

Meditative Works

Shortly after Hallgrímur finished the *Passíusálmar* he composed *Diarium christianum*, a prose work whose full title is *Diarium christianum, eður Dagleg iðkun af öllum Drottins dagsverkum, með samburði Guðs tíu boðorða við sköpunarverkið og minningu nafnsins Jesú, skrifað og samsett af s. Hallgrími Péturssyni anno 1660* [A Christian's Diary, or Daily exercise of all the Lord's daily works, together with a comparison of God's Ten Commandments with the Creation, and a remembrance of Jesus' name, written and composed by séra Hallgrímur Pétursson in the year 1660]. Though the *Diarium* is unlike the *Passíusálmar* in many respects, they are both meditative works much influenced by classical rhetoric. *Diarium* was first published at Hólar in 1680, with four subsequent printings (see Magnús Jónsson II 1947, 229–230).

Hallgrímur wrote another meditative work called *Sjö guðræki-legal umþenkingar, eður Eintal kristins manns við sjálfan sig, hvern dag í vikunni, að kvöldi og morgni* [Seven pious meditations, or a Christian's monologue with himself, each weekday, evening and morning]. First printed at Hólar in 1677, the work appears to have been even more popular than the *Diarium*, with eight subsequent reprintings, the last in 1905.

Both these works will be examined in this chapter, making use of Lárus H. Blöndal's 1957 edition undertaken on behalf of the Icelandic Music Society (all page references are to this edition). The 1957 text of the *Diarium* is based on the final 1773 Hólar edition,

while that of *Sjö guðrækilegar umþenkingar* derives from the 1773 seventh printing, also from Hólar.

Gunnar Harðarson (1998) has drawn attention to the powerful influence of Christian meditative writing on *Sjö guðrækilegar umþenkingar*, a medieval tradition that enjoyed a new lease of life in the post-Reformation Lutheran church. The same influence can be found in the *Diarium*. The authors mainly responsible for developing medieval Christian mysticism were Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (ca. 1090–1153), Hugh of Saint Victor (1096?–1141), and Saint Bonaventure (ca. 1217–1274). Gunnar also notes that the best known and most widely disseminated work that grew out of this tradition, *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471), was printed at Hólar in 1676 in the Icelandic translation by séra Þorkell Arngrímsson, just a year before the publication of Hallgrímur's *Umþenkingar*. Martin Moller was among the authors who helped to disseminate the meditative heritage of the medieval church within the Lutheran communion. His works were very popular in Iceland and influenced Hallgrímur directly. Gunnar Harðarson also suggests that the vocabulary and atmosphere of *Umþenkingar* recall older meditative works preserved in Icelandic manuscripts, such as *Viðræða líkams og sálar* [Dialogue of body and soul] as found in *Hauksbók*. Hallgrímur could have encountered that work through his contacts with Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson, who had the work on loan during the 1660s. All these links deserve further investigation, but there is no doubt that Christian mysticism greatly appealed to Hallgrímur, as the *Passíusálmar* and his meditative writings clearly reveal.

The meditative works are also interesting because they again show the extent of Hallgrímur's knowledge of rhetoric. The texts follow traditional rhetorical practice closely as regards structure, subject matter, and presentation, and they were certainly widely read. Arne Møller (1922, 84, footnote) points out that in terms of style the works recall the writings of Jón Vídalín, and this need come as no surprise, for both Hallgrímur and Jón draw on the same rhetorical traditions to which all learned European writers at this time paid heed.

Møller also draws attention to the links between Hallgrímur's meditative works and two European texts—Gerhard's

Meditationes sacrae and Martin Møller's *Soliloquia animae* (1922, 82). He notes that Hallgrímur's meditations (especially the *Diarium*) are characterized by extensive allegorizing (Møller 1922, 83) or complex metaphors, and on at least four occasions Møller uses the term "barnalegur" [childlike] to characterize them: "barnlig Ynde [. . .] ganske barnligt [. . .] barnlige Naivitet [. . .] barnlige Fantasi" [childlike wonder [. . .] quite childlike [. . .] childlike naïveté [. . .] childlike fantasy] (Møller 1922, 84–85). He sees these writings as quite unlike Hallgrímur's poetry (ibid. 82). Magnús Jónsson thought there was more to Hallgrímur's prose writings than this: "Mælska [Hallgríms], andagift og hnyttni eru þar oft svo frábærar, að lesa má til mesta gagns" [[his] eloquence, inspiration, and wit are often so excellent that the greatest benefit can be derived from reading [the *Diarium*]] (Magnús Jónsson 1947, 2:213). Møller indicates that the *Diarium* is a somewhat unusual work—"et Udkast til en lille Hexaëmeron fra Hallgríms Haand" [a sketch for a short *Hexaëmeron* by Hallgrímur] (Møller 1922, 82).

Møller's "short *Hexaëmeron*" reference is to a major translated work by the Danish poet Anders Christensen Arrebo, and also to a specific literary genre—or rather to a great literary tradition—that dates back to a work by Saint Ambrose (ca. 340–397) that discusses the six days during which God created the world. In 1578 the French poet Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas published *La Première Semaine*, a poem in which his literary art and rhetorical knowledge are directed to the same subject, the Creation. This work was much admired throughout Europe, with translations into English, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and German (Friese 1968, 229). At the instigation of the Chancellor of Denmark Arrebo translated the Du Bartas poem into Danish as *Hexaëmeron Rhythmico-Danicum. Det er: Verdens første Uges sex Dages præctige og mæchtige Gierninger* [Hexaëmeron Rhythmico-Danicum. That is: the glorious and mighty deeds of six days in the world's first week]. Arrebo began his work in the 1630s but died before completing it. *Hexaëmeron* was first published in 1661, twenty-four years after the poet's death, having previously circulated in manuscript among poets and scholars. The work describes each day of the week according to the Creation story. The poet first cites the biblical text and outlines the events

of the day in question, and then draws lessons from it to serve as reminders and warnings to the reader. Arrebo follows his source quite closely but adds distinctively Scandinavian natural descriptions. For him all nature bears witness to God's closeness and benevolence (Friese 1968, 229–230).¹ In Sweden Bishop Haquin Spegel (1645–1714) composed *Guds Werk och Hwila* [God's work and rest], a creation epic along similar lines, first printed in 1685. Spegel used the same sources as Arrebo but also made extensive use of the Danish poet's translation. The major difference between the two works is that Spegel's work is more serious and displays less delight in the wonders of the created world (Friese 1968, 233ff.). In terms of structure the Swedish work consists of fifty-eight hymns while Arrebo's work, divided into seven parts, has eleven thousand verses.

Translating Du Bartas's remarkable transcendental work into Danish was a formidable task, and Arrebo made use of not only the French original but also the other translations, among them one in Dutch, though in several respects he went his own way in the final version.

There is also a considerable difference between the divine images presented by the Calvinist Du Bartas and Arrebo, the Lutheran humanist (Friese 1968, 229–231). Deploying a wide range of extravagant and hyperbolic rhetorical figures, Arrebo's poem became an important inspiration for the emotive style of Danish baroque writing and was a major influence on later poets such as Kingo, Naur, and Dorothe Engelbretsdatter (Storstein and Sørensen 1999, 131–132).

Arrebo's *Hexaëmeron* begins by introducing the Creator and expressing joy and admiration at the Creation:

Du jo HErre Gud før, det skønnest' Himmelens Decke,
Som det, HErre, dig bør, mon ofver Jorderig strecke.
Ziirlig Demanten er, saa oc den røde Rubine:
Soolen skønner oc skær, paa højen Himmel, maa skinne:

1. "I *Hexaëmeron* er verden god, et vejr af kraft og vidunderlighed. Hver gang synden dukker op, skubbes den til side af en ukompliceret tillid til Guds gerninger" [In the *Hexaëmeron* the world is good, full of strength and wonder. Each time sin appears, it is pushed aside by simple trust in God's works] (*Dansk litteraturhistorie* 3 1983, 113).

Perlerne stickis næt tapetet herligt at pryde:
 Stjernerne bedr' er sæt', hves Orden ingen kand bryde.
 (Arrebo 1965 1, 50)

[Thou, Lord God, the finest heavenly cover
 duly, Lord, over the earth stretched.
 Beautiful is the diamond and also the red ruby:
 the sun fair and bright in the high heaven shines:
 the pearls finely sewn the splendid carpet to adorn:
 the stars are better set, whose order no one can change.]

In *Diarium* Hallgrímur also presents a picture of the beauty of the heavens, whose stars he compares not to Arrebo's precious stones but to embroidered tenting in the residences of noblemen:

Það þykir þeim ríku tignarmönnum prýðilegt að yfirbreiða stóla sína með fögrum tjöldum, saumuðum eða mynduðum með fugla og dýra myndum og málverki, hvað þó ekki er nema dauður skuggi. En sá almáttugi Drottinn prýðir hér tjald síns hverndags stóls (það er loftið) með óteljanlega slags mörgum fuglum, sem margir eru afbragðs lystilegir að fögrum lit og syngja mjög sætlega. (177)

[It pleases wealthy princes to cover their thrones with fine tenting, embroidered or decorated with images and paintings of birds and animals, even though everything is just a dead shadow. But the Lord Almighty adorns the covering over his everyday throne (which is the air) with numerous kinds of birds, many of them wholly delightful in their fine colors and sweet singing.]

He describes the pleasure experienced when standing outside in fine weather, relishing the sun by day and the stars by night:

Hvað gleðilegt og lystilegt er heilbrigðum líkama í hýru veðri að sjá það fagra sólar skin og þær ljómandi stjörnur í fögru og hlýju næturveðri, svo mann skal engan veginn langa frá svoddan fagri ásýnd. (171-172)

[How enjoyable and pleasurable it is for a healthy body to see the beautiful sunshine in good weather and the twinkling stars on fine balmy nights, so that no one will ever wish to abandon such a fair sight.]

The *Diarium*, composed for both meditation and exhortation, also extols the Creation and its creator:

Aldrei skyldi maðurinn svo sínum fæti á jörð stíga, og aldrei svo þvo sig í vatninu eða svala svo þar á sínum þorsta, og aldrei heldur svo grös eður grænkaðan skóg líta, að þessara allra hluta mildur gjafari og almáttugur skapari hafi ekki sína skylduga þökk þar fyrir. [. . .] Þar sér þú eina milda hönd og forsorgunarsamt föðurs hjarta þess lifanda Guðs, sá eð bæði mönnum og fénaði fyrir fram tilbjó bæði fæði og fóður og fuglunum hæli og athvarf í þeim þykkblómguðu viðargreinum. (166)

[Man should never set foot on the earth, and never wash in cool water or slake his thirst there, and never view the grasses or the verdant wood without offering due thanks to the gracious giver and omnipotent creator for all this. [. . .] There you see the gracious hand and fatherly heart of the living God, he who prepared food and fodder for man and beast, and refuge and shelter for the birds in the densely leaved branches.]

However, Hallgrímur Pétursson's *Diarium* is not a draft for a creation epic. It belongs to a different literary genre, though its subject matter has links with the *Hexaëmeron*, sharing its ideology and, to some extent, its aesthetic priorities. The *Diarium* consists of seven "iðkanir" [exercises], each with three main sections: first, a scriptural text about the Creation is renarrated and interpreted; second, a section headed "Nafnið" [the Name] discusses the names for weekdays; and, third, a section headed "Jesús" takes the form of a prayer. The author links all three parts in terms of their substance. Each has several subsections, within each of which points are usually listed and then discussed in order. Numbers and numerology

DIARIUM CHRISTI,
ANUM.

Eður

Dagleg Ið

kun af öllum Drottins
Dags Verkum/ með Sam-
burði Guds tíu Boðorda við
Sköpunarverkin/ og Minningu
Nafsins Jesú.

Skrifað og Samsett
Af S. Hallgríme Péturs
sýne/ Anno 1660.

Þryckt í Skalhólte Af
Jone Snorrassýne/
Anno 1693.

Diarium christianum; eður, Dagleg iðkun af öllum Drottins dagsverkum, með samburði Guds tíu boðorda við sköpunarverkin og minningu nafnsins Jesú, skrifað og samsett af s. Hallgrími Péturssyni anno 1660. Photograph: Jóhanna Ólafsdóttir.

are important elements that are linked to the overall notion of the Creation and nature. The author believes that the world is a carefully constructed and considered whole in which each element, however small, is important and interconnected, and these in turn form patterns that carry a meaning for mankind. It is certainly no coincidence that the work has seven parts, each with three sections. The same structure occurs in Kingo's *Aandelige Siunge Koors Første Part* [Spiritual songs, Part One] (1674), where we find a morning, evening, and meditation hymn for each day of the week:

The first part is based on a combination of the sacred numbers three and seven. Three represents the Holy Trinity, and the sevenfold repetition of the number three should emphasize that the Holy Spirit is present in the meditations as the living intermediary between the soul and God. In Christian tradition the number seven represents both God's Creation in seven days and the seven ages in his Creation plan.²

There is no question of direct influence here; the writings of Thomas Kingo and Hallgrímur Pétursson are heavily informed by a christian baroque tradition that emphasized due order in God's Creation and corresponding rule and regulation in human art, not least in the literary works that poets create.

As we have noted, the *Diarium* is full of ideas for the reader to meditate on. Thus it is hardly possible to talk about development within the work, though each day has its theme that links the individual elements of each exercise. Thus, for example, the main point about Sunday is the role and meaning of the sun. The Sunday exercise sets the initial tone of brightness, joy and praise. The function and significance of the moon comprise the theme for Monday, "fyrsti erfiðisdagur í vikunni" [the week's first day of labor] (162), and are reflected in the meditation. In the Tuesday exercise the number three features prominently, while on Wednesday the emphasis is on "central" elements, such as the center of the

2. Første Part bygger på en kombination af de hellige tal tre og syv. Tretallet repræsenterer den hellige treenighed, og den syvfoldige gentagelse af tretallet skal betone, at helligånden er til stede i andagten som den levende formidler mellem sjælen og Gud. Syvtallet udtrykker i den kristne tradition både Guds skabelse i syv dage og de syv tidsaldre i hans skabelsesplan (*Dansk litteraturhistorie* 3 1983, 322).

world, the center of the body (the heart), and the fact that Jesus is an intermediary among us. The Thursday exercise treats the number five, while for Friday there is discussion of various kinds of fasts, such as that for Christ's Passion and death. As for Saturday the emphasis is on resting from work, with a discussion of what true rest involves.

The number seven is also treated in the Saturday exercise (Saturday being the seventh day of the week), and its meaning for individuals and for mankind as a whole is explored. Various theories are cited, such as the idea that every seventh year of a man's life brought the risk of various kinds of change (195), and also the notion that the world would last for six thousand years before coming to an end. Hallgrímur cites "þá gömlu" [the old [scholars]] (194) in support of these ideas. It is not clear which venerable authors he has in mind, but theories about the ages of man (*aetates hominum*), their number, and links with nature, history and the universe (*aetates mundi*) were common in medieval Europe (Burrow 1986, 73–74). They are found, for example, in Saint Augustine's writings, but were in fact older (Schmidt 1955, 305) and can be traced back to classical antiquity and forward into the Renaissance (see Burrow 1986, 40). According to such theories the six days of the Creation correspond to the six ages of the world. And thus, just as God created man in his image on the sixth day, mankind will have that image restored in the sixth age, as a result of the Second Coming of Christ, to be followed by the Last Judgment, after which a new (seventh) age would begin. God would then rest in his holiness in the same way as he rested on the seventh day of Creation (Schmidt 1955, 292). Hallgrímur is clearly familiar with these notions but like most scholars (Saint Augustine among them) he was cautious about precise calculations and datings, for "tímans punktar allir standa í Drottins valdi" [all points of time are under the Lord's control] (194).

Each part of the exercise has its own structure. The first section begins, as already noted, with a short retelling of the Genesis creation story. The Sunday exercise talks about the light that God drew from the darkness. The interpretation then focuses on particular points in the narrative. There are four of these in the first exercise, the second of which has six subheadings (dealing with

the six kinds of light). At the end of the first part of each exercise the subject matter is always linked to one or more of the Ten Commandments. For the Sunday exercise the idea of light is linked to the first two commandments. With the first commandment, “Thou shalt have no other God,” the words point to the one God who is both creator of the light and the light itself; and the second commandment, with its injunction to keep the Sabbath Day holy, is also clearly connected to Sunday. In this way the author links the commandments with the Creation scriptures. The fifth commandment is associated with the Thursday meditation, and though that commandment (“Thou shalt not kill”) is not quoted directly, it is “vernd og hlífðarmúr því til frelsis og forsvars” [a defense and protective wall for mankind’s freedom and safety] (178), just as in the natural world, water is a protective space for fish and the air affords freedom for birds. Hallgrímur and his contemporaries believed there were those who “Drottins vandlætningar sverð bera réttilega til straffs þeim óhlýðugu og þverbrotnu” [bear the Lord’s moralizing sword justly to punish the disobedient and flawed] (178). The *Diarium* makes it clear that the world operates within fixed guidelines, and that anyone looking for reasons to obey authority can find them in the unchanging path of the stars:

Tunglið, af sólarbirtunni upplýst, hindrar og burt drífur þau svörtu næturmyrkur. Veraldlegt yfirvald, upplýst af Jesú Kristí anda, fyrir hans orð, varnar verkum myrkranna með alvarlegu straffi eftir fremsta megni. Þar fyrir ber því heiður og lotning. [. . .] Nokkrir af þeim lærðu mönnum halda, að sumar plánetur, þá þær koma á móts við sólina á sínum hring, þá víki þær aftur svo sem til baka, líka sem vildu þær virðing veita sólunni svo sem sínum höfðingja. Svo skulu allir undirgefnir veita virðing, heiður og hlýðni sínum yfirboðurum, hverjum sem hæfir og skyldugt er, eftir Drottins befallingu og skipan. (174)

[The moon, illuminated by the light of the sun, hinders and drives away the darkness. Secular authority, informed by the spirit of Jesus Christ, through his word, protects against works of darkness by stern punishment as much as possible.

They deserve honor and reverence for this. [. . .] Certain scholars believe that when some planets meet the sun in its orbit, they then retreat, also as if seeking to honor the sun as their ruler. So should all subjects grant dignity, honor, and obedience to their superiors, to all those for whom it is right and proper, according to the Lord's authority and order.]

Though Hallgrímur makes it clear here that secular authority should be obeyed in full, elsewhere in his writings he indicates that in disputes between secular and spiritual authorities, the latter should prevail and that ultimately the obligation was to obey God rather than men.

As already noted, another part of each exercise carries the heading "Nafnið" [The name] and refers to the weekday in question. The etymology is carefully explained, sometimes including earlier pagan names for the day. Thus in the Tuesday exercise Hallgrímur has the opportunity to discuss the old pagan name Týrsdagur, and also the heathen customs that Christians should abandon. In the first part (the interpretation) there is a good deal of information about the number three, not least the following surprising passage:

Þrjár eru Drottins velgjörningar manningum nauðsynlegastir í heimi þessum: 1. Góður sálusorgari. 2. Guðhrætt og réttvíst yfirvald. 3. Góð ektapersóna. Hafir þú þessar góðu gáfur öðlazzt, þá þakka þær Guði og far vel með, svo Guð svipti þig ekki, vegna þíns óþakklætis, svo góðum gáfum. (168)

[In this world the Lord's three most necessary benefits for all people are: 1. A good pastor or confidant. 2. God-fearing and righteous authority. 3. A good companion. If you have been granted these good gifts, thank God for them and use them well, so that God does not remove them because of your ingratitude.]

Needless to say we are not told here whether the author himself had been blessed in all these respects, but the Lord certainly did not deprive Hallgrímur of the gift of a good wife out of any ingratitude,

because Guðríður outlived her husband.³ The Thursday exercise involves contemplation of the five principal elements of Christianity (the catechism), Jesus' five sacred wounds, the five human senses, the five locations of sorrow in Jesus' Passion and, finally, the five crucial places in any individual's life (such as where one works or, even, where one is buried). In the first and second part of the exercise the poet addresses his own soul, a format that in itself makes the work a meditation.

In the third part of the exercise, however, in addition to drawing together material from the first and second parts, the author addresses Jesus in prayers that are associated with the knowledge presented earlier. On the fifth day the Lord created the birds, and so the prayer makes use of metaphors connected with birds and flight:

Minn herra Jesú, gjörðu hjarta mitt fljúgandi frá jarðneskum hégóma upp til þín í himininn [. . .]. Láttu mig ekki verða andstygilegan hræfugl fyrir þínu augliti og ei heldur hafa ránsfugla art né hrafna náttúru við minn náunga. (182)

[My Lord Jesus, make my heart fly from earthly vanity up to you in heaven [. . .]. Let me not be a loathsome carrion bird in your sight nor show the instinct of a bird of prey or the nature of a raven towards my neighbor.]

On the same day the Lord also created the fish in the sea, and the author explores this fact by means of metaphors referring to the ocean depths:

Minn herra Jesú, fleyti mér almáttugur, miskunnsamur kraftur þinn í gegnum allt mitt eynda og mótlættinga vatn til himnaríkis sælu hafnar. Drag þú mig í neti þinna blessaðra fyrirheita að landi þinnar náðar, og drag þú mig upp úr dauðans pytt og djúpi að landi þinnar dýrðar. Láttu mig ekki með óætis fiskum, það er iðrunarlausum syndurum, út kastast. (182)

3. Guðríður was with her son Eyjólfur at Ferstikla when he died in 1679. She then returned to Saurbær, where Hallgrímur's successor, séra Hannes Björnsson, was living and remained there for the rest of her life. She died and was buried at Saurbær in 1682.

[My Lord Jesus, may your almighty and merciful power carry me through all the miserable and hostile waters to the harbor of heavenly bliss. Draw me in the net of your blessed promises to the land of your grace, and draw me up from death's deep pit into the land of your glory. Let me not be cast out with the inedible fish, that is, with unrepentant sinners.]

The *inventio* here lies in what Møller calls far-fetched metaphors, and there is certainly an art in teasing out every element relevant to the main theme, and in citing examples that are somehow linked to the subject matter and capable of illuminating it. As noted earlier, a poet could seek help in rhetorical manuals, and Hallgrímur may well have found inspiration in such reference works or other European sources.

As presented in the *Diarium*, all aspects of the Creation bear witness to God's power and love. Throughout the work there are also other truths for mankind to reflect on, as in the Wednesday exercise:

[. . .] Drottinn setti himintunglin til merkis og teikna. Óvirtu því aldrei þau teiknin, sem á þeim ske, því þau boða oftast eitthvað nýtt og benda þér jafnan þar með til iðrunar. (172)

[[. . .] The Lord created the planets as signs and tokens. Therefore, never ignore the signs relating to them, because they usually portend something new and thus always direct you towards repentance.]

In the Monday exercise the moon and its qualities are discussed in six parts, and wisdom is derived from various facts associated with it. This again shows that all nature is potentially meaningful for humanity and its relationship with God, as with “Tunglið hefur sína birtu af sólinni” [the moon takes its brightness from the sun], and “öll þín verk og iðja Guði óþekk og með öllu blessunarlaus án Jesú Kristí yfirskínandi náðar og blessunar” [all your works and industry [are] unsympathetic to God and wholly unblest without Jesus Christ's grace and blessing shining over them] (162). The

moon's instability ought to remind people that all sublunary things are transient, and the speed with which it changes ought to signal how quickly a lifetime passes and other similar truths. Some of the comparisons seem apposite, others rather far-fetched, though the poet's contemporaries may have regarded them as ingenious rather than wilfully bizarre. For example, Hallgrímur notes that in some languages the heavens may be called "Ausspannung, expansum or útþensla" [expansion], and thus since Jesus stretched out his own hands, he may be called "útþanið firmament" [the outstretched firmament] (164). Four metaphors are then created from this conceit.

The whole presentation is based on rhetorical tradition, and Hallgrímur uses a variety of figures of speech. In the Sunday exercise we find both contrast and repetition:

Aðgreindu einninn verkin ljóssins frá verkum myrkranna, verkin ljóssins elska þú og kostgæf daglega herklæðum ljóssins að skryðast. Verkin myrkranna hata þú og kasta þeim frá þér. Tjáðu þig við ljósið Guðs orða í ljóssins barna selskap, svo þú verðir með þeim ljóssins þess eilífa hluttakandi. (154)

[Separate also the works of light from those of darkness, love the works of light, and take care daily to clothe yourself in the armor of light. Scorn the works of darkness and cast them from you. Express yourself by the light of God's word amongst the company of the children of light, so that with them you may partake of the eternal light.]

The material is drawn together at the end of each exercise with the help of figures such as *homoeoteleuton*, whereby sentences feature the same kind of grammatical or inflectional ending, *epiphora* (clauses ending in the same word or phrase), and *gradatio*:

að lifa svo í þessu náttúrlega ljósinu og haga svo þínu skilnings ljósi, fyrir Guðs guðdómlegu ljósi, eftir Drottins orða ljósi, með skært ljómandi trúar ljósi, að það verði fyrir augum Drottins gott haldið og metið, svo muntu fyrir hans náð þess eilífa dýrðarinnar ljóss njótandi verða (154).

[to live like this in this natural light and act like this in the light of your understanding, before God's divine light, in accordance with the light of God's word, by means of the clear shining light of faith, so that it will be thought and judged good in the eyes of the Lord—in the same way by his grace you will come to enjoy the light of his eternal glory.]

Hallgrímur is well able to present vivid images from everyday life, but it is the transferred meaning that is crucial:

Fyrir sólarinnar fögrum geisla ljúka menn sínum húsgluggum upp, þá verður húsið fagurt, lystilegt og skemmtilegt. Ljúktu upp gluggum hjarta þíns, mín sál, fyrir orði Drottins, þá muntu finna og fá þar út af eina andlega himneska gleði og skemmtan. (156)

[Men open their windows to the sun's beautiful rays, and the house then becomes beautiful, pleasurable, and enjoyable. Open the windows of your heart, my soul, to the word of the Lord, and then you will find and receive there a certain spiritual and heavenly joy and pleasure.]

In the Sunday exercise, along with one instance of *adversatio*, there is a notable example of *isocolon*, a succession of sentences of similar length and structure but with different vocabulary:

Fagurt er það náttúrlega ljósið, þó hlýtur það í dauðanum að formyrkvast. Fagurt er ljósið skynseminnar, þó verður það að fölna. Lystilegt er ljósið augnanna, þó verður það að forblindast. (159)

[The natural light is beautiful, though it must darken in death. The light of reason is beautiful, though it must fade away. The light of the eyes is pleasing, though it must grow dim.]

The Sunday exercise ends in a prayer that features *synonymie*, the repetition of words that have similar sound and meaning:

blessa þú mér dagsins, ljóssins og sólarinnar ljós og ljóma,
og leið mig um síðir til þess eilífa góða ljóssins, minn góði
herra Jesú. (159)

[bless me, Light and Radiance of the day, the light and the
sunlight, and lead me finally to the eternal good light, my
good Lord Jesus.]

Rhetorical questions are often used:

En hvað eru handaverk mannanna hjá handaverkum Drot-
tins, eða það dauða hjá því lifanda, eða það forgengilega
jarðneska hjá því eilífa himneska að reikna? (177)

[But what are the works of men compared to the works of
the Lord, or the dead to the living, or earthly transience to
the eternity of heaven?]

The Tuesday exercise features an *allegoría*:

Keppstu heldur við að færa fram ilmandi jurtir bæna og
þakklætis, fögur blómstur dyggða og mannkosta og þarfleg
grös góðra verka, og sjá svo til, fyrir hjálp Drottins, að það
hávaxna blómsturtréð heilagrar þolinmæði megi grænkast í
aldingarði þíns hjarta [. . .]. (167)

[Strive instead to produce the fragrant herbs of prayer and
gratitude, the fine flowers of virtues and meritorious quali-
ties, and the useful grasses of good works, and, with the help
of the Lord, see that the tall flowering tree of holy patience
may grow green in the orchard of your heart [. . .]].

Alliteration and accumulation are also used frequently. Examples
of the former include “herra og höfðingi allra himintunglanna”
[Lord and Master of all the heavenly planets] and “herra og
höfðingi allra himneskra birðsveita” [Lord and Master of all the
heavenly hosts] (155), and also present participle repetition (*asyn-
deton*): “mýkjandi frostið [. . .], lífgandi sæðið [. . .] mýkjandi alla

ofurkælu dauðans, eyðandi makt djöfulsins” [melting frost [. . .], [. . .] life-giving seed softening all death’s overwhelming cold, destroying the devil’s power] (155). As for *accumulatio*, we have, for example: Jesus as “sá fegursti og fríðasti á meðal mannanna sona í réttlæti, sakleysi, almætti, náð og miskunnsemi” [the fairest and most beautiful among the sons of men in righteousness, innocence, omnipotence, grace, and mercy] (157). Further examples occur in the Friday exercise, and it is no coincidence that Jesus’ Passion is referred to on that day:

Von er þó að mannsins líkama mynd verði í fátæktinni, volæðinu, sorginni, sóttinni, ellinni og dauðanum óálitleg, vesalleg, aumleg, auðvirðileg og sorgleg, þar Jesú Kristí blessaða mynd varð í kvölinni svo óálitleg og hryggileg, að þar sást ekkert girnilegt á honum, já, þar var ekki að sjá nema blóð, hráka, bláma, benjar og þrota. (186)

[Yet it is to be expected that the image of the human body in poverty, wretchedness, grief, fever, old age, and death would be defaced, miserable, weak, contemptible, and sad, as the blessed image of Jesus Christ in his agony was so defaced and sad that there was nothing pleasing to be seen on him, Yes, nothing to be seen except blood, spit, bruises, wounds, and swelling.]

There are examples of typological metaphors, as, for example, where the Old Testament Joshua prefigures Christ: “svo sem einn himneskur Josua og hertogi lífsins leiðir hann oss með sinni upprisu þurran, sléttan og hættulausan veg gegnum dauðans flóð til himnaríkis” (156) [just like a heavenly Joshua and Lord of life, he leads us by his resurrection on a dry, smooth, and safe way through the flood of death and on to heaven].

The *Diarium* includes references to known authors, such as Luther (154), Plato (187), and Saint Bonaventure (181). We do not know whether Hallgrímur had direct access to works by these authors or whether he sourced them more indirectly. Bishop Brynjólfur’s fine library certainly included Plato’s works in Latin (Jón Helgason 1948, 124 ff).

Though it is a learned, meditative work, the *Diarium* was also written for the Christian laity of all classes. The intention was to guide people through their daily lives, while also broadening their horizons and making it easier for them to reflect on their own existence and the world at large within a broader context. Their entire world view should be based on God, the almighty Creator, who gives purpose and meaning to everything.

We turn now to the work by Hallgrímur entitled in the first edition *Sjö Guðrækelegar Vmþeinkingar, Edur Eintal Christens mans vid sialfan sig, huørn Dag j Vikunne, ad Kuøllde og Morgne. Samannteknar af Hallgrijme Peturs Syne. Hoolum 1677* [Seven pious meditations, Or, A Christian's monologue with himself, each day of the week, in the evening and morning. Compiled by Hallgrímur Pétursson. Hólar, 1677]. The work's date of composition is unknown. Grímur Thomsen believed that both meditative pieces were written in 1660 (Grímur Thomsen 1887, xxii); Møller agreed that the subject matter could support this date (Møller 1922, 81); Magnús Jónsson claimed that the two works differed significantly and there was little to suggest that they had been written at the same time. Of the *Diarium* he notes that there is little or no complexity, figurative speech, verbal variation, or ornamentation; everything, including the meditations and prayers, is plain and straightforward (Magnús Jónsson 1947, 2:233). Magnús concludes that while the *Diarium* reveals Hallgrímur's wide learning and the sense of urgency that characterized his work around 1659–1660, *Eintal* is a very different kind of composition (Magnús Jónsson 1947, 2:233).

The work cited by Magnús Jónsson as *Eintal* will hereafter be referred to as *Sjö guðrækilegar umþeinkingar* [Seven religious meditations] or just *Umþeinkingar*. It consists of fourteen meditations, one for each morning and evening of the week. The scriptural texts that Hallgrímur chooses to interpret distinguish between morning and evening events, or refer to events that give particular days special meaning, such as the Crucifixion on Good Friday and the Resurrection on Easter Sunday. Sometimes, therefore, the same events are treated as in the *Diarium*. There are also instances of the same element being discussed in both texts simply because it had been preoccupying the author, as, for example, the ill-treatment of animals. In the *Diarium* Friday exercise Hallgrímur advises that it

dishonors Christian men “með hungri eður kulda eður ómiskunn-samri meðferð að kvelja viljandi sér þarfsamlegar af Guði gefnar skepnur” [through hunger or cold or merciless treatment deliberately to torture useful God-given creatures] (188). He justifies this view in part by recalling that in their relations with God men themselves often resemble disobedient sheep: “Minnstu heldur, hversu oft þú ert þínum Guði bágur. Skyldi hann þér þá fyrirmæla? Hvar mundi það þá vilja lenda?” [Remember rather how often you behave badly towards your God. Should he then curse you? Where would it end?] (188). In the Monday morning meditation in *Sjö guðrækilegum umþenkingum* the author advises:

Formæltu ekki skepnum Drottins nokkru sinni, þó þær séu þér ekki í dag sem hlýðugastar. Þenktu heldur, hversu þú ert sjálf bág og þverbrotin þínum Guði, og formælir hann þér þó ekki. (208)

[Never curse the Lord’s creatures, though they are not as obedient as they could be for you today. Think rather how bad and disobedient you yourself are to your God, and yet he does not curse you.]

The meditations mostly take the form of a direct address to the soul before concluding with prayer. This confirms that like the *Diarium* the text is a meditation. This can be seen clearly in the Thursday evening meditation that begins with “Sjá þú hér, sála mín” [See here, my soul] (219). The text goes on to contemplate Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, and to render the scene more vivid (*evidentia*) and immediate, the reader/listener is instructed to “Skoða þú þar fyrir þínar fætur og gæt að: Þú hefur nú í dag enn áfram gengið á götu þinnar lífdags leiðar” [Examine your own feet and reflect: today you have continued onward on the path of your life’s journey] (219). Morning meditations are often full of joy and thanks for the new day and recall Christ’s resurrection, whereas evening meditations are linked to the dark, penitence, sleep, and death:

Og svo sem við í morgun glöddustum við að sjá það fagra upprennanda dagsljós, svo megum við nú hryggjast við að

sjá það undir ganga aftur og myrkrið, sem dauðann boðar og fyrirmyndar, yfir koma. (210)

[And just as in the morning we were happy to see the beautiful dawning of the day, so we must now be sad as the light disappears and darkness, that bodes and mirrors death, descends.]

The Creation and its wonders are at the front of the author's mind here, as in the *Diarium*. He believes that it reveals the goodness and generosity of the Lord who provides for all his creatures “svo ríkuglega og góðviljuglega kostfrí [. . .]” [so abundantly and generously free of charge] and at the same time shows “hvað stöðug er sú stjórnin, sem ekki lætur þvílíka skikkan nokkru sinni skeika” [how strong is the governance that allows no deviation from the created order] (208). On Thursday morning, he urges his soul to contemplate how many people are praying together at that very moment all over the world, likening their prayers to music and the fragrance of incense:

Virtu nú og einninn fyrir þér, hversu mörg hjartnæm andvarpan og bæn Guðs barna um allan heiminn muni nú hljóma fyrir eyrum Drottins, svo sem vel samstillt hljóðfæri fagnaðarins, hverjar hvers kyns reykelisi sætara fyrir honum ilma. (218)

[Reflect now also on how many a heartfelt sigh and prayer from God's children all over the world will now be sounding in the ears of the Lord like well-tuned instruments of joy, and these prayers are more fragrant to him than any incense.]

Hallgrímur then draws up a vivid picture of how God answers such prayers:

Og í annan stað, hvað mikil miskunnsemi og marghátuð blessan ofan stígur til þín og svo sem ástúðlegt himinregn ofan drýpur frá Drottinni aftur yfir þau biðjandi Guðs börn (218).

[And in another place, what great kindness and manifold blessings descend on you, like loving heavenly rain dripping down from the Lord over God's children at prayer.]

Magnús Jónsson rightly points out that *Umþenkingar* is a more straightforward work than *Diarium*, but goes too far in claiming that there is no learning discernible in it (Magnús Jónsson 1947, 2:233). Certainly the commentary element is less pronounced and more straightforward, but the author's scholarship is apparent in the substance and style of the discussion.

Imagery is frequently used that often contains the essence of the meditation. Thus, in the Wednesday morning exercise mankind is compared to a plant in God's orchard:

Mín sál, sá sami Drottinn, sem þig hefur plantað í aldingarð sinnar kristni og vökvað þig með sínu heilaga blóði í skírnarlauginni, hann hefur víst eftirlangan að finna á þér góða ávexti. (214)

[My soul, the same Lord who has planted you in the garden of his Christianity and watered you with his holy blood in the baptismal pool, certainly longs to find good fruit on you.]

These fruits and their opposites are referred to in various ways during the meditation. The Christian soul ought to have Jesus rooted within it and draw nourishment and strength from him. Good works and love of one's neighbor will then become apparent:

svo sem einn góður ávöxtur, Guði þekkur og mönnum kær, og þó að kvistir og hnútar sýnist í bland með af mannlegum brest og ófullkomleika, þá má Drottins náð og meðalganga Jesú Kristí svo mikið, að þess verður ekki gætt af hans stranga réttlæti (214)

[[with mankind] as with a good fruit, pleasing to God and enjoyed by men, though knots and stains of frailty and imperfection can be seen on it, the Lord's grace and Christ's

intercession are so strong that his stern justice will pay no heed to this]

The reference to Christ as an intermediary is no coincidence; it links up with the theme of Wednesday, the middle day of the week. The following exhortation occurs later in the meditation: “Keppustum því nú við í nafni Drottins að vera ekki fúinn fauskur, enn síður eitrad skaðatré í herrans aldingarði” [therefore let us now strive in the Lord’s name not to be a rotten splinter, still less a poisonous tree in the Lord’s garden] (215). The Wednesday evening meditation describes vividly the sadness caused by fruits that prove to be disappointing:

Annaðhvort er það, að þeir hafa ekki sýnt sig í því að spretta, eða þeir eru hvergi nærri vaxnir og eru því óduganlegir, súrir og beiskir, og ekki til þess náttúrlega sætleiks komnir, eða þeir eru af aðskiljanlegu ryki og dufti syndanna, hræsninnar og veikleikans saurgaðir, og því með engu móti þvílíkum herra sýnandi, enn síður bjóðandi. (216)

[It is either the case that they have not shown themselves by blossoming, or that they are nowhere near fully grown and are therefore useless, sour, and bitter, and have not reached their natural sweetness, or that they are soiled by the various spores and dust of sin, hypocrisy, and weakness, so that they cannot be shown—still less offered—to such a Lord.]

Though *Umþenkingar* is a more straightforward work than *Diarium*, it contains many examples of linguistic complexity and classical figures of speech, such as *gradatio* and *accumulatio*:

Því innilegar sem við hugsum um Jesú forþénustu og hans miskunn, því glaðari verðum við, því værara sofum við, því óhræddari megum við vera fyrir djöfli, synd, samvizku, kvíða, Guðs reiði og öllu illu. (207)

[the more deeply we think about Jesus’ merits and mercy, the happier we will be, the more soundly we will sleep, the

more confident we may be against demons, sin, conscience, anxiety, God's anger, and all evil.]

There are also many instances of *anaphora*; in this case accompanied by *isocolon* [parallel sentences]:

Láttu þínar blessaðar benjar [. . .] Láttu mig eignast þinn frið. Unn þú mér í þínum friði að sofa, í þínum friði að deyja, í þínum friði upp að rísa og í þínum friði eilíflega að gleðjast. (207)

[Let your blessed wounds [. . .] Let me possess your peace. Let me sleep in your peace, die in your peace, rise up in your peace and rejoice eternally in your peace.]

Or again:

Vinum því í trausti Drottins, trúlega vegna Guðs, siðsamlega vegna Guðs engla, forsjálega og ærlega vegna mannanna, skynsamlega og vareigðarlega vegna djöflanna, réttvíslega í kærleika til Guðs og náungans vegna sjálfra vor. (212)

[Let us work, therefore, in the trust of the Lord, faithfully for the sake of God, honorably for the sake of God's angels, providently and honestly for the sake of mankind, sensibly and cautiously for the sake of the demons, righteously in the love of God and neighbor for our own sake.]

There are also instances of *homoeoteleuton*, sentences that end with the same grammatical structure: “[. . .] skálka sem hann spotuðu, hnefum slógu og hrákum spýttu” [sinners who mocked him, struck [him] with fists, and spat [on him] with phlegm] (220). The author also uses wordplay: “margt gott er ógjört sem gjörast átti, en margt illt gjört sem ekki gjörast skyldi” [much good is not done that ought to be done, and much harm done that ought not to be done] (216). There are also numerous instances of repetition, contrast, and paradox:

Annaðhvort leita menn eftir þessu í þessum heimi, svo þeir fá það eflaust í öðrum heimi, ellegar menn forsóma það svo í þessu lífi, að þeir fá það aldrei í öðru lífi. (224)

[Either men search for it in this world so that they will receive it for certain in the next world, or men neglect it in this life so that they will never receive it in the next life.]

From the first edition onward *Sjö guðrækilegar umþenkingar* was accompanied by an Appendix headed “Nær maður gengur í sitt bænhús einsamall, þá má hann falla á kné, lesa svo eina af þessum bænum í senn, svo hann með Davíð tilbiðji Drottinn sjö sinnum, það er, oft á hverjum degi, kvöld og morgna” [When a man walks into his place of prayer alone, he should then fall to his knees, read these prayers one at a time, so that like David he may worship the Lord seven times, that is, often each day, evening and morning] (see Magnús Jónsson II 1947, 240–242). The book indicates that the *Umþenkingar* are “samanteknar af s. Hallgrími Péturssyni” [compiled by séra Hallgrímur Pétursson] and, like the hymn at the end of the volume (“Hjartað fagnar og hugur minn”), attributed to him. However, there is no mention of who composed the prayers. This may have seemed superfluous, for they can be safely attributed to Hallgrímur, along with everything else in the volume. Seven of the prayers are in verse and three in prose. The latter pieces feature various figures of speech that create a very distinctive rhythm. As elsewhere the influence of rhetoric is clear:

Ó, Drottinn minn, gefðu mér gott og frómt hjarta undir sólunni, iðjusaman líkama í dagsbirtunni, hæga hvíld og sæla svefnró á nóttunni, biðjandi munn í hörmunginni, lofandi tungu í velgengninni, iðnar hendur í nauðþurftinni, ólata fætur í embættisgöngunni, svo ég allt mitt dagfar kristilega framleiða kunni. (*Sjö guðrækilegar umþenkingar*, 1682)

[O God, grant me a good and pious heart under the sun, an industrious body during daylight hours, peaceful rest and blissful sleep at night, a prayerful mouth in sorrow, a praise-giving tongue in prosperity, hard-working hands in

need, busy feet in official duties, so that I may discharge all my daily tasks in a Christian way.]

At the end of the 1688 Skálholt text of *Sjö guðrækilegar umþenkingar* we find a work entitled “Hver sá sem sinn lifnað vill sáluhjálflega framleiða, hann verður þessar eftirfylgjandi greinar vel að akta og hugfesta” [He who wishes to live his life devoutly must carefully respect and bear in mind the following articles]. The “articles” take the form of exhortations in seven numbered chapters of equal length (Magnús Jónsson 1947, 2:244ff.), but unlike the two meditations, they address the reader rather than the soul. It was Bishop Þórður Þorláksson who first arranged for these pieces to be printed, along with *Umþenkingar*, and, as Magnús Jónsson points out, the bishop was probably well aware of the author’s identity, because the two men were both friends and relatives.

Hallgrímur Pétursson’s *Vikudagabætur* [Weekday prayers] are included with *Umþenkingar* in the 1773 edition. There are fourteen prayers, one for each morning and evening of the week. Their date of composition is unknown, but they bear all the marks of Hallgrímur’s authorship, and are so closely linked to his meditative writings, especially the *Diarium*, that they may well have been written after the completion of that work. We find the same metaphors as in the *Diarium* and, free from all the commentary and prolixity, Hallgrímur’s gift for imagery takes wing:

Ó herra Jesú Kriste, þú himneska náðarsól. Láttu á þessum heilaga sunnudegi geisla þinnar miskunnar falla á mitt auma syndsamlega hjarta og uppþurrka þann skammarlega sudda og óhreinleika syndanna, sem á það hlaðizt hefur. Drag þú mig með þínum krafti til þín, líka sem sólin dregur vatnið frá jörðunni til himinsins, lát mig ei verða jarðlega sinnaðan, heldur að mitt hjarta verði límt og fest við þig. (231)

[O Lord Jesus Christ, heavenly sun of grace. On this holy Sunday let your beams of mercy fall on my wretched and sinful heart and dry the shameful drizzle and impurity of sins that has gathered there. Draw me to you by your power, even as the sun draws the waters of the earth towards

heaven; let me not be worldly-minded, but rather may my heart be glued and secured to you.]

The Monday morning prayer requests that the speaker may be “sem vaxandi tungl, ei aðeins að árum og aldri” [like a waxing moon, not just in years and age] but also “í vizku og kenningu, trú, guðrækni, elsku og miskunn, þar til ljómi minnar trúar verður algjörður sem fullt tungl” [in wisdom and learning, faith, godliness, love, and mercy, until the light of my faith is complete like a full moon] (232). In the Monday evening prayer it is as if the author is on his way into outer space among the stars: “Og líka sem tunglið, þess hærra sem það stígur upp frá jörðunni, þess fegra sýnist það, svo gef, herra Jesús, að eg sífelldlega stígi upp eftir þér, svo að eg ljómi þess lengur og skærara” [And just as the higher the moon ascends from the earth the more beautiful it seems, so grant, Lord Jesus, that I may continually ascend toward you so that I may shine longer and brighter] (232). The text reveals that the narrator is subject to many emotions—joy and eagerness but also loneliness and sorrow:

Sú fagra sól guðlegrar náðar er í mér svo sem umbreytt í myrkur og dimmu ranglætisins. Æ snú þér til mín og fyrirgef mér allar mínar syndir, vertu mér náðugur, því eg er einmana og aumur. (237)

[The fair sun of divine grace is in me transformed into the gloom and darkness of unrighteousness. O, turn to me and forgive me all my sins, be gracious unto me, for I am alone and wretched.]

The themes for each day are the same as in the meditations; the Trinity on Tuesday, middles and centers on Wednesday, Jesus’ agony in Gethsemane on Thursday, and so on. Figures of speech are deployed extensively, as, for example, when the Wednesday evening prayer describes how sins stand between “mín” [me] and God:

Þú sér, hversu mínar syndir standa í millum mín og þín og aðskilja mig og þig og hylja þitt náðar auglit fyrir mér, þær standa sem eitt þykkt ský og hindra mig, svo eg kann ekki nálgast þig, þær blinda mín augu, svo eg kann ei réttilega

sjá þig né þekkjja, þær krenkja mína tungu, svo eg kann ei réttilega ákalla þig, þær taka mitt hjarta að herfangi, svo eg kann ei réttilega trúá á þig. (234)

[You see how my sins stand between me and you, separate me and you, and hide your gracious face from me; they hang like a thick cloud and hinder me so that I may not approach you; they blind my eyes so that I cannot truly see or know you; they hurt my tongue so that I cannot truly call on you for help; they take my heart hostage so that I cannot truly believe in you.]

The weekday prayers conclude with the one for Saturday evening, in which Hallgrímur meditates about evening (not least “síðasta lífsvöldið” [life’s final evening]) and sleep. The work concludes with a prayer that he “gláður og farsæll burt sofni og inngangi svo til þín, í þitt dýrðar ríki, til að halda þar eilífan hvíldardag óumræðilegrar gleði og farsældar” [happy and blessed may fall asleep and secure access to you in your kingdom of glory, there to keep the eternal Sabbath of unspeakable joy and prosperity] (238).

The works discussed in the present chapter are unfamiliar to most modern readers, but they were popular in Hallgrímur’s day and well into the eighteenth century, as can be seen from the number of times they were reprinted. We may also note the words of séra Jón Halldórsson of Hítardalur, who cites Hallgrímur’s meditative works as important evidence that he was “gáfuríkur predikari og besta skáld hér í landi á seinni tímum [a gifted preacher and the best Icelandic poet of recent times] (Jón Samsonarson 1971, 87–88). In the eyes of most Icelanders Hallgrímur Pétursson is above all the poet of the *Passíusálmur*, but his meditative works enable us to appreciate that there were other aspects of Christian teaching—the Creation, nature, the everyday struggles of life, normal behavior—that he also wished to explore and discuss. Hallgrímur seeks to place man’s existence within a universal context of both time and space. Watching over everything is God Almighty, who gives meaning to each day and daily event; the sole purpose of man’s life is to be a participant and co-worker in that great unity, while at the same time each individual’s life is part of the divine plan, of the salvational history that concerns every person and also humanity as a whole.

