the moon's ear, the throat of the dusk, etc. Most of these images are abstractions with little meaning; the human body is dismembered and associated with practically all divisions of nature. The limbs of the human body are used imaginatively. Outside of the poet's love for the Meynell family and his friend, Coventry Patmore, there are no other people mentioned that Thompson knew and loved personally. In such poems as Cecil Rhodes and the Ode for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, the poet shows formal journalistic devotion but not sincere homage. There is a feeling that a good deal of the imagery is labored praise. Thompson was trained in philosophy and his musings on the nature of man, in the poem Any Saint, are a rare and successful combination of Catholic teaching and poetry. He distilled into sharp, potent metaphors his reflections on the nature of man. It would take pages of commentary to discuss the

philosophical implications of the closely packed truths in those few stanzas. Thompson was always fully aware of the importance of experience, and readers of this poetry are deeply impressed by his knowledge of life, but the poet himself drew his imagery from his reasoning rather than his experience of life. Thompson's view is life for God's sake, and, it may be truly said, he practised what he preached.

In the last chapter, six minor categories are grouped together. The only political opinion expressed by Thompson is a disfavorable one on the democratic form of government. He manifests little interest in government, rulers, or statesmen. He predicted the coming of the first World War and read the signs of the times with accuracy. England wanted peace, but sought it without the peace of Christ. The only sport that Thompson mentions is cricket; the image is a memory of his boyhood while watching a game of cricket. There's not a single image from domestic life. Whenever the poet mentions some aspect of the home, it is always in a highly imaginative illustration. Thompson had no home life and consequently there is no mention in imagery of home and the hearth. The poet was not selective in the choice of food, but the imagery reveals a preference for wine as a drink. This is due, to the use of wine in the Mass, and the imagery from the Bible. Whenever Thompson mentions an article of clothing, it is a woman's garment such as a veil, a mantle, a cymar, etc.

The poet reveals no interest in clothings nor in being a well-dressed man.

Thompson himself impresses one as having been an extremely introspective and self-centered man. He was very quiet and shy; he was obviously delighted in the presence of children but mentions nothing about his adult friends. Not a single image is the result of the poet's own traveling; he was a man who traveled very little. There is no evidence that the poet visited foreign lands in the imagery. There are four ship images in his poetry and these images are based on an ordinary knowledge of ships. Likewise, there is no indication that the poet was ever aboard ship. The distant lands mentioned in his imagery are mentioned by name only; sometimes the place is historical, at other times it is a name of Thompson's own making.

The departments of life and nature that Thompson drew from as sources for his imagery are very few; the majority of the images are the true product of a rich inner experience. Thompson lived in a dreamworld of his own making and not in the world of reality. In his best images, he shows profound thought and the mastery of precise, artistic expression. By far the greater number of his images are richly-colored and highly imaginative; at his lyrical optimum, he is constantly singing the praises of God. This was Thompson's creed "to join song and sanctity" and to be the "poet of the return to God." His life was devoted to his poetic vocation.

APPENDIX I

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF THE LIFE OF FRANCIS THOMPSON¹

- 1859 - Francis Joseph Thompson was born on December 16th to Charles and Mary T. Thompson
- 1866 - As a small boy, the poet showed an interest in reading Shakespeare and Coleridge and thus manifested a special predilection for poetry.
- 1870 - At the age of eleven, young Thompson was sent to Saint Cuthbert's College to prepare him for the sacred priesthood.
- 1877 - He spent seven years fruitlessly because the rector of Saint Cuthbert's College advised him not to continue; The chief reasons for Thompson's failure to become a priest have been attributed to his indolence and absentmindedness.
- 1878 - Following his dismissal from the seminary, Thompson was sent to Owens College in Manchester to study medicine.
- 1885 - After three attempts, Thompson failed in his final examinations and left Owens College.
- 1885 - On the first Sunday in November, Thompson had a violent quarrel with his father and left home, never to return.
- 1888 - After almost three years of living as an outcast on the London streets, Thompson saw his poem The Passion of Mary in Merry England.
- 1889 - Thompson became a reviewer on the staff of Merry England. The poet also met the Meynell family whose affection and friendship inspired most of his early poetry.
- 1890 - The first great creative period: The Hound of Heaven, Sister Songs, and Love in Dian's Lap were written during this period; the first volume Poems was published.
- 1892 - Thompson moved from Palace Court, Greatham, the residence of Wilfrid Meynell, to the Capuchin Monastery at Pantasaph.
- 1894 - Francis Thompson met the "master of vision," Coventry Patmore.

- 1896 - The death of Coventry Patmore on the twenty-sixth of November was a profound shock to Thompson.
- 1897 - The second and last volume of Thompson's poetry entitled New Poems was published during this year; It was dedicated to Coventry Patmore.
- An entry in Thompson's notebook during this year reads as follows "1897: End of Poet. Beginning of Journalist. The years of transition completed."
- 1898 - Many of the articles written by Thompson and collected by Father Connolly were written during the last ten years of the poet's life.
- 1907 - The ravages of the laudanum habit upon Thompson's delicate constitution had made serious inroads on his health. At the constant urging of the Meynells, he entered the Hospital of Saint John and Saint Elizabeth.
- Francis Thompson died on the morning of November thirteenth; three days later he was buried at Saint Mary's Cemetery in Kensal Green. Around his neck was a slender string, and close to his heart an:

"Image of Her conceived Immaculate;"

Orison Tryst
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THOMPSONIANA - The Boston College Collection, consisting of 409 first editions, 326 poetry manuscripts, 43 of Thompson's notebooks, 23 autographed letters, 148 periodicals, and the manuscript of the Life of St. Ignatius; besides these treasures there are paintings of Thompson and his friends, Wilfrid and Alice Meynell and Coventry Patmore.

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