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The Poetic Principles of Gerard Manley Hopkins

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THE POETIC PRINCIPLES OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

by

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Vita

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CHAPTER I

FORMATIVE INFLUENCES WHICH ACTED UPON GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

To make an intensive and accurate study of a poet’s principles of art one may not be satisfied with an examination of only the principles themselves. The principles must be illuminated and explained. Obviously, the study of a man’s poetry will make clearer and perhaps amplify his statement of poetic principles. A study of the language of the poet’s age or a study of his own characteristic language may throw new light upon his statement of principles. A study of the literary opinion of the poet’s time -- of his adherence to convention or rejection of it -- may throw his opinions into bolder relief. A study of the man behind the principles may well deepen our understanding of the objective meaning of the principles themselves.

In the explanation of the poetic principles of Gerard Manley Hopkins many things are involved; some of these things are not primarily literary or esthetic but are personal. As a poet and a critic Hopkins was individual, independent, and human. His principles, when they most interest the critic, are peculiarly his own. His personality pervades his esthetics and his art. So I will begin this paper with a chapter in which I will discuss the personality of Gerard Manley Hopkins and then Hopkins’ sympathy for his literary contemporaries.

Gerard Manley Hopkins was born into a family of artists. His father, Manley Hopkins, had published a book of verse, a history
of Hawaii, and a book on marine insurance. One of Manley Hopkins' sisters gave her nephew, Gerard, an early training in music and painting. Uncles on both sides of the family were painters. His brothers, Arthur and Everard, were to become artists. One of his sisters was facile in sketching, another in writing verse, a third, Grace, in composing music.

Gerard himself was of that bent of nature which we call "artistic". At the age of five or six he showed precocious ability in music and drawing. Although at Highgate and Balliol his interests were ex professo intellectual, he found time to sketch and draw and to make and write down innumerable observations on clouds and trees and waves and winds. After his "confession" to Lidden his chief concern in life was steadfastly religious and spiritual, and his occupations were parochial or pedagogic; yet he still found time to catch the "inscapes" of lovely things, to visit art galleries, to study and compose music, to write and criticize poetry.

Hopkins' interest in art was never more than that of the dilettante. Before he entered the Society of Jesus in 1868 he frequently illuminated the notes in his diaries with sketches; but afterwards he drew very little. On February 12, 1868 in a letter to A. W. M. Baillie Hopkins says: "You know I once wanted to be a painter ... the higher and more attractive parts of the art put a strain upon the passions which I should think it
unsafe to encounter."¹ This sacrifice of ambition, this forging of his gifts "into a pattern that should bear witness to the glory of God" was generous but was not so regrettable as Claude Colleer Abbott would seem to imply.² In one of his own appendices to the Correspondence with Dixon, Abbott gives a brief account of the extant sketches by Hopkins and concludes with these words:

The impression left by this work (except for the early drawing) is in contrast to that conveyed by the poems. The attraction lies in the careful, sustained observation of detail and beautiful finish rather than in bold grasp or freshness of approach. Here is charm, not strength; acceptance, not discovery; and the charm has in it small sign of future growth.³

Hopkins' talent for and amateur practice in art did, however, have a noticeable effect upon his poetry and his ideals of art. He has the sensibility of an artist; he sees colors and light and shadow truly; he has a just sense of form, of composition, of the balancing of masses. He has the artist's firm grip upon detail.

¹Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited with Notes and an Introduction by Claude Colleer Abbott, Oxford University Press, New York, 1938, 84. (In the footnotes to come this volume will be referred to as F.L.).


My aspens dear ..... 
Not spared, not one
That dandlea a sandalled
Shadow that swam or sank
On meadow and river and wind-wandering weed-winding bank. 4

Rose moles all in stiple upon trout that swim.5

Above all, it would seem to be from his early artistic reveries and studies of nature that he came upon the notion "inscape". In his early note-books and papers the word is often used. Such a fruitful meditation may be found in his "Journal" under the date of August 10, 1872. On that day he had been studying the waves, watching their contour and the pattern of their breaking.

About all the turns of the scaping from the break and flooding of the wave to its run out again I have not yet satisfied myself. The shores are swimming and the eyes have before them a region of milky surf but it is hard for them to unpack the huddling and the gnarls of the water and law out the shapes and the sequence of the running.6

Later, we shall see how he posed as the chief aim of the poet to find the "scape" of things, "to law out" their reality and reproduce it in verse. In "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and in "The Loss of The Eurydice" we find him attempting to "law out" in verse the swirl and turmoil of storm-waves.

4"Pinsey Poplars", No. 19.

5"Pied Beauty", No. 13.

6The Note-Books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited with Notes and a Preface by Humphry House, Oxford University Press, New York, 1937, 164. (In the footnotes to come this volume will be referred to as Note-Books).
Hopkins deliberately put art out of his life. It had a place in his early life; it had an effect upon his mind. In his later years only the effect remained. The chronology of his interest in music, however, is different. We know that he had an early training of some sort in music, but he seems first to have taken serious interest in music only in the year he began his Theological studies at St. Bueno's, 1874. In a letter of January 22 of that year he tells Bridges that he has begun to learn to play the piano "not for execution's sake but to be independent of others and learn something about music." During the next six years he often mentions his interest in music, tells of examining some music by Bridges, tells of admiring Purcell and Charles Weber.

In June of 1880 he speaks of having composed some music to the "Spring Odes" (the music has never been found) and says:

I sorely wish I knew some harmony ...
I wish I could pursue music; for I have invented a new style, something standing to ordinary music as sprung rhythm to common rhythm; it employs quarter tones. I am trying to set an air in it to the sonnet 'Summer Ends Now'.

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7 The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, edited with Notes and an Introduction by Claude Colleer Abbott, Oxford University Press, New York, 1935, 30. (In the footnotes to come this volume will be referred to as R.B.).


9 Ibidem.

10 R.B., 102.
In 1884 he again mentions his "new art". He is putting Collins' Ode to Evening to music. And he describes his music as unusual in air and harmony. "What came out was very wild and very strange and (I thought) very good ... as near a new world of musical enjoyment as in this old world we could hope to have." The air is that of plain chant where it is most different from modern music. The harmony is more advanced, he says, than that of any modern music. The result is a "new art; the effect is unlike anything I have ever heard. The combination of the two things (air -- harmony) is most singular ... also most solemn ... something very good." 

Apparently Hopkins was very well pleased with his progress in music when in May of that same year he wrote: "Do I mean to rival Purcell and Mozart? No. Even given the genius, a musician must be that and nothing else, as music now is; at least so it has been with all the great musicians." During the next three years of aridity, he was unable to write much verse and he seemed to turn to music for the relief of his creative capacities. During 1888

\[\text{11} \text{ R.B., 199-200.}\]

Hopkins admired plain chant very much. "The only good and truly beautiful recitative is that of plain chant; which indeed culminates in that. It is a natural development of the speaking, reading, or declaiming voice and has the richness of nature." (\textit{R.B.}, 280.).

\[\text{12} \text{ R.B., 211.}\]

\[\text{13} \text{ R.B., 220.}\]
Hopkins' interest in music loomed so large that Bridges upraided him for it and Hopkins defended it. In his last letter to Patmore, May 20, 1888, he ends his correspondence speaking of music which he has sent to Sir Robert Stewart for correction. In his last letter to Bridges, April 29, 1889 he likewise ends his correspondence speaking of his music.

Although Hopkins himself seems to have been confident of the worth of his music, in the judgment of the critics who saw it, especially of Sir Robert Stewart, there was in it no great merit or valid originality but rather a certain amateurishness, a stubborn unorthodoxy and flare for unschooled invention. Bridges begrudged Hopkins the time he took away from poetry to spend on music. Abbott notes that while Hopkins worked under grave disadvantages in music, the work was not barren.

One is tempted to think that music instead of poetry became his dominant passion. Did he perhaps believe it possible for him to glorify God more completely and wholeheartedly in this sister art? Notes are more impersonal, less earth bound and dangerous than words. Or had he reached that stage in poetry when music rather than words seemed the natural creative continuation?

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15 R.B., 277; R.B., 295.


17 R.B., Introduction xxxiii.
"Binsey Poplars" and especially "The Leaden Echo and The Golden Echo" would give some plausibility to this last statement. It is certain, however, that Hopkins' interest in music strongly colored his ideas about poetry and the poems he wrote. As we will see later he composed orally and meant his poems to be communicated orally, to be declaimed. He frequently put the poetry of others to music and several times stated that his poems should be "almost sung". His poems were to be strongly rhythmical and were to be pregnant with delicate sound effects or internal rhyme, alliteration, assonances. Charles Trueblood has gone so far as to define the poetry of Hopkins as a "sound pattern". And E. Clarke says:

Monosyllabic Saxon is at the root of Hopkins' architectural method. But he was also a musician, and it is not difficult to detect a mechanized musical notation tapping like a little hammer along his lines. In this -- and in this alone -- is he unique among the poets. Generally speaking, poetry is not so nearly related to music as to sculpture. It is specifically lapidary. Hopkins knew this but enriched the whole tradition of English verse by embroidering into it the conceits of the violin and the piano without in any way destroying its fundamental simplicity. Therein lay his genius.

A fact often neglected in considerations of the mind of Hopkins is this, that while art and music and even poetry were avocations with Hopkins, classical study in a certain sense was

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19 "Gerard Hopkins, Jesuit", Dublin Review, CLXXXVIII, 133.
his life-long vocation. At Highgate and at Balliol he was a brilliant student. In 1859 he wrote a prize poem, "The Escorial". In 1862 he won a gold medal for his prize poem "A Vision of Mermaids". In 1863 he won an Exhibition for Balliol College. In 1867 he took a double first in Greats. And no less a person than Jowett called him the Star of Balliol and referred to him as one of the finest Greek scholars he had ever seen at that college. In 1867 he taught at the Oratory School, Birmingham. In 1873 he taught classics at Manresa House, Roehampton. In 1882 he taught classics at Stonyhurst. From 1884 until his death he held the Chair of Greek at the Royal University, Dublin. His published lecture on "Rhythm and the Other Structural Parts of Rhetoric - Verse"\textsuperscript{20} is a conventional treatment of the mechanics of verse under five general headings, but it is bristling with classical reference and formidable terminology derived from Greek prosody. In a letter to Bridges on October 21, 1886 he announces his intention to write a book upon the Dorian rhythm.\textsuperscript{21} In February of the next year he tells Baillie that this book on Pinder's Dorian measure is "nominally on this but with an introduction on the philosophy (for the speculation goes pretty deep) of rhythm in general."\textsuperscript{22} In the same letter he speaks at

\textsuperscript{20}Note-Books, 221-248.

\textsuperscript{21}R.B., 233-235.

\textsuperscript{22}F.L., 128-134.
length of his Homeric studies. In English verse his two great models and authorities and prophets were Milton and Shakespeare. Many of his ideas about rhythm are referred to his studies of Milton, especially of the Samson Agonistes. In practical criticism, for Hopkins the final, the ultimate norm was comparison with Shakespeare, the great master. It is very important to remember Hopkins' broad and deep classical background. Then we will begin to notice that his critical ideas follow a strictly classical pattern and that he is if anything too strict in his insistence upon rule and conventional science. We will notice that his verse forms are conventional. Then we will be prepared to look upon his innovations with a proper perspective, seeing in them not a break from classical traditions in English poetry but an opening up of new possibilities within traditional forms.

Suffering and The Poet

A man who has suffered has an outlook which is different from that of a man who has not. Suffering either ennobles or embitters; of its nature it cannot leave one unmoved. Poor health brought no small measure of suffering into the life of Gerard Hopkins and had an effect upon his poetic theory and upon his poetry. In a letter to Arthur Hopkins, C. N. Luxmore describes Hopkins as a schoolboy, a boy who was admired, well liked, who got into games, but who evidently was not very robust since he went under the name of "Skin".23

23F.L., Appendix I, 247-249.
In a Page of Irish History Father Darlington, a contemporary of Hopkins, says: "Though he was not subject to actual attacks (of epilepsy) he suffered more or less continuously from nervous depression, and like Curtis, he died at a comparatively early age."

He himself puts it in this way: "I have no sickness -- but I am always tired, always jaded though work is not heavy, and the impulse to do anything fails me or has in it no continuance." In letter after letter he complains of ill health; in one he goes so far as to say "I think my fits of sadness, though they do not affect my judgment, resemble madness. Change is the only relief. And that I can seldom get." He finds that Lent is hard upon him, with its change of diet. Examinations put a great strain upon him; even lecturing wears him down. Long hours in the confessional made him sick even to vomiting. Circumstances of his life conspired to make his health worse; His conversion to Catholicism was a great spiritual struggle which left him physically exhausted. From Birmingham he writes to Baillie that he has almost no energy and

\[24_F.B., 183.\]


\[F.W.D., Letter 27.\]

\[F.L., Letters 39, 42, 50, 51.\]

\[26_F.B., 216.\]
that teaching exhausts him, "that one sees and hears nothing and nobody here" .... "But if I am a priest it will cause my mother, or she says it will, great grief and this preys on my mind very much and makes the near prospect quite black." 27

Father D'Arcy points to Hopkins' Victorian brittleness:
"They have startled and still startle the traditional Catholics by their inability to unbend." 28 He hated the smoke and the dirt of the cities; and their puny, deformed citizens revolted him in spite of himself. "My Muse turned utterly sullen in the Sheffield smoke-ridden air." 29 "One is so fagged, so harried and gallied up and down. And the drunkards go on drinking, the filthy, as the scripture says, are filthy still. Human nature is so inveterate. Would that I had seen the last of it." 30 In the very last years of his life his "exile" in Ireland, his lack of inspiration, and his spiritual aridity all combined to make him suffer most intensely. That Hopkins was exquisitely sensitive to this pain -- "turned for an exquisite smart" -- is abundantly clear both from his letters and the "terrible" sonnets. In a letter to Baillie he says:

27 F.L., 84-85.
29 R.B., 85.
30 R.B., 110.
Three of my intimate friends at Oxford have thus drowned themselves, and a good many more of my acquaintances and contemporaries have died by their own hands in other ways; it must be, and the fact brings it home to me, a dreadful feature of our days.

The melancholy I have all my life been subject to has become of late years not indeed more intense in its fits but rather more distributed, constant, and crippling. One the lightest but a very inconvenient form of it, is daily anxiety about work to be done, which makes me break off or never finish all that lies outside that work. It is useless to write more on this: when I am at the worst, though my judgment is never afflicted, my state is much like madness. 31

In a letter to Bridges he says: "In mind or body or both I shall give way." Then he speaks of the commonness of suicide, and, while suffering himself from gout of the eyes, tells how a sick boy tore out his own eyes. 32 So when Hopkins cried out in anguish in those last sonnets, he was crying from the depths of his own soul:


32̷R. B., 282-283.
I am gall, I am heartburn.
(No. 45)

Wert Thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me?
(No. 50)

I cast for comfort I can no more get
By groping round my comfortless, than blind
Eyes in their dark can day .......
(No. 47)

But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me
Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lionlimb against me? scan
with darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones.
(No. 40)

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them
cheap who ne'er hung there.
(No. 41)

"Never, I think", Aldous Huxley has written, "has the just man's
complaint against the universe been put more forcibly, worded more
tersely and fiercely than in Hopkins' sonnet. God's answer is
found in that most moving, most magnificent and profoundest poem
of antiquity, the Book of Job."33

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33Quoted by John Pick in Gerard Manley Hopkins Priest and Poet,
Oxford University Press, New York, 1942, 153. The sonnet
referred to is No. 50.
Perhaps it is because he was so familiar with hard things that Hopkins did not hesitate to propose poetic ideals that would be hard to realize. He demanded an all but impossible concentration. Thought was to be stripped to its essence, to its inscape. Feeling was to be intense yet austere. Language was to be spare yet full of music. Symbolism was to show distinction yet never to be mere ornament. And all of these things were to be fused into a living oneness, into a single "bright and battering sandal". Each poem is to ring out its own music:

.............each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;

He knew the value of following out rules with fierce fidelity:

Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;

Yet the rebellious wills
Of us we do bid God bend to him even so.

And so we find him a stickler for rules; the few rules of sprung rhythm must be adhered to absolutely; the caesura must always break the Alexandrine line; the structure of the sonnet is inviolable, etc. Suffering made him sober; there is no dreaminess in either his theory or his poetry. Suffering made him realistic; he is not the effete Swinburne or the placid Tennyson. Suffering taught him the patience that made him wait seven years for the birth of the "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and the realization of the experiment in rhythm which "for long had been haunting my mind". Suffering contributed to the patience with which he clung
to his theories and practice in spite of the rebuffs and misunderstanding of his small audience. Perhaps, too, it ennobled his natural patience in the observation of nature, human nature in particular, his patience in struggling for more than le mot just, for the right inscape. Above all, suffering gave him a profound humility which is one of the most attractive characteristics of his personality and of everything that he ever wrote, a humility that was not timid but was reverent, strong, virile, and very earnest. It was this humility which made him a Catholic and a priest; it was this humility which made him hate sham and charade in verse, that made him recoil -- in spite of their recognized abilities -- from Whitman because he was a "great scoundrel", from Carlyle because that "gigantic genius" was not earnest and did "not fight fair in the field of fame", and from Ruskin because "his wrongness undoes all his good again". It was this humility that made him see the world charged with the grandeur of God and made him vividly feel the loveliness of creatures as creatures, and made him strive to make the creatures of his own mind so lovely.

34 R.B., p. 155.
35 R.W.D., 59.
36 F.L., 166.
"Hopkins' genius was as much a matter of rare character, intelligence and sincerity as of technical skill: indeed in his great poetry the distinction disappears; the technical triumph is a triumph of spirit." 37

Jesuit Poet

The great turning point in the life of Gerard Hopkins as a poet and priest was his conversion to the Catholic Church in 1866 and his entrance into the Society of Jesus in 1868. He had gone to Balliol from a moderately high church family. At Oxford he found two "religions", aestheticism with an undercurrent of hedonism, and liberalism, which was counteracted by the Tractarian Movement. The religion of aestheticism had been given its original impetus by Ruskin when he published Modern Painters. Keats was in full sympathy with this spirit of Ruskin. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, with Dante Gabriel Rossetti as their chief representative, were the trustees of the aesthetes. From 1857 to 1867 Mathew Arnold, the high priest of pure aestheticism, held the Chair of Poetry at Oxford. Pater, who ultimately formulated his refined hedonistic ethic of Cyrenaic intensity, was a teacher and friend of Hopkins. Hopkins seems to have been affected only slightly by aestheticism as a religion. He did however retain throughout his life a love for pure beauty as intense as that of the aesthetes. He was as

competent as they in recognizing and fashioning pure beauty in verse. But he learned what they did not, the nature of absolute Beauty and the proper perspective in which to hold "pure beauty". Hopkins at Oxford first leaned towards rationalism or liberalism, but in 1864 he returned to the high Church with Liddon as his confessor. In 1866 he became a Catholic; two years later he became a Jesuit.

Many, like Bridges, Baillie, Abbott, Phare, and John Gould Fletcher think that Hopkins' entrance into the Society of Jesus blighted his poetic career. It seems to me that these people are mistaken; their attitude will be more specifically treated in the last chapter of this thesis in a discussion of what I call the "Pelagian Mind". Others think that the peculiar genius of his poetry came precisely from the fact that he did become a Jesuit. They grant that he already had natural talent, genius, fine classical training; but they rightly assert that the discipline and sufferings and consolations of his spiritual life ennobled and enriched his powers. From his spiritual life he received new, solid inspiration and new, workable subject matter. The aestheticism of Arnold is barren and sterile; it reminds one of the blue-white lip of a tall glacier frozen against the sky; there is beauty but a bitter coldness. Though he became poet-laureate Bridges lacks force and greatness. He was a craftsman; he had fine feelings; but he lacked depth and his work lacked substance. It is Hopkins the Jesuit whom we find warm and human; it is he not they who arouses
us, who searches our hearts, who moves us; he communicates true rapture before natural beauty and true grief in pain; he speaks of a world we know -- of men -- of children we know; he speaks from a man's heart, Hopkins the Jesuit. He made the "Morning, Midday and Evening Sacrifice", (No. 24). He sacrificed his "poor Jackself" and found his humanness

Never flees more, fastened with the tenderest truth
To its own best being and its loveliness of youth: it is an everlastingness of, O it is an all youth!

(No. 36)

Daniel Sargent draws a long a priori argument on the masculinity effected in Hopkins by his becoming a Jesuit. He argues from the fact that the spirit of the strong willed Ignatius predominates his society and that the development of a strong will is the chief aim of the training of a Jesuit. As an a posteriori and more cogent argument he adduces a comparison of "The Wreck of the Deutschland" with the effeminacy of the pre-Jesuit poems. John Pick makes a great body of Hopkins' poetry seem to be meditations in verse adapted directly from the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius.

These facts about the relationship of his priesthood and his poetry are clear:

(1) His entrance into the Society of Jesus interrupted his production of poetry from 1868 to 1875 and caused him to burn whatever manuscript poetry he had at hand in 1868. 39

(2) It curtailed the quantity of his poetry and the amount of time he could give to theorizing. In 1879 he declaims any intention of ever publishing his poetry, although he does like to have it in one place. "I can not in conscience spend time on poetry, neither have I the inducements and inspirations that make others compose. Feeling, love in particular, is the great moving power and spring of verse and the only person I am in love with seldom, especially now, stirs my heart sensibly and when he does I cannot always 'make capital' of it, it would be sacrilege to do so. Then again I have of myself made verse so laborious." 40 Just before entering upon his thirty day retreat for the tertianship he declares his position with regard to composition:

39 R·E·D., 14.

40 R·B., 66.
I shall, in my present mind, continue to compose, as occasion shall fairly allow, which I am afraid will be seldom and indeed for some years past scarcely ever, and let what I produce wait and take its chances; for a very spiritual man once told me that with things like composition the best sacrifice was not to destroy one's work but to leave it entirely to be disposed of by obedience. 41

And during the break day of the retreat he repeats his resolution to write only under obedience. He comments that brilliance does not become his order and that he is prepared to leave his poetic aspirations entirely in the hands of Christ. 42 He refused to give Dixon permission to give his poetry notice in an "abrupt footnote" saying that he had no thought of publishing until all circumstances favor .... "One of them should be that the suggestion to be published should come from one of our own people. I could wish that my pieces could at some time become known but in some spontaneous, so to speak, and without my forcing. 43 Apparently the rejection of the "Deutschland" and the "Eurydice" by the Jesuit magazine Month made him fear that anything he ever would want to publish would not get the "Cum Permissu Superiorum". 44 In 1885 he says

41 R.W.D., 83.

42 R.W.D., 96-99; "Christ," he has said, "is the only just judge, the only just literary critic." R.W.D., 8.

43 R.W.D., 27.

44 R.B., 200.
"I can scarcely believe that on that or anything else, anything of mine will ever see the light of publicity." ⁴⁵

(3) His entrance into the Society of Jesus gave him new subject matter -- that is, not just the world -- but now the world charged with the glory of God. "God's Grandeur", "Pied Beauty" and "Hurrahing in Harvest" come very close to being verse statements of the "First Principle" of the Spiritual Exercises. ⁴⁶ The last sonnets are very much like the "Discernment of Spirits" in the Exercises; they describe the phenomenon of spiritual aridity and give the standard remedies. John Pick's study of Hopkins is a long elaboration of the point I merely suggest here.

(4) His entrance into the Society gave him a new stature as a man. The suffering, the work, the discipline which it involved, the unpleasant surroundings into which it brought him served to make him a fuller man. His renewed love of God, his genuine charity in spite of natural repulsions, his devotion to the Blessed

⁴⁵ R.B., 221.

⁴⁶ See the Spiritual Exercises themselves or, more pertinently, Hopkins "Sermon, Based on the Principle or Foundation" (Note-Books, 201) Compare this with the poems mentioned, or even with the "Windhover".
Virgin Mary gave him a finer heart. His natural sincerity and honesty were developed into a profound chastity of mind, a temper of soul which Dixon has called "terrible pathos", which colored and made great his own writings as he said the gentlemanliness of Dixon colored and ennobled his writings.

(5) It gave occasion to the development of his experiments in verse. For the development of truly great work the classical Romans believed that leisure was needed, a certain freedom from strain, "otium". Hopkins' seclusion from the field of professional poetry gave him just such a freedom from strain. He had no need to keep in the current of the day; he had no need to cater to critics, to the public or to financial support. For seven years the idea of sprung rhythm hung in his mind like an echo. With no violence but by insistent attractiveness the rhythm assumed a full mastery over his mind, a mastery strong enough to survive the rejection of the "Deutschland" and the "Eurydice", the bewilderment of Bridges, the gaping horror of Patmore, and the respectful astonishment of Dixon.

(6) His entrance into the Society influenced even his purely poetic principles. Poem No. 34 gives a "Jesuit" explanation for his demand for absolute honesty and earnestness. Spareness is very characteristic of the Jesuits; as
Hopkins himself said, brilliance does not become them.

Jesuits are soldiers in the Company of Christ; individuals are not important, the glory of God is important. Therefore with the Jesuits there is no fuss about manner or about individuals; there is no flare, no pretention. The Jesuit's idea is to get to the essentials, to do what is to be done as quickly and as well as possible for objective reasons -- and that is pretty close to Hopkins' idea of poetry, to get to the inscape and realize it with concentration and sincerity.

All of Hopkins' poetry, poem by poem, bespeaks the man, the poet, the priest: the three inextricably one. His poetic principles bespeak the Jesuit certainly not exclusively but nevertheless noticeably. "L' Hopkins fu un gesuita-poeta, e non gia un poeta-gesuita." 47

Hopkins' Friends

Of incalculable importance to the development of Hopkins as a poet and critic was his friendship with Bridges, Dixon, Patmore, and Baillie. A poet must have an audience. An experimentalist must have someone upon whom he can test his findings. Because he never published, Hopkins was deprived of a public. But these friends gave him an audience. Perhaps

47 Benedetto Croce, La Critica, XXXV, 81.
it was just as well this way. The public would have been struck with horror at Hopkins' poetry; critics would have berated him. His small audience was indeed made very uneasy by his poetry, but it was patient with him. It admired him and knew his true value; it was willing to suffer something in order to enjoy something. Bridges is something of an enigma in his relationship with Hopkins. Bridges had a great talent for friendship and he had great appreciation for true poetic ability. He loved Hopkins and -- to the amazement of Patmore\textsuperscript{48} -- he loved the poetry of Hopkins. To Bridges the spiritual and religious life of Hopkins was a natural mystery in which he had no great interest but which he regretted in Hopkins because he felt that it interfered with his poetry. Being in most cases the first ever to see Hopkins' poems, he was struck by them with a shock more intense than we of a later day would feel.\textsuperscript{49} His "Preface" to the poems -- as well as a great deal of his correspondence -- points to his awareness of the faults in Hopkins' poetry. The fact that he kept more accurate and more complete copies of Hopkins' poems than their author points to the fact that he valued them. Bridges was a real friend. He gave Hopkins serious attention, he criticized him, he encouraged him, he sympathized with him. Sometimes Bridges is

\textsuperscript{48}F.L., 208.

\textsuperscript{49}"Bridges came up and Rover bit him." "Bridges came up" means that Bridges liked Hopkins. "And Rover bit him" means that Hopkins often baffled Bridges. \textit{Note-Books}, 117.
pedantic, superior, bigoted; but he did great service to Hopkins and he has done great service to all who have read Hopkins. Fortunately, Richard Watson Dixon was slow to attune his ear to the rhythms of Hopkins and he provoked him to many explanations of his poems and theories. He gave Hopkins less artistic appreciation than Bridges but a better human understanding. Patmore gave great admiration but little appreciation. Baillie was sympathetic to certain of Hopkins' theories of language, but he distracted Hopkins into fruitless interest in Oriental languages.

Hopkins and His Contemporaries

The literary world of Hopkins' day certainly had an influence upon him. Just what that influence was is very difficult to determine. Hopkins exercised a confident, independent judgment upon all the Romanticists and Victorians. He was certainly a disciple of no one of them, as he might be said to have been of Shakespeare and Milton. But he read them carefully, studied their faults and their virtues, and in his correspondence speaks freely of them. The only evidence we have is that Hopkins did actually have definite opinions about his immediate predecessors and contemporaries. These opinions certainly occasioned the statement of many of his poetic principles; perhaps they even contributed to the formation of some of them. We cannot say: the evidence is not conclusive. I prefer to use these

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50 F. L., 204-205.
statements in their proper places in the exposition of what Hopkins thought a poem and a poet should be (chapters II, III, IV); but I will, nevertheless, give a summary of his ideas about these men.

In a letter to Patmore on January 3, 1884 he remarks on an examination given with a prize for the best arrangement of living authors. The winner, he said, placed Browning first; but he felt that the usual run was Tennyson, Ruskin, Newman, Mathew Arnold, Browning. Thus he names for us the leading literary figures of his day.

In another letter he tells Dixon how he classifies the men of his day into four schools:

I must hold that you and Morris belong to one school, and that though you should neither of you have read a line of the other's. I suppose the same models, the same masters, the same tastes, the same keepings, above all, make the school. It will always be possible to find differences, marked differences between original minds; it will be necessarily so. So the species in nature are essentially distinct, nevertheless they are grouped into general they have one form in common, mounted on that they have a form that differences them. I used to call it the school of Rossetti: It is in literature the school of the Pre-Raphaelites. Of course that phase is in part past, neither do these things admit of hard and fast lines; still consider yourself, that you know Rossetti and Burne Jones -- was it the same or your sympathy for him? This modern medieval school is descended from the Romantic school (Romantic is a bad word) of Keats, Leigh Hunt, Hood, indeed of Scott early in the century. That was one school; another was that of the Lake poets and also of Shelley and Landor; the third was the

51 F.L., 201.
sentimental school, of Byron, Moore, Mrs. Hemans, and Haynes Bailey. Schools are very difficult to class: the best guide, I think, are keepings. Keats' school chooses medieval keepings, not pure nor drawn from the middle ages direct but as brought down through the Elizabethan tradition of Shakespeare and his contemporaries which died out in such men as Herbert and Herrick. They were also great realists and observers of nature. The Lake poets and all that school represent, as it seems to me, the mean or standard of English style and diction, which culminated in Milton but was never very continuous or vigorously transmitted, and in fact none of these men unless perhaps Landor were great masters of style, though their diction is generally pure, lucid, and unarchaic. They were faithful but not rich observers of nature. Their keepings are their weak point, a sort of colourless classical keepings: when Wordsworth wants to describe a city or a cloudscape which reminds him of a city it is some ordinary rhetorical stage-effect of domes, palaces and temples. Byron's school had a deep feeling but the most untrustworthy and barbarous eye, for nature; a diction markedly modern; and their keepings any gaud or a lot of Oriental rubbish. I suppose Crabbe to have been in form a descendant of the school of Pope with a strong and modern realistic eye; Rogers something between Pope's school and that of Wordsworth and Landor; and Campbell between this last and Byron's, with a great deal of Popery too, and a perfect master of style. Now since this time Tennyson and his school seem to me to have struck a mean or compromise between Keats and the medievalists on the one hand and Wordsworth and the Lake School on the other (Tennyson has some jarring notes of Byron in Lady Clare Vere de Vere, Locksley Hall and elsewhere). The Lake School expires in Keble and Faber and Cardinal Newman. The Brownings may be reckoned to the Romantics. Swinburne is a strange phenomenon: his poetry seems a powerful effort at establishing a new standard of poetical diction, of the rhetoric of poetry; but to waive every other objection it is essentially archaic, biblical a good deal, and so on: now that is a thing that can never last; a perfect style must be of its age. In virtue of this archaism and on other grounds he must rank with the medievalists.52

In another letter he adds to this:

The strictly poetical insight of our poetry seems to me to be of the very finest, finer perhaps than the Greek; but its rhetoric is inadequate -- seldom first rate, mostly just sufficient, sometimes even below par ... Wordsworth ... with great spiritual insight into nature ... but not knowing that sonnets have a natural charpente and structure never or at least seldom to be broken through: for want of knowing this his inspired sonnets ... suffer from 'hernia', and combine the tiro's blunder with the master's perfection.53

In criticizing the poetry of Henry Patmore, Coventry's son, Hopkins says:

What first strikes in the poems is the spontaneous thoughtfulness, the utter freedom from the poetical fashion and the poetical cant of the age and all that wilderness of words which one is lost in in every copy of magazine verse one comes across ... But if the poems have a shortcoming beyond points of detail it would be in flow, in the poetical impetus and also in richness of diction: they are strong where this age is weak -- I mean Swinburne and the popular poets and, I may say, Tennyson himself -- in thought and insight, but they are weak where this age is strong.54

The four schools, then, are: The Romantic School, the Lake School, the Sentimental School, and Tennyson's School. The Arch-Romantic is Keats; with him are Leigh Hunt, Hood and Scott. These are great realists and observers of nature. They are weak, however, in that they depend for their subject matter upon material inherited from the middle ages through the Elizabethans. The Lake School includes the poets of the Lake and also Shelley and Landor.

53 _R.W.D._, 141.
54 _F.L._, 188-189.
The great virtue of this school is its diction, which is pure, lucid, unarchaic, after the manner of Milton's diction though not of the same high quality as his. The members of the Lake School are faithful but not rich observers of nature. Their subject matter is classical and colorless. The Sentimental School includes Byron, Moore, Mrs. Hemans, and Haynes Bailey. Not so much is to be said in praise of this school. Its diction is modern but its observation of nature is false and its subject matter is exotic triviality. The School of Tennyson represents a compromise between that of Keats and that of the Lake poets. Swinburne is a unique poet, orientally fluent but weak in thought and feeling.

To the age as a whole Hopkins attributes, in general, two virtues and two faults. The poets of the age enjoy fine poetical insight -- a deep, true vision of beauty -- and an admirable flow and richness of diction. On the other hand they lack an adequate science of verse writing, frequently lack thought, and sometimes lack character.

The poet about whom Hopkins made his most complete declaration of opinion was John Keats. His criticism of Keats is a valuable revelation of his own deep feeling for beauty (which, I think, made Keats attractive to him), of some of his own poetic principles, and of his opinions of the age of Keats. Hopkins had a very high opinion of Keats: "Keats' genius was so astonishing, unequalled at his age and scarcely surpassed at any, that one may surmise
whether if he had lived he would not have rivaled Shakespeare."\textsuperscript{55}

For Hopkins such comparison with Shakespeare represents the highest possible praise. Apparently Hopkins had all his life a rather settled opinion about Keats: he was a youth, ill-instructed, with the highest talents and deepest feeling for beauty, who died too soon. To Bridges he early called attention to Keats' "deep feeling ... for concrete beauty, wild or natural beauty."\textsuperscript{56}

He considered comparison to Keats in some things very high praise.\textsuperscript{57} Still he found in Cap and Bells, in spite of its good rhythmical qualities, "such a piece of nonsense that I had not the patience to read it through."\textsuperscript{58} His opinion was never questioned or developed until in 1887 he read a review by Petmore of Colvin's book on Keats. Then he wrote two letters which give his complete criticism of Keats. The first letter represents his life-long opinion. The second letter represents a somewhat though not essentially modified view.

\textsuperscript{55}\textsuperscript{R. W. D.}, 6.

\textsuperscript{56}\textsuperscript{R. E.}, 132.

\textsuperscript{57} Vide \textsuperscript{R. E.} 3; \textsuperscript{R. W. D.}, 37; 133.

\textsuperscript{58}\textsuperscript{R. W. D.}, 78.
His poems are, I know, very sensuous and indeed they are sensual. This sensuality is their fault, but I do not see that it makes them feminine. But at any rate (and the second point includes the first) in this fault he resembles, not differs from Shakespeare. For Keats died very young and we have only the work of his first youth. Now if we compare that with Shakespeare's early work, written at an age considerably more than Keats's was it not: such as Venus and Adonis and Lucrece, it is, as far as the work of two very original minds ever can be, greatly like in the virtues and its vices; ...

He was young; his genius intense in its quality; his feeling for beauty, for perfection intense; he had found his way right in his odes; he would find his way right at last to the true functions of his mind. And he was at a great disadvantage in point of education compared with Shakespeare. Their classical attainments may have been much of a muchness, but Shakespeare had the school of his age. It was the Renaissance: the ancient Classics were deeply and enthusiastically studied and influenced directly or indirectly all, and the new learning had entered into a fleeting but brilliant combination with the medieval tradition. All then used the same forms and keepings. But in Keats's time, and worst in England, there was no one school; but experiment, division, and uncertainty. He was one of the beginners of the Romantic movement, with the extravagance and ignorance of his youth ... About the true masculine fibre in Keats's mind Mathew Arnold has written something good lately.59

Since I last wrote I have reread Keats a little and the force of your criticism on him struck me more than it did. It is impossible not to feel with weariness how his verse is at every turn abandoning itself to an unmanly enervating luxury. It appears too that he said something like 'O for a life of impressions instead of thoughts!' It was I suppose, the life he tried to lead. The impressions are not likely to have been all innocent and they soon ceased in death. His contemporaries, as Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and even Leigh Hunt, right or wrong, still concerned themselves with great causes, as liberty and religion; but he lived in mythology and fairyland the life of a dreamer. Nevertheless I feel and see in him the beginnings of something opposite to this, of an interest in higher things and of powerful and active thought ...

His mind had, as it seems to me, the distinctly masculine powers in abundance, his character the manly virtues, but while he gave himself up to dreaming and self indulgence of course they were in abeyance ... Reason, thought, what he did not want to live by, would have asserted itself presently and perhaps have been as much more powerful than that of his contemporaries as his sensibility or impressionableness by which he did want to live, was keener and richer than theirs ...

He was, in my opinion, made to be a thinker, a critic, as much as a singer or artist of words ... one of his last works shews a deliberate change in style ... Even when he is misconstructing one can remark certain instinctive turns of construction in his style, shewing his latent power.⁶₀

⁶₀ F.L., 237-239.
About Wordsworth, too, Hopkins had a great deal to say. And in Wordsworth too he found much to admire and much to deplore. In his Platonic dialogue "On the Origin of Beauty" he makes his own mouthpiece say: "I must not allow anything against Wordsworth." Against a charge of Canon Dixon Hopkins warmly defends the greatness of the "Ode to Immortality":

Now the interest and importance of the matter were here of the highest, his insight was at its very deepest, and hence to my mind the extreme value of the poem ... The execution is so fine.

Put in an early essay (1865) on "Poetic Diction" Hopkins takes issue with certain statements in the "Preface" to the Lyrical Ballads and argues that the concentration necessary in the language of poetry necessarily differentiates it from the language of common speech. In a letter to Bridges he complains that in the sonnets of Wordsworth there is an "odious goodness and neckcloth about them which half throttles their beauty." But his chief complaint against Wordsworth is that he often drapes the language of poetry around prose-thought.

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61 Note-Books, 67.
63 Note-Books, 92-94.
64 R.R., 38.
In Tennyson Hopkins finds superior workmanship. "Infallibly telling freedom of stroke, which is indeed half of art." Yet he too wears the neckcloth of odious goodness. But the great charge against Tennyson is that he is a "genius uniformed by character". "I sometimes wonder at this in a man like Tennyson: his gift of utterance is truly golden, but go further home and you come to thoughts commonplace and wanting in nobility."

When marking out the faults of Keats or Wordsworth or even Tennyson, Hopkins always speaks with a tone of regret; he admires these men in spite of their faults; as an artist he seems to have a certain reverence for them. But it is with gusto that he speaks of the limitations of Swinburne. He has an unfaltering certainty that Swinburne was a small man with one astonishing capability. Swinburne has "not feeling, much less character. Swinburne's genius is astonishing, but it will, I think, only do one thing". That one thing is "a perpetual functioning of genius without truth, feeling, or any adequate matter to be at function on". He adds that Swinburne

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65 R.B., 139.
66 R.B., 38.
67 R.B., 95.
68 R.B., 79.
69 R.B., 304.
has no real understanding of rhythm, though he sometimes "hits well". But where credit is due, Hopkins gives it — but not without a parting punch. "For music of words and the mastery and employment of a consistent and distinctive poetic diction, a style properly so called, it is extraordinary ... it could be only in Persian or in some other eastern language that a poetical dialect so ornate and continuously beautiful could be found. But words are only words." 70

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70 R. W. D., 156-157. In his review of the first edition of Hopkins' poems J. Middleton Murry (Athenaeum, June 6, 1919, 425-426 and repeated in Aspects of Literature, Knopf, New York, 1920, 52-62) recognizes the effect of Hopkins' opinion of Swinburne even from the poems alone. "Swinburne ... appears hardly to have existed for Hopkins, though he was his contemporary." Murry also discerns "an echo of Keats ..., aspiration after Milton's architectonic in the construction of the later sonnets and the most lucid of the fragments, 'Epithalmion'."
We have already seen what opinion Hopkins had of certain other men. Carlyle was a gigantic genius but insincere. Ruskin has the "insight of a dozen critics, but intemperance and wrongness undoes all his good again". About Browning's work he says: "I greatly admire the touch and the details, but the general effect, the whole offends me, I think it repulsive." In several letters Hopkins praises Robert Louis Stevenson as a novelist; he admires his characterization, plot construction, and "consummate style".

As can easily be seen from the last stanza of the "Deutschland" from the theme of the "Eurydice" from sonnet No. 44 and from the fragment No. 59 Hopkins loved England very dearly. He encourages Patmore to write: "Your poems are a good deed done for the Catholic Church and another for England, for the British Empire." And to Bridges he says: "We are Englishmen. A great work by an Englishman is like a great battle won by England." Perhaps it is because of this that in the many times he speaks of the Irish, he never has a good word to say for them. Nevertheless there is a certain amount of justice in his criticism of the Irish poets:

71 See notes 35, 36.
72 E.B., 137.
73 E.B., 114; E.F., 235.
74 E.L., 213.
75 F.E., 231.
"Irishmen are not poets ... though much alive to what we vaguely call poetry in nature and language ... They always mistake the matter of poetry for poetry." Of the poetry of Samuel Ferguson he says: "He was a poet as the Irish are ... full of feeling, high thoughts, flow of verse, point, often fine imagery and other virtues, but the essential and only lasting thing left out -- what I call inscape, that is species of individual beauty of style." About Walt Whitman, the American, he speaks several times; but one letter sums up all he has to say:

I always knew in my heart Walt Whitman's mind to be more like my own than any other man's living. As he is a very great scoundrel this is not a pleasant confession. And this also makes me the more desirous to read him and the more determined that I will not ... There was to the eye something in my long lines like his, that the one would remind people of the other. And both are in irregular rhythm. There the likeness ends. The pieces of his I read were mostly in an irregular rhythmic prose.

With regard to the poetry of Bridges, Dixon, and Patmore we might suspect that Hopkins' judgment might fail because of the bias of love and friendship. But we should recall that in each case it was the poetry which first attracted Hopkins to the man.

76 R.B., 229.
77 F.L., 225-226.
78 R.B., 155.
In the poetry of Bridges he admired richness of phrase, sequence, constant music, but above all "character throughout and human nature ... the finest foundation for all the more inimitable graces, itself not inimitable." In Dixon he admired absence of affectation, a gentlemanliness, a purity and directness of human nature which he termed "'pathos', the deepest, I think, that I have anywhere found." In Patmore he balances "Bad rhymes, continued obscurity; and, the most serious, a certain frigidity when, as often, the feeling does not flush and fuse the language" against "For insight he beats all our living poets, his insight is really profound, and he has an exquisiteness, farfetchedness, of imagery worthy of the best things of the Caroline age."

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79 R.B., 72-73.
80 R.W.D., 37; R.B., 137-140.
81 R.B., 82.
CHAPTER II

THE LEADING AESTHETIC IDEAS AND PRINCIPLES OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

The poetic principles of Gerard Hopkins brought forth poetry of finished beauty; but the principles themselves sprang from deep springs; rather they were the melting waters that ran down in the springtime from high thoughts about Beauty and Nature and the various functions of nature. In this chapter we will consider some of the high thoughts or esthetic principles of Gerard Hopkins which were the fountainheads of his poetic principles. In the first part of this chapter we will consider beauty as it is most immediately presented to us: the external aspect of beauty; then we will consider the Source of Beauty. The significant link between beauty as it exists in itself and beauty in art is a study of the relationship between art and nature; such a study -- according to the mind of Hopkins, of course -- will be made in the second part of this chapter. The first and second parts of this chapter will lead us to the conclusion that concretely beautiful objects in nature or in art are a specific mixture of matter and form. The third and most considerable part of this chapter will be a discussion of the principles which Hopkins posited with regard to the matter of a poem. The entire third chapter -- the very heart of the thesis -- will be concerned with the principles which Hopkins laid down with regard to the form of the poem.
Beauty: The External Aspect

For a competent observer beauty is unmistakable; yet it eludes even patient analysis. It cannot be formulated; it cannot be "tagged". With their customary adroitness the French invented a word like eclat and the use of "Je ne sais quoi" as a noun so that they could point to the beauty of a thing without even attempting an analysis. But for a long time men have been speculating about the nature of beauty. Like the early Ionian philosophers and their successors, like Plato, whom he admired, Hopkins seems first to have been moved to the philosophical analysis of beauty by the contemplation of physical beauty in nature. He tells us his ideas about the external aspect of beauty in three essays: "On the Origin of Beauty", "Poetic Diction", and "Parmenides". The "Origin of Beauty" is an imperfect Platonic dialogue; the Socratic method fails Hopkins because his questions lack true leading forces. The teacher asks a disciple to contemplate the fronds of a chestnut tree, and to note how the leaves conform into a branch, into a fan. He emphasizes the regularity of the pattern in spite of innumerable variations in the leaves. Then he directs the disciple's attention to the manner in which individual leaves are formed by radiation; here again inevitable regularity is found to be combined with delicate, individual irregularities. The master then concludes that beauty must essentially contain both regularity and

1Note-Books, 54-102.
irregularity. The sky at sunset is a grand pattern of dominant colors; but within the regularity of that pattern swim vagrant shadows and shades and tints of the dominant colors. Bringing these contemplations into focus the teacher explains that in a picture half painted the yet unpainted half is essential, though it in itself could not either be a picture. Beauty he concludes is a composition or a comparison of things: a relationship of leaf to leaf in a fan, or of one radial vein to another in a leaf, or of color to color in a sunset. Beauty is a contrast or an antithesis of things which are at once alike and dissimilar.

It is the peculiar property of poetry above other arts to express simultaneously likeness and unlikeness. Parallelism, ranging from Hebrew to the modern use of rhythm, rhyme, assonance, alliteration is the way of expressing this antithesis. In a play or a poem this beauty consists in the relationships of line to line or stanza to stanza or part to part. Rhythm is beautiful because it is the regular repetition of the same accent in different syllables. Meter is beautiful because it is a regular sequence of rhythm. Rhyme is beautiful because it is the repetition of the same vowel sounds in different syllables. These thoughts lead directly into Hopkins' conception of what a poem is: a parallelism expressing the antithesis in two similar things, or, in other words, a restressing of an inscape, of an individual concrete

2 Many examples of antithesis may be found in Note-Books, 87-89. A more complete, though not very clear discussion of parallelism may be found in the "Journal", Note-Books, 92-93.
mixture of being and non-being; but this matter we will leave to the
third chapter and proceed at the moment to an investigation of
Hopkins' ideas about the Source of Beauty.

The Source of Beauty

All things counter, original spare, strange:
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

If the beautiful things of this world are adazzle or dim it is
because each one in a different individual way reflects an Original
Beauty, which in Itself is immutably Perfect, is all Light. To
Hopkins the world is the mirror of God, a bird that sings to God, a
book that tells the story of His Glory. In a sermon based on the
"Principle or Foundation" in the Spiritual Exercises Hopkins tells
why God created the world:

Not for sport, not for nothing. Every sensible man has a
purpose in all he does, every workman has a use for every
object he makes. Much more has God a purpose, an end, a
meaning in his work. He meant the world to give him praise,
reverence and service; to give him glory. It is like a
garden, a field He sows: what should it bear him: praise,
reverence, and service; it should repay him glory. It is
a leasehold he lets out: what should its rents be: Praise,
reverence, and service. Its rent is His glory. It is
a bird he teaches to sing, a pipe, a harp he plays on. It
is a glass he looks in ... It is a book he has written,
of the riches of his knowledge, teaching, endless truths,
full lessons of wisdom, a poem of beauty ... it tells him
of his glory. It is a censer fuming ... It is an altar. 3

3 Note-Books, 201.
A truth about which the "faithless fable and miss" is this: to admit God's mastery over the world is not to lessen the beauty of the world but is rather to enhance that beauty. Plato loved the beauty in the physical world around him; but he loved it more as a suggestion of a greater beauty than as an ultimate reality in itself. For Plato each thing he saw around him was a reminder of the original, immutable, all perfect Idea of that thing. Somewhere beyond the stars, for him, there existed a sort of heaven where all the original Ideas of things existed, each with pristine, perfect, unmarred splendour. The center of this heaven was the Idea of Good, which irradiated all the other Ideas and gave new glory to them. The glory of the visible world was to be a reflection of an invisible world. Wordsworth, the great prophet of the love of nature, loves nature not precisely for itself but rather for something within it. The inspiration for poetry comes, he tells us in the "Preface" not upon the immediate sight of physical beauty but in tranquil recollection.

In the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" he reminds us that the child is nearer to nature than the adult is. "Heaven lies about us in our infancy", in the sense that the child is, as it were, more lately derived from nature and more immediately responsive to it but the chief joy that comes from the contemplation of nature lies in the thoughts which this contemplation engenders:

To me the meanest flower that blows can give Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.
Hopkins too had a "mystical" view of nature, or as John Pick has called it a "sacramental view", but without the faults of the Pantheistic view of Wordsworth or the view of Plato, which left no logical explanation for non-being, נא. As a matter of fact, the view of Hopkins is not "mystical"; it is accurately realistic.

Many would reject his view ostensibly because of its alleged religiosity but in reality either from a lack of understanding of what the view really is or from fear of the moral consequences involved in admitting such a view of nature. Hopkins as well as any man can love everything in nature -- everything -- everything because it is precisely what it ontologically is. He can love a bird or a flower or a fellow human being; for him bodies are not evil: they are in themselves good. For him art is not religion; art is an entity itself and can be loved for itself. He can love beauty of achievement in verse, "pure beauty" as intensely as Mathew Arnold. Everything that has a positive entity he can love for itself. But the chief, the fiercest, the most exquisite beauty of each individual thing is that it has a transcendental relationship with its Creator: that all its goodness is derived; that all its beauty is derived. Each individual thing is something like the jewel in an engagement ring; it is lovely in itself but lovelier still because of a relationship which it bears.

In his notes on "The Contemplation to Obtain Love" Hopkins says:
All things therefore are charged with love, are charged with God and, if we know how to touch them, give off sparks and take fire, yield drops and flow, ring and tell of him.4

The world is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;5

Like the engagement ring, the more beautiful the thing is in itself the more worthy a reminder of the giver is it. Hopkins was an intense lover of individual things just insofar as they were individual. The great link between himself and Scotus seems to have been an intense love of individuality.6 So we must never suspect that for Hopkins individual things in nature or in art became mere characterless symbols, factory made sign-posts, all of a piece. Individual things were for him sign-posts, in a certain sense were symbols. But the wonder of them is this: that each one points in its own way, that it points best by being its own self.

Each mortal thing does one thing and the same: Deals out that being indoors each one dwells; Selves -- goes itself; myself it speaks and spells, Crying what I do is me: for that I came.

4Ibid., 342.

5"God's Grandeur".

God could, Hopkins tells us, show us the world as it were enclosed in a drop of water -- or, in fact, in a "drop of Christ's blood by which everything what ever was turned to scarlet, keeping nevertheless mounted in the scarlet its own color too". 7

In the comparatively small body of Hopkins' poetry the theme that God "is under the world's splendor and wonder" appears a remarkable number of times. It appears, as in the line just quoted, in "The Wreck of the Deutschland", in "God's Grandeur", in "Pied Beauty", "To What Serves Mortal Beauty", "On the Portrait of Two Beautiful Young People", "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", "Hurrahing in Harvest", etc. In many of his poems this theme is implicit. For example he himself assures us that he meant the poem "Harry Ploughman" to be "A direct picture of a ploughman, without afterthought ... a vivid picture before the minds eye." Yet even this was implicitly religious because it showed "delight in natural acts perfectly performed." 8

To quote Bremond: "Il voit Dieu en tout ce qui est delectable, toute beaute, et toute bonte." 9 But he saw beauty not only in the bluebell and the "silk-sack cloud"; he saw it also in man. "When a man is in God's grace and free from mortal sin, then everything that he does, so long as there is not sin in it gives God glory." 10

7 Unpublished MS quoted by Pick, _op. cit._, 44 and 50.

8 See Bridge's note to poem No. 43; Pick, _op. cit._, 151.


10 _Note-Books_, 304.
For men "... their correspondence with grace and seconding of God's designs is like a taking part in their own creation, the creation of their best selves. And again the wicked and the lost are like half-creations and have but a half-being." As men give glory to God so too do their works. Their works indeed give more glory to God than those of nature. "Elles ont, d'irait la scholastique, une valeur spécifique de louange." Hopkins therefore believed that each work which a man performed he should perform as perfectly as possible. If a man is to create a work of art, he should create it perfectly according to the nature of the medium in which he is working: "For a work to be perfect there ought to be a sense of beauty in the highest degree both in the artist and the age, the style and keepings of which the artist employs." Hopkins' sacramental view of nature had a strong influence upon his poetic principles. For him a poem was a poem; it had its own nature, its own entity, its own being. This being was good in itself -- this poem was good in itself. The more perfectly it was itself, a poem, the more perfectly it would give glory to God. Something half a sermon and half a poem would be imperfect. He decries "mawkishness" and "the neckcloth of odious goodness". Phare notes that he does not confuse his dogmatic content and his poetry but that he "takes his Catholicism for granted; it has become a part of him." 

11 Ibid, 344.

12 R.E., 142.

He knows that every prayer is not in the strict sense poetry; but he also knows that every perfectly achieved poem is a prayer, at least materially. He wants his poems to preach to us not as the preacher does from the pulpit, but as the sun and the stars do from the sky:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven ... His everlasting power also and divinity -- being understood through the things that are made. 14

He wants to be true to nature, to his nature as an artist. He knows that thus his works will have a value: To conclude the quotation begun above: "Et si elles (the works of men) viennent a etre connues, le monde en est plus beau et meilleur, miuex oriente vers Dieu. Je voudrais avoir convincau le lecteur, au moins de cette haute valeur spirituelle du poete Gerard Hopkins et de son oeuvre." 15

The Relationship of Art and Nature

From what we have already seen of Hopkins' sacramental view of nature, we must realize what reverence he had for the individual natures of things. It will therefore be no surprise for us to find that even as a boy of fifteen he had already written, "The ways of art best follow nature". 16 In the poem "Inversnaid" he tells us that he loves nature untrammelled:

14 Rom. I, 18, 20. (St. Paul)

15 Bremond, loc. cit., 49.

16 "Escorial", Note-Books, 126.
What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and wildness? Let them be left,
0 let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long lives the weeds and the wilderness yet.

And in "Duns Scotus's Oxford" he finds that the "towery city and
branchy between towers" has been soured by the encroachment of "a base
and brickish skirt". In one of the fragments he left (No. 56) he finds
that nothing "sighs deep poetry" to his mind as much "as a tree whose
boughs break in the sky. Say it is ash-boughs". But it is in the
poem "Binsey Poplars" that he is most explicit in warning us that any
departure from nature is a mistake. Nature is as delicate as the
human eye-ball; the slightest prick spoils it completely. We should
not try to improve upon nature, because "even where we mean to mend
her we end her".

When we hew or delve;
After-comers cannot guess the beauty been.
Ten or twelve, only ten or twelve
Strokes of havoc unselv
The sweet especial scene,
Rural scene, a rural scene,
Sweet especial rural scene.

Therefore we can readily understand why Hopkins called unreality in
art "the worst fault a thing can have". He accuses Bridges of having
fallen into this fault in his "Ulysses". There the unreality consists
in two things: first, in the introduction of goddesses as if they
were real persons, secondly, in an unsuccessful use of archaic
language.17 And to Dixon he says

"Any untruth to nature, to human nature is frigid ... A true humanity of spirit, neither mawkish on the one hand nor blustering on the other, is the most precious of all qualities in style ... After all it is the breadth of his human nature that we admire in Shakespeare." He accuses Dickens of mawkishness, of false pathos and he accuses Browning of frigidity or untruth to nature. For Hopkins the supreme expression in art is to arrive at nature's self. The artist Millais was accused of leaving the school of Oxford. Hopkins argues that he did not leave the school except in the sense that he outgrew it; his art began to approach nature with a fidelity that was beyond any school. He represents Millais as "passing through stage after stage, as at last arriving at Nature's self, which is of no school -- inasmuch as different schools represent Nature in their own more or less truthful different ways, Nature meanwhile having only one way." The poet's task is to "Law-out" nature -- to immobilize it -- to catch it -- to hold it, as here it is caught:

... and thrush through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightenings to hear him sing.

18_F.L., 74.
19_F.L., 54.
20"Spring", No. 9.
The Matter of Poetry

We have already seen that in his criticism of the Irish poets Hopkins distinguished the matter of poetry from the form or inscape of poetry. There he indicates that "feeling, high thoughts, flow of verse, point, fine imagery and other virtues" pertain to the matter of poetry. By the "matter" of a poem, he meant the raw material of the poem -- the pig iron out of which the tempered steel of poetry was to come. It is the body which must be informed by a soul (inscape) before a living organism will ensue. Thought, subject matter, inspiration, and a serious purpose are a part of the matter of poetry which must exist before the actual execution of the poem begins. In the execution of the poem organic unity, originality, honesty, feeling, objectivity, and common sense must be achieved. We will consider each of these matters in turn.

Thought

Hopkins' chief criticism of the literature of his own day was that it lacked thought. It wrote a "wilderness of words"; and "words are only words". The poetry of Swinburne he found astonishing but watered out of greatness because beneath it there was no thought. In Tennyson it was a fault to lack nobility of thought. In Henry Patmore, however, "spontaneous thoughtfulness" is commended as a high artistic virtue. Bridges is praised for the "vigorous thought" in his Prometheus. In his practical criticism of the

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21 See C.I., Note 52.
22 R.E., 147.
poetry of his three chief correspondents -- and of others -- the words insight and thoughtfulness are constantly at his pen's point. He admires sudden turns and "recoils" of thought. According to Hopkins a meaning or a significance should "explode" upon the reader, should be inevitably communicated. 23 When Hopkins said that there should be some thought behind a poem he did not, of course, mean that every poem should be didactic. He meant that it should have an intelligible element; it should be more than word pagentry. His own poems are the best indication that he considered thought essential to poetry, for as Herbert Read says:

The thought in Hopkins tends to be overlaid by surface beauty. But the thought is very real there, and as the idiom becomes more accepted, will emerge in its variety and strength. 24

Serious Purpose and Important Subject Matter:

For Hopkins a poem was no trifle. When, upon entering the Society of Jesus, he burned his early poems, he was offering a holocaust of something very dear to him. He began to write again only at the suggestion of his superior, and he wrote not just to while away time, to amuse himself or others, to "live in a world of sensations" like Keats, or to anaesthetize himself against the

23 E.M.D., introd. xxviii. In the letters themselves, passim, without undue search.

circumstances of his life. He intimates as much to us in the letter to Bridges in which he enclosed the first copy of "The Wreck of the Deutschland". "It seems that triolets and rondels and rondeaus and chant royal and what not and anything but serving God are all the fashion." 25 And the "Deutschland", "lying like a dragon" before his poetical output is a sure token that he was to write in no light mood. Claude Abbott justly compares Hopkins to Wordsworth in seriousness of purpose. 26 And Wordsworth is the high-priest of poetry. Bremond notes that Hopkins is "toujours serieux, earnest, toujours d'une intensité presque tragique, meme dans las joie." 27 Perhaps the clearest impression that anyone could give us of the seriousness with which Hopkins wrote is the impression which Dixon sent to Hopkins during his tertianship:

25 R.B., 43.

26 F.L., introd., xx.

27 Bremond, loc. cit. 34.
I can understand that your present position, seclusion and exercises would give your writing a rare charm -- they have done so in those I have seen; something that I cannot describe, but know to myself by the inadequate word terrible pathos, something of what you call temper in poetry: a right temper which goes to the point of terrible; the terrible crystal. Milton is the only one else who has anything like it: and he has it in a totally different way: he has it through indignation, through injured majesty, which is an inferior thing in fact. I cannot tell whether you know what I mean.28

If a man who is a critic and a poet demands of poets, and exemplified in his own poetry, a seriousness which can be termed "terrible", we may safely conclude that he will demand that the subject matter of poetry be not trivial but important. And Hopkins does make such a demand. "On the other hand the pathetic touch by itself, as in dramatic pathos, will only draw light tears if its matter is not important or not of import to us."29 One of the

28 Dixon to Hopkins, F.L., 80. This expression terrible pathos has been much misunderstood. It is conceived to refer somehow to the sufferings of Hopkins' life and especially to the tone of the so called "terrible" sonnets. But these "terrible" sonnets are dated by Bridges as not preceding 1885. Dixon communicated the expression to Hopkins on October 26, 1881. Dixon refers to a "temper" of soul, a "voluntas", a grim determination of the will to give the truth, the reality, the inscape of the thing. It is an uncompromising honesty which others have variously called humility or chastity and which Hopkins himself calls manliness. The "terribleness" of this pathos is the intensity or fervidness with which it exists in Hopkins.

29 Note-Books, 128.
characteristics in Bridges which attracted Hopkins to him personally was his fine masculinity. And one of the characteristics of the poetry of Bridges which Hopkins much admired was this same masculinity or character. "And finally I must say how pleased and proud I am ... it does me good the freshness and buoyancy and independence I find in your poems, marked with character throughout and human nature and not 'arrangements of vowel sounds' as Mallock says, 'very thinly costuming a strain of conventional passion, kept up by stimulants, and crying always in a high head voice about flesh and flowers and democracy and damnation.'"

A theme of importance to the reader and the poet is necessary not merely to justify the time and talent consumed in writing and reading the poem but rather because the importance of the theme has a direct bearing on all the other aspects of the poem. The subject matter of a poem is like something dropped into the alembic of the poet's mind and held over the flames of his talent, genius, and inspiration. If the something dropped into the flask is dirt, it will remain unchanged; if, however, it is gold, it will glow and grow lovely-malleable. A plain person can be handsomely dressed but he cannot be made handsome -- and only the handsome will do for poetry. Hopkins expounds this theory in a letter to Dixon in which he places Wordsworth's "Ode to Immortality" amongst the half dozen great odes of the world. He admits that Wordsworth's insight varied, but here,
he says it was great, and because of the importance of the subject matter:

Now the interest and importance of the matter were here of the highest, his insight was at its very deepest, and hence to my mind the extreme value of the poem. His power rose, I hold, with the subject; the execution is so fine. The rhymes are so musically interlaced, the rhythms so happily succeed (surely it is a magical change 'O joy that in our embers') the diction throughout is so charged and steeped in beauty and yearning.\(^{31}\)

**Inspiration:**

When a poet sets about writing a poem, according to Hopkins, he must have some high, noble thought in mind, must have a serious purpose in view, and must be dealing with a theme of real significance. But these three things of themselves are not enough. There is required something else, an elusive something, something which Plato in his *Ion* calls "a divine madness". Inspiration is required. Until he becomes inspired the poet does not reach his true stature. Until then he is only a man, gifted perhaps and highly trained, but able only to plod along like the man next to him. He may attempt poetry; some may even credit him with poetry, but he will never attain to more than Parnassian. Without inspiration he will write as only poets can write; he will speak on and from the level of a poet's mind. He will use his own peculiar poetic dialect, the inimitable dialect of a great mind. In what he writes there may be found his style, his manner, his mannerisms. But poetry will not be found, because he does not write in the mood of mind in which the poetry of inspiration is written. Parnassian will

\(^{31}\)R.W.D., 148.
pall upon us, will weary us, will trick us into believing we know the poet's secret and could do as well ourselves (though we could not). Parnassian does not delight us, surprise us, enchant us.\textsuperscript{32}

It is artificial poetry, "that is, the language of poetry draping prose thought, a fine rhetoric such as there is a good deal of in Wordsworth's blank verse".\textsuperscript{33}

Though as honest as Wordsworth and as capable as he, the poet uninspired writes under an empty "close grey sky" until a moment comes --

\begin{quote}
A close grey sky --
And poplars grey and high,
The country side along.

The steeple bold
Across the acres old.

And then -- a song!\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

Out of some where unknown, like the song of a lark, "a heart throb against the sky", comes a thrill, a passion, a fervor -- comes inspiration, and then the poet can write the poetry of inspiration. He is in truth a poet.

I think then the language of verse may be divided into three kinds. The first and highest is poetry proper, the language of inspiration. The word inspiration need cause no difficulty. I mean by it a mood of great, abnormal in fact, mental acuteness, either energetic or receptive, according as the thoughts which arise in it seem generated by a stress and action of the brain, or strike into it unasked.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{32}F.L., 68-76. Unless other indication is given all the remarks in this section are based on Letter XXXV, to Baillie.

\textsuperscript{33}R.B., 159.

\textsuperscript{34}"The Lark", by Lizette Woodward Reese.

\textsuperscript{35}F.L., 69.
Inspiration is "the gift of genius, (which) raises him above himself". The poetry of inspiration is that which never wearies us; which "sings in its flights". The inspired poet still uses his own dialect but in a different way; it no longer seems reducible to rule, no longer seems imitable. The poem is a happy, an inimitable, an inevitable thing, "a thing of joy forever". "In a fine piece of inspiration every beauty takes you as it were by surprise."35

In the last years of his life one of Hopkins' chief sorrows was his lack of full inspiration

Sweet fire the sire of muse, my soul needs this
I want the one rapture of an inspiration --

The fine delight that fathers thought; the strong Spur, live and lancing like the blowpipe flame.

(Poem No. 51)

Without inspiration he found his soul a "winter world" bleak and cold. And he wrote to Bridges "with some sighs" that this winter world was "our explanation -- if in my lagging lines you miss the roll, the rise, the carol, the creation". (Poem No. 50)

Even a great master of language like Tennyson palls upon us in his longer work because in them he is uninspired. He gives us pleasure "when he is rhyming pure and simple imagination, without afterthought, as in the "Lady of Shalott", "Galahad", "Dream of Fair Women", or "Palace of Art". But "when the inspiration is genuine, arising from personal feeling, as in "In Memoriam", a divine work, he is at his best".36

35 F.L., 69.
The mood of inspiration does not last for long. The poet must work, and work to final perfection while the mood is upon him or he will never fully achieve his poem. Patmore often recognized the justice of various criticisms by Hopkins but at the same time protested that he was no longer able to make correction because the time of inspiration was past. And Hopkins sympathized with Patmore, as he told him:

I think I know very well what you mean when you speak of the danger and difficulty of making more than verbal alterations in works composed long ago and of a bygone mood not being to be recovered. For a time we keep the connection with our past feelings open; they recede, but still we have an insight into them; then something comes between and a long while after looking back, like the tail of a train going round a sharp curve, you see your own self quite from outside. And even verbal alterations will be hazardous, for the stress of mood which dictated and justified the word or image has passed away.37

Sometimes a poet is struck with an inferior sort of inspiration which does not wholly conquer the poet's mannerisms. Then the poet will write Castalian. "You can hardly conceive yourself having written in it, if in the poet's place, yet it is too characteristic of the poet ... to be quite inspiration." (Here he quotes from the sonnet composed on the road to Calais.) "This is from Wordsworth, beautiful, but rather too essentially Wordsworthian, too persistently his way of looking at things." (No. 35)

In rare cases it might happen that true inspiration so bold and powerful might come to one who was normally not capable of even

37 F.L., 165.
Parnassian that he would produce real poetry of inspiration. Someone without the dialect of a great poet or the level of mind of a great poet could be inspired to great poetry.

"I may add there is also Olympian. This is the language of strange masculine genius which suddenly, as it were, forces its way into the domain of poetry, without naturally having a right there. Milman's poetry is of this kind, and Rossetti's 'Blessed Damozel'. But unusual poetry has the tendency to seem so at first." (No. 35)

The Qualities of a Good Poem

The first quality which Hopkins demanded in a poem was unity, complete, organic unity, an absolute fusion of all the elements that went into the poem. The idea of "oneness" both in the sense of individuality and in the sense of organism is so fundamental in the doctrine of Hopkins' poetry that it can not be adequately discussed apart from the notion of inscape. A full discussion of the word inscape will occur in the next chapter. For the present let it be said that the first fruit of inscape, which means everything to Hopkins, is unity.

One remark, however, upon unity can be made here. Unity does not by any means exclude complexity. The contrary is closer to the mind of Hopkins. In a long letter to Dixon on August 15, 1883, Hopkins analyzes unity of action in dramatic verse. Using Agamemnon, Eumenides, and Oedipus Rex as examples of unity and Faust as an example of lack of unity he explains that unity consists not in simplicity of plot but in connectedness of plot.
There is unity of action, as I understand, if the plot turns on one event, incident, or, to speak more technically, motive and all its parts and details bear on that and are relevant to that ... In general I take it that other things being alike unity of action is higher the more complex the plot; it is the more difficult to effect and therefore the more valuable when effected.38

What is true in dramatic verse is true of other verse as well. In his own poetry Hopkins attempted to unify great complexity. And that he succeeded Morton Zabel testifies:

In Peace the shapely unity of the concept does not exclude a rare evocation and interplay of tenuous emotional states -- fatigue, querulous despair, fortitude, and finally abnegation to Providence.39

And he notes the exquisite unity in the "Windhover" in spite of the complexity of the imagery, a bird, a minion and dauphin, like a horse on rein. In Hopkins' own poetry, when it is perfectly realized, everything -- thought, imagery, diction, and all the innumerable little graces -- dovetail into a perfect unity, spell an inscape.

Second in importance only to unity Hopkins held originality. Anyone who has seen a few lines of Hopkins' mature poetry would know that he must have honored originality. The musician Henry Purcell strongly fascinated Hopkins. In his poem to Purcell (No. 21) he indicates that he admires the musician chiefly because he has done

38 F.L., 113.

in music what Hopkins strives to do in verse (and would like to do in music as well). The chief merit of Purcell is summed up in the prose argument which precedes the poem; it is not originality, but originality too is a great virtue:

... It is the rehearsal
Of own, of abrupt self there so thrusts on, so throngs the ear.

In "Inversnaid" we find that he loves things wild, loves them to be themselves; so again in "Binsey Poplars". From "Pied Beauty" we know that he loves things "counter", not conforming to pattern. When he criticized Bridges Poems of 1879 Hopkins thought that in many places they were too reminiscent of Milton or Tennyson or Gray, and he charged Bridges that to echo someone else was a great fault:

They do it (i.e., certain lines echo), they will do it to every ear, and it is a great fault to do it, and they do it.\(^{40}\)

In this same year he writes that he expects Tennyson to be one of the age's great poets, but that he finds him weak insofar as his opinions are not original or independent.\(^ {41}\)

Six years later he still finds echoing "a disease, an evil".\(^{42}\)

As has already been pointed out, it was part of Hopkins' sacramental view of things to believe that each thing was at its best when it was most perfectly itself.

\(^{40}\)R.B., 69. The italics are Hopkins' own. This is one of the very rare lines of his correspondence which he has underlined.

\(^{41}\)R.W.D., 24.

\(^{42}\)R.B., 206.
I scarcely understand you about reflected light: every true poet, I thought, must be original and originality a condition of poetic genius; so that each poet is like a species in nature (not an individuum genericum or specificum) and can never recur. That nothing should be old or borrowed however cannot be, and that I am sure you never meant.43

There is danger in originality; and Hopkins was fully conscious of this. Instead of being original work may become eccentric: "Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or inscape to be distinctive and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped."44 "I sent a short piece to Mrs. Waterhouse in commoner and smoother style than I mostly write in, but that is no harm: I am sure I have gone far enough in oddities and running rhymes ... into the next line."45 "To return to composition what I want there, to be more intelligible, smoother and less singular."46 "You give me a long jobation about eccentricities. Alas, I have heard so much about and suffered so much for and in fact been so completely ruined for life by my alleged singularities that they are a sore subject."47 In his notes to the Poems Bridges brings exaggerated attention to the oddities and mannerisms of Hopkins. Time and advances in poetic technique have done much to lessen the number and impact of Hopkins' singularities. Those who understand the origin of his oddities always sympathize with Hopkins

43 _R.B._, 222.
44 _R.B._, 66.
45 _R.B._, 250.
46 _R.B._, 291.
47 _R.B._, 126.
and sometimes exonerate him of false charges. The point of issue here, however, is not whether or not Hopkins was guilty of oddity, it is this: Hopkins believed that singularity was a vice. He insisted that originality should be attained and warned that queer-ness should be avoided.

Again borrowing from his ideas about music we may judge that Hopkins demanded that the virtue of objectivity be found in a poem, that the poem be at grips with reality. In the letter in which he sends the sonnet "Henry Purcell" to Bridges he says: "My sonnet means Purcell's music is none of your damned subjective rot." For all of his artistic idealism Hopkins was far from wishing to be lost in a world of harmonious sounds like Swinburne or in a world of dreams like Keats. He was a complete realist. "Commonsense is never out of place anywhere, neither on Parnassus nor on Tabor nor on the Mount where our Lord preached." In a poem, too, there should be a certain virile feeling. Hopkins tells Dixon that he admires his poetry for the "instress of feeling" which he finds there and for a pathos "the deepest, I think, that I have anywhere found." He repeats to Bridges this same admiration for the "tragic feeling" of the verse of Dixon. In Patmore on the contrary he finds that a

48 See Chapter IV.

49 R.B., 84.

50 F.L., 226.

51 R.W.D., 37.

52 R.B., 139.
lack of feeling is harmful to verse, "the feeling does not flush and fuse the language" and "a certain frigidity is the result.""53 Honesty should be found in a poem. We can recall that Hopkins decried Carlyle as an artist because he did not play fair and that he chided Bridges for using pretenses for realities (in the matter of the Roman goddesses). He praises the artistic integrity of Boswell, who "hated Mrs. Thrale ... yet her picture comes out ... bright and witty ... because as an artist he was above doing in­justice."54

In the poem too there must be a revelation of certain qualities which are proper not so much to the poem itself as to the poet. In a poem Hopkins always searches for a revelation in the author of "a certain male quality", a something which to his mind distinguishes men from women, the ability to get their thoughts on paper objectively. For Hopkins the masculine quality in a poet, combined dispassionateness and consummate craftsmanship.55 For anyone who reads the letters, this is an important idea to remember, because Hopkins uses the word "masculine", "manly", "unmanly", "virile", so often, and usually in this sense. Hopkins' virtue of masculinity resembles very closely the "terrible pathos" which Dixon ascribes to Hopkins himself, or that

53 R.B., 82.
54 F.L., 97.
55 R.W.D., 133.
virtue which Bremond ascribes to Hopkins when he says: "Il a
cette vertu des coeurs purs, la simplicité d'intention. Il
suivra son chemin tout droit jusqu'au bout."56 These last
virtues mentioned cannot in a given poet be isolated from each
other. Feeling, temper of mind, masculinity, chastity of mind,
rigorous honesty, humility -- even some of the others mentioned,
objectivity, commonsense all overlap each other: they are the man.
If we were to try to find one word which would in some measure
include all of these qualities we might settle upon the word
character. Hopkins often chose this word or one similar to it when
giving his highest praise. We have already seen that the chief merit
of the verse of his beloved Bridges was "character and human nature
throughout". Apparently in 1879 Bridges contemplated leaving off
writing poetry and asked the advice of Hopkins in the matter.
Hopkins answered with a long letter in which he establishes a
triple hierarchy of beauty, that of the body, of the mind, and that
of the heart -- in ascending order. "The handsome heart" is to be
most prized. And in Bridges Hopkins finds besides great poetic
talent the more precious gift of character; and so he encourages
him to continue with his poetry.

56 Bremond, loc. cit., 26.
If I were not your friend I should wish to be the friend of the man that wrote your poems. They show an eye for pure beauty, and they show, my dearest, besides, the character which is much more rare and precious; ... but in the point of character, of sincerity or earnestness, of manliness, of tenderness, of humor, of melancholy, human feeling, you have what they have not and seem scarcely to think worth having. 57

In Canon Dixon Hopkins admired a "purity and directness of human nature". 58 And in him Hopkins finds a fine gentlemanliness, "and this adds charm to everything Canon Dixon writes". 59 Somehow the man erupts through the work without destroying it and gives the work the warmth of humanness. In Aeschylus we find "swell and pomp of words, touching consideration, manly tenderness, earnestness of spirit and would-be-piety, by which the man makes himself felt through the playwrite". 60

57 R.B., 93-99.
58 R.B., 126.
59 R.B., 176.
60 R.B., 256. Here again it may be noted how consistent Hopkins is to his sacramental view of nature. A poem is to be a perfect, individual bit of reality, most perfect when most perfectly itself. Yet it receives new beauty somehow when it is warmed by the personality of its author. So every reality receives new beauty when it is seen to be warmed by the Personality of Its Author.
Hopkins has left us some of his ideas on matters which have
only an extrinsic connection with poetry. These ideas are not
original, not at all peculiar to him; but since he has made mention
of them we will. He found the composition of verse slow and laborious.
Recall the "Deutschland" and you will not be surprised at this. He
found it easier by far to compose music. He felt that a poet needed
publication and fame as a stimulus to work. He continually urged
Bridges and especially Patmore to get into print. He felt that his
own style would have been purified of many of its mannerism if it had
had an audience to corrode its faults.

Great artists owe it to themselves and to their talent to write
as much as they can.

You think, as I do, that your modern poets are
too voluminous: time will mend this, their
volumes will sink. Yet where there is high
excellence in the work, labour in the execution,
there volume, amount, quantity tells and helps
to perpetuate all. . . . It was by Providence
designed for the education of the human race
that great artists should leave works not only
of great excellence but also in very consider-
able bulk.

61 R.B., 136.
63 F.L., 211.
With age there comes advancement in the poetic art. "It is recognized by the soundest critics that poets ripen and that faults of youth and immaturity can be found in works which are even masterpieces in other ways." 64 "Richness of imagery belongs especially to youth, broader effects to the mature mind." 65

Apparently Hopkins felt that a preliminary step in grasping a poem -- even for the casual reader -- was its scansion. He forbade Dixon to manage the publication of the "Eurydice" saying, "Few will read it, fewer will scan it, much less understand it or like it." 66 Hopkins knew the difficulties involved in reading his verse. He had received two of his poems back from the Month, had astonished his friends -- had them seeking cribs from each other and finally from him -- had himself been struck with the raw nakedness of his lines. He gave Dixon the sort of advice which Bridges gives us all in the "Preface" to the Poems: to skip the "Deutschland" at first and find him out in his easier pieces and then come back. 67

Finally it is an obvious fact in the life of Hopkins that while he placed a high value on poetry, he placed still higher values on other things. He did not surrender himself to poetry as to a religion

64 _F.L._, 178. (The letter further develops the idea).

65 _R.W.D._, 84.


as Arnold did or as to a profession as Bridges did. He gave himself first to his priesthood and only then to his poetry, only "when opportunity will fairly allow". Even, he felt, it was more important to write about philosophical matters than to write poetry. He is not worried about the publication of his poems, he says: if the poems were read they might do some good, but if they are not, no harm is done. In philosophical matters things are different. If he doesn't write correctly some one else will write incorrectly, and he wishes to be first in the field.68

68R.W.D., 150.
CHAPTER III

HOPKINS' DEFINITION OF POETRY AND HIS USE OF THE WORD INSCAPE

Hopkins' Definition of Poetry

The best way to approach Hopkins' definition of poetry is by an indirection. If we consider an individual man, we find him a being composed of body and soul. The body is necessary. If a soul, a pure spirit, were to exist without a body it would be an angel and not a man. The soul is the life giving principle, the individuating principle. It might almost be said to be the man; but it is not. Only the whole composite is the man. The body exists for the man. The soul exists for the man. It is the man who is important.

Man is an individual. He exists, under God, for himself. According to Hopkins man is the most completely individualized created being; he is able to perfect his individuation by the exercise of his own, individual free will. "The just man justices." (No. 34) "Nothing else in nature comes near this unspeakable stress of pitch, distinctiveness, and selving, this selfbeing of my own. Nothing explains it or resembles it, except so far as this, that other men to themselves have the same feeling ... Searching nature I taste self but at one tankard, that of my own being."¹ Man enjoys a perfect autonomy. For Wordsworth man would realize his highest possibilities by a vague swoon into nature, by a pantheistic absorption, by losing his individuality. But

¹Note-Books, 309-310.
not at all for Hopkins! Man realizes his highest possibilities as an individual. As an individual, free either to "keep" or not to "keep" as he deliberately chooses, the just man "keeps grace". As this particular man he receives into his soul the gift of supernatural life called grace, a participation in God's own Life, a sharing-of-life-with-Christ. He, the individual, the one, the man remains wholly himself and becomes Christ, because Christ's life is really within Him.

I say more: the just man justices;
Keeps grace; that keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is --
Christ -- for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his,
To the Father through the features of men's faces.

(No. 34)

Now if we turn to a poem, as Hopkins defines it, we will find that the poem too has what we might call a body and a soul -- but that it does not exist either for the body or for the soul but only for its own self. It too is autonomous. In a poem we might think of the elements of thought, character, significance, etc. as being the body. And we might consider the gift of utterance to be the soul of the poem. And the poem, the individual thing, the raison d'être for the body and the soul is the inscape.

From what has been said in the preceding chapter it should already be clear that Hopkins demanded thought and character in a poem. But he demanded too the life-giving gift of poetic expression. Although he finds in Robert Burns a "fineness of nature" (superior to that of Tennyson), he can allow him only a middle place on the honor
roll of great poets, because in him Hopkins finds a "poverty of language", his best being only "fresh, picturesque, fervent, flowing". 2 "In serious poetry", he says, "the standard and aim is strict beauty and if the writer miss that his verse, whatever its incidental merits, is not strict or proper poetry." 3

In an essay made difficult by highly individualized language Hopkins explains the relationship between "Verse and Poetry". 4 The essay gives a full and very characteristic explanation of the matter here at hand. Verse, he asserts, in order to be poetry must have meaning and must have been composed with excellent finish; yet it must have been composed not for the sake of the meaning conveyed nor for the sake of the excellence of the vehicle. A poem is like a living organism. It has immanent action; it exists for itself, not for the thought it contains, not for the art of expression, but for itself. "Poetry is speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning." Meaning therefore is necessary, but only as a support, a foundation, a body. "Poetry is a shape of speech existing for its own sake. It is speech only employed to carry the inscape of speech for the inscape's sake." It must be held firmly in mind that this inscape is not the inscape of meaning but the inscape of speech itself. It is this inscape or

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2 R.B., 95-96.

3 R.B., 133.

4 Note-Books, 250.
shape of speech which is important, which must be dwelt upon.

"Now if this can be done without repeating it, once of the inscape will be enough for art and beauty and poetry but then at least the inscape must be understood as so standing by itself that it could be copied and repeated. If not, repetition, oftening, over-and-overing, aftering, of the inscape must take place in order to detach it to the mind; and in this light poetry is speech which afters and oftens its inscape, speech couched in a repeating figure and verse is spoken sound having a repeating figure." Poetry is a shape of speech as such, that is, it is an inscape of words; whereas verse is an inscape of sound. Poetry connotes speech with meaning. Verse connotes merely the sound of speech.

Hopkins' definition of a poem is consistent at the same time with the traditional, the classical concept of a poem and with his own over-all philosophy of the beauty of individual things as such. As we are reminded by Maritan\(^5\) it is a rule of all art that art operates "ad bonum operis", for the good of the work done, while practical wisdom operates "ad bonum operantis", for the good of the worker. Art as such has no other end than the perfection of the work made, and not the perfection of the man making. Hopkins would heartily have seconded such statements as these. They are perfectly consonant with his idea that each thing is most perfect when it most perfectly realizes its own self being. We must be careful, however, to realize that the

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\(^5\) Quoted by Pick, *op. cit.*, 39.
autonomy of poetry did not mean the same thing to Arnold and to Hopkins. To Arnold poetry was a final end in itself. It was the ultimate reason for its own existence. To Hopkins poetry was a proximate end -- that is to say, for Hopkins, this inscape of speech was the end of the work of art as such but it was not the end of life, as it was for Arnold. Arnold was a kind of idolater. St. Thomas says, "The sole end of art is the work itself and its beauty ... for the man making, the work to be done comes into the line of morality, and so is merely a means." The end of the work of art is beauty, but the end of man is God. "If the artist were to take for the final end of his activity, that is to say for beatitude, the end of his art or the beauty of his work, he would be purely and simply an idolater."5

Neither in his theory nor in his practice could Hopkins be accused of the error that religious significance alone would make a poem great. Neither for a moment could we imagine that Hopkins did not feel that a finished and polished poem, an individual "bead of being" did not have a certain religious significance, a sacramental aspect. Like any other created thing, a poem -- even without specifically religious subject matter -- was charged with the glory of God. The poem takes its place with

Earth, sweet earth, sweet landscape, with leaves throng
And louched low grass, heaven that doest appeal
To, with no tongue to plead, no heart to feel.

And is to be used by man to render glory to God

And what is Earth's eye, tongue, or heart else, where
Else, but in dear and dogged man?"  

5Quoted by Pick, op. cit., 39.

6"Ribblesdale", No. 35.
For Hopkins a poem was a part of the "Pied Beauty" of the world, not just another part, but to him a dear and precious part. He wanted the poem to be perfect -- "immortal song ... the roll, the rise, the carol, the creation" (No. 51) and when it was most perfectly that, then it most perfectly spoke to him of God.

Inscape

As we have just seen, a key-word in Hopkins' definition of poetry is the strange word inscape. It is a key-word in his whole ideology of esthetics. So we must try to determine what he meant by it.

To us inscape is a mysterious word. To Hopkins the thing itself was not mysterious; nor was it rare. On the contrary inscapes were everywhere and were everywhere evident. "All the world is full of inscape and chance left free to act falls into an order as well as purpose." 7 "I thought how sadly the beauty of inscape was unknown and buried away from simple people and yet how near at hand it was if they had eyes to see it and it could be called out everywhere again." 8 He saw inscapes while watching the inner beams and the piled up hay in a shadowy barn, while watching the lazy drift of blown snows, while studying flowers under the microscope. 9

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7Note-Books, 173.
8Ibid, 161.
Hopkins felt pity for "simple people" because he felt that they looked upon the individual things of nature without ever seeing them fully or seeing them in their true beauty. "Simple people" looked upon objects of nature and saw complexity, saw diversity of parts, did not see the inner secret of order within the object, did not see its inherent symmetry. They did not "law out" the plan of the object. They did not find its "existence-pattern", its inscape.

But Hopkins studied nature and art precisely to discover the key to its individual order. "About all the turns of the scaping from the break and flooding of the waves to its run out again I have not yet satisfied myself. The shores are swimming and the eyes have before them a region of milky surf but it is hard for them to unpack the huddling and gnarls of the water and law out the shapes and the sequence of the running." He wanted to find the law of the breaking waves, the secret of the order of their spilling, the key to their falling apart. For him the great purpose of observation was not vacuous staring or vague gratification from a general impression but an intellectual grasp of an internal harmony, an appreciation of beauty deriving from the vision of order under divergencies. Hopkins had a very passion for things in whorls -- the waves, the clouds, the leaves, the flowers, the brook, the grass moved by the wind, the snow falling, the whorled design of the side of a fish. Somehow the whorl

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10Ibid, 164.
seemed to him the best example of complex reality within which there is a secret of simplicity, a key to form, an inscape.

One day Hopkins went to see a sham battle of seven thousand commoners. Apparently oblivious to the excitement of the day he concentrates his remarks on the inscape of some horses which he saw. "I caught that inscape in the horses that you see in the pediments especially and in other bas reliefs of the Parthenon and even which Sophocles had felt and expresses in two choruses of the Oedipus Coloneus, running on the likeness of a horse to a breaker, a wave of the sea curving over. I looked at the groin or flank and saw how the set of hair symmetrically flowed outwards from it to all parts of the body, so that, following that one may inscape the whole beast very simply."\(^{11}\) Here it is very clear that inscape is the secret of inner symmetry and to inscape is to catch or to mark this secret. When he visits the Academy he notes in a picture "some leopards showing the flow and slow spraying of the streams of spots down from the backbone and making this flow-in and inscape the whole animal and even the whole group of them."\(^{12}\) In another picture he sees a "herd of stags between fir trees all giving one inscape in the moulding of their flanks and bodies and hollow shell of the horns."\(^{12}\) Inscape, then, unmistakably is the secret of the pattern of the individual or of the group; it is the sesame, the key;

\(^{11}\) Ibid, 189.

\(^{12}\) Ibid, 190.
it gives form to the whole; it shows how to find, to follow, to see
the form and the order of the thing. Deep down in things there is
form - inscape -- "existence-pattern" -- ultima realitas entis. The
observer's business is to find it, to law it out.

If an artist fails to observe or to communicate attention to
this thread of design, he fails as an artist. Hopkins condemns several
pictures at the Academy for "scattering", "lack of composition". Of
Northwest Passage he says that there is "want of arch-inscape even to
scattering". Of Holman Hunt's Shadow of Death he complains that
there is "no inscape of composition whatever -- not known and if it
had been known it could scarcely bear up against such realism". Here he reaffirms the fact that inscape is the key to composition.
And he also adds another idea -- namely, that the revelation of inscape
in art should not take the form of severe realism. The revelation of
inscape should be suggestive. The existence-pattern of the object
should be infallibly indicated. Too much realism tends to crust over
or swallow up the pattern. If the artist is too realistic he risks
the danger of giving only the "scape" or external form of things
instead of the inscape. Then he will fall under condemnation, as
did Hunt and Rembrandt.15

13 Ibid, 193.
14 Ibid, 197.
15 Ibid, 194.
Inscapes communicates to us the individuality of things; it communicates the order, symmetry and beauty of individual things. It is the artist's duty to observe inscapes and then in his own medium to re-create them, re-realize them. A poet must "law out" reality; he must reproduce it (by incape not scape). In "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and in the "Eurydice" Hopkins literally tries to mimic the angry swirl of waters, to re-realize it for the reader. In the "Windhover" he tries to "realize" the flight of a bird. In "Birches" and "Binsey Poplars" he uses long, languorous rhythms suggestive of trees. In each poem he tries to use a poetic pattern which will suggest exactly the pattern of reality. "Now this is the artist's most essential quality, masterly execution: it is a kind of male gift and especially marks off men from women, the begetting one's thoughts on paper, on verse, on whatever the matter is; the life must be conveyed into the work and be displayed there, not suggested as having been in the artist's mind."  

Richard Dixon did not have access to Hopkins' "Journal" as we have. But from the poems themselves he recognized in other terminology what Hopkins was striving after. He remarks that Hopkins' poems have a quality which Taine found in Milton: "admiration ... which reaches its fullness and completeness in giving the exact aspect of the thing it takes: so that a peculiar contentation is felt".  

16 R.W.D., 133. The italics are not Hopkins'.

17 R.W.D., 100.
is the "terrible pathos", the "terrible crystal" which Dixon attributes to Hopkins -- the temper, the sincere will to represent (inscape) reality with crystal clarity. "In the power of forcibly and delicately giving the essence of things in nature, and of carrying one out of one's self with healing, these poems are unmatched."\(^{18}\) So clearly does Hopkins aim at reproducing the aspect of individual things that Daniel Sargent calls him a miser. "He wished to have a key whereby he could lock all things beautiful into a world where they should stay forever beautiful."\(^{19}\)

When we have understood what inscape is, when we have understood the poetic aim of Gerard Hopkins, then we can fully appreciate the acuteness of the statement: "Toute la poesie, le rythme et l'emotion, est une fonction de l'inscape."\(^{20}\) Inscape is a kind of tyrant. Everything must be made to serve it. What does not serve it must be cast off. It makes claim to greatness and calls out the poet's best efforts and talents. Above all it must be served -- not the poet's vanity, the common taste, the critic's plea: the inscape alone must be served.

The first fruit of this utter service of inscape will be a perfect, a natural, an organic unity. Everything in a poem has the

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\(^{18}\) R.W.D., 32.

\(^{19}\) Sargent, op. cit., 162.

\(^{20}\) Bremond, loc. cit., 40
common purpose of giving an inscape, of re-creating an existence pattern. All the various elements live with a common vitality. Inscape is a moulding force existing within the elements. "Fineness, proportion of feature comes from a moulding force within which succeeds in asserting itself over the resistance of cumbersome or restraining matter; the bloom of health comes from the abundance of life, the great vitality within."21

Hopkins did not speak much of striving for unity, because he did speak much of striving for inscape in which unity is implicit. In one whom he very much admired, however, he did single out unity as a virtue. "Milton is the great master of sequence of phrase. By sequence of feeling I mean a dramatic quality by which what goes before seems to necessitate and beget what comes after, at least after you have heard it it does."22 For Hopkins there are two elements in a poem, first the "idea", truth23 thought,24 or feeling.

21 F.L., 159.
22 R.W.D., 8.
23 F.L., 78.
24 F.L., 106-106. In a poem Hopkins recognized two strains of thought in my thought is that in any lyric passage of the tragic poets ... there are -- usually, I will not say always, it is not likely -- two strains of thought running together and like counterpointed. First there is the over thought or the obvious meaning of the text. Second, there is the under thought, "conveyed chiefly in the choice of metaphor, etc. used and often only half realized by the poet himself, not necessarily having any connection with the subject in hand but usually having a connection and suggested by some circumstance of the scene or of the story."
and secondly the style or method of expression. These two elements must be perfectly fused: it is a fault when the "feeling does not flush and fuse the language." From a consideration of Hopkins' own poems it is at once apparent that unity is a prime virtue of inscape. Considering them, Morton Zabel quotes Herbert Read and M. Edouard Dujardin to the effect that the central doctrine of the school of vers libre was that "the modulations of thought and feeling must find exact correspondence in the modulations of rhythm and cadence" and notes that Hopkins succeeds where the members of the school themselves fail. "He insisted upon the unity of his art -- its substance with its method. This was his highest claim for his achievement." And Bremond takes the poems of Hopkins as a starting point for the generalization: "'L' art savant est createur de l'oeuvre entiere; il ne se borne pas a donner un vetement convenable a une pensee deja toute faite. La forme artistique n'est pas vetement, meme d'exacte mesure, mais il est avec las pensee la poesie meme. On ne peut pas les seperer." 

Begotten of this perfect unity an entirely new being comes into existence, an inscape of speech, a new being with its own individual

25 R.B., 82.

26 Loc. cit., 156.


28 Loc. cit., 36.
existence-pattern. Here we must be careful not to become confused. As has been already demonstrated Hopkins used the word inscape in several different senses. Here these different senses are brought together and we say that fidelity to inscape brings forth a new inscape. We mean this: An existence pattern exists; the poet catches a glimpse of the pattern. Chastely, honestly, humbly he uses his style to express this glimpse of the pattern and his product is a new inscape. This new inscape is a thing alive. As F. R. Leavis says, "His words and phrases are actions as well as sounds, ideas and images." These actions are actions of speech, not of ordinary speech but of speech elaborated into music. We shall see more of the idea of inscape as speech when we consider Hopkins' notion of the manner of communicating poetry. At present it will be enough to repeat the words of J. Middleton Murry, "Musical elaboration is the chief characteristic of his work ... Inscape is still, in spite of apparent differentiation, musical."30

Inscape is a puzzling word and it will always remain puzzling. It is a name for three different things. Even when the reader knows the three meanings, when reading an individual text, he must always stop to see which of the three things is there named. It is, nevertheless, this word around which Hopkins did his most characteristic

29 Leavis, op. cit., 171.

and most important thinking. His contribution to poetic art and theory -- a very considerable contribution -- is inseparably connected with his love of inscape, which can broadly be interpreted to mean his love of individuality. The heart of his poetic theory -- his contribution -- is this: "Get that individual quality. Isolate it. Reveal it. Emphasize it. Over and after it." From that command flows the necessity for solid reality, for concentration, temper, chastity, for all the overtones and undertones represented in his style. His contribution consists in having provoked critics to admire him and poets to mimic him for three things:

1) **His realism**: He insisted that the poet should have an authentic grasp on some real entity (thing, act, emotion, truth, person, significance).

2) **His artistic integrity**: He insisted upon "individually-distinctive beauty of style". Here enters his austere chaste, humble, utter sincerity, sanctioning his own experiments, a rebuke to triflers, moral triflers or technical triflers.

3) **His bold originality**: He exploited untouched possibilities of the language.

   a) By his experiments in rhythm he pointed towards new ways to emphasis.

   b) By his own not always successful experiments he reminded poets that concentration is a means of communication in itself.
c) By his diction he bared the raw strength of our Anglo-Saxon tongue.

d) Above all he threw new insistence upon the fact that a poem is a "pattern of speech" and that sound and music are essential to its nature. His letters proclaim this. Especially he propounds this in his poems, which are so suggestive of the possibilities which he proclaims.

His realism, his integrity, his originality are all functions of inscape.
APPENDIX TO CHAPTER III

Because the word inscape is so important to an understanding of the poetic principles of Hopkins I have thought it well to add to this chapter an appendix in which I will add to my own explanation of inscape some other definitions of the word. The first "definitions" are by Hopkins himself. The others are by students of Hopkins. In the last part of this appendix I have tried to explain some other words peculiar to Hopkins.

Hopkins:

1) "Design, pattern or inscape is what I above all aim at in poetry." (R.B., 66)

2) "Inscape (the very soul of art)." (R.W.D., 135)

3) "The essential and only lasting thing left out -- what I call inscape, that is individually distinctive beauty of style." (F.L., 225)

4) "For in the world besides natures or essences or 'inscapes' and selves ..." (Note-Books, 322)

5) "Origin of Beauty", "Poetic Diction", "Parmenides". (Note-Books, 54-102)

as a noun: a) inscape is that precisely which makes this individual thing what it is (form of a thing, individuating note)

b) in another sense inscape is a glimpse of this "form".

c) in another sense inscape is a method of expressing this "form", a re-realizing of it, a re-stressing of it.

as a verb: To inscape is to make the artistic form equate the ontological form.
E. E. Phare:

"Inscape is the result of the object's relation to its creator." (Op. cit., 81)

Aldous Huxley:

Inscape is an "existence-pattern". (Quoted by Phare, Op. cit., 85)

Bremond:

"Inscape, c'est-a-dire, sa ligne, sa structure significative." (Loc. cit., p. 37)

Pick:

Inscape: 1) the outer form of things.

2) the inner form or ontological secret.

3) (usual) the essential individuality or self-hood of a thing working itself out and expressing itself in design and pattern. This he calls beauty. (Op. cit., 32-39; 156-159)

Sargent:

Inscape "is the profundity into which 'instress' draws the mind". "That design, that pattern, felt by the artist enables him to penetrate the thing seen, and can be called 'instress'. We look at a landscape in order to see out into space; we look at 'inscape' in order to see from space into meaning." (Op. cit., 154).
Inscape: defined by John Manning Fraunces: The Meaning and Use of Inscape

I - Nominal definition:

Inscape is the internal aspect of a thing which the eye can grasp in a single view or from a single point. (p. 3)

II - Primary meaning:

Inscape is an essence which is particularized here and now. (p. 5), i.e. either: 1) substantial form
or 2) ultima realitas entis
(see note below) Chapter II
or 3) this thing: matter, form, individuality; these three taken together (pp. 72-73)

III - Derived meanings:

A. Inscape is the external unity and proportion of a natural being -- that which is apparent and from which we can note the internal essence. "In this sense Hopkins speaks of the inscape of flowers, trees, clouds, mountains, fields, etc." (Chapter III)

B. Inscape is the harmony of parts in artificial beings -- i.e., the "unity of cathedrals, of poems, of music, of all artificial things." (p. 7 and cp. 3)

IV - Inscape as a verb: means to get this thing into fitting language. (pp. 72-79)

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Note: In the scholastic theory all things are composed of matter and form; matter is comparable to passive potency; substantial form is comparable to act. Form gives matters its essential, specific character. Whether or not it is form which gives things their individuality is a moot question amongst philosophers. Duns Scotus thinks that it does not but that an entirely separate entity, the "ultima realitas entis" gives things their individuality. It stands in relation to the composite of matter and form somewhat as act to potency. (That this last is a rather obscure idea Scotus himself admitted.)

In this matter, it seems to me, we find the exact reason for Hopkins' devotion to Scotus. Both men loved individuality. It seems to me that the first meaning of inscape is ultima realitas entis.
In a poem:

1 - Inscape: is the "principle of unity", that is, the intellectual element which controls the sensible element.

The poet has an "idea" and his medium. He must master the medium, bend it to his individual inscape or grasp of individual reality. Then

2 - Inscape: is "individually-distinctive beauty of style."

Some Significant words peculiar to Hopkins.


Sake: - "The being a thing may have outside itself, as a voice by its echo, a face by its reflection, a body by its shadow, a man by his name, fame, or memory, and also that in the thing by virtue of which especially it has this being abroad, and that is something distinctive, marked, specifically or individually speaking, as for a voice and echo clearness, for a reflected image light, brightness, for a shadow-casting body bulk; for a man genius, great achievements, amiability, and so on." (R.F., 82) (cf. Sonnet No. 21) Therefore sake is:

1) - the being a thing may have outside itself.
   e.g., a voice's echo
   a man's fame.

2) - the precise reason for that other-being,
   e.g., the voice's unusual clarity
   the man's genius.

Scape: - the external form or outline of things. (Not, as inscape, the inner-form or ontological secret of a thing) "Rebrandt is a master of scaping rather than of inscape." cf. Note-Books, 194; 176; 179; 164.
Sprung rhythm, roving over, hangers or outriders: cf. "Hopkins Prosody" (Chapter IV)

Inspiration, Parnassian, Castalian, Olympian: cf. "Inspiration" (Chapter II)

Keepings: Characteristic subject matter, background, or reference of the works of a particular school of art.

To Keep: To live by means of and according to the demands of - e.g. to keep grace means to live a supernatural life.
Chapter IV

Hopkins' Theory of Craftsmanship

Craftsmanship

As we have just explained, by inscape Hopkins frequently means "individually-distinctive beauty of style". For the creation of a poem it is necessary not only that the poet have a clean, firm grasp of some reality but also that he have "the artist's most essential quality, masterly execution ... a kind of make gift ... the begetting one's thought on paper." It is far from enough that the poet have something to say and be sincere in saying it; he must know how to speak. "For work to be perfect there ought to be a sense of beauty in the highest degree." And the "sense of beauty" of which Hopkins speaks is no vague cliche. For him "sense of beauty" is revealed in "Tennyson's workmanship and infallibly telling freedom of stroke, which is indeed half of art." A beautiful style for him is one which is equal to the material at hand, in which each verse is a work of art, in which there are no "botchy places ... no half wrought or low-toned ones, no drab, no brown-holland."

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1R.W.D., 133.
2R.B., 142.
3R.B., 139.
4R.W.D., 24.
which there is richness in phrasing and in versification, in which the sequence of phrases is perfect. It must give evidence of a fresh bouyant spirit, of independent observation, judgment, and execution; it must be integral with vigorous, strong "Greek" thought. Through it the character and human nature of the poet must shine; it must be made to glow with his noble personality. Where necessary it must communicate pathos or feeling. It must be characterized by constant music of word and phrase and illuminated by neat, valid imagery. In his Collected Essays Herbert Read finds "Hopkins is eager to use every device the language can hold to increase the force of his rhythm and the richness of his phrasing. Point, counterpoint, rests, running-over rhythms, hangers or outriders, slurs, end-rhymes, internal rhymes, assonances, and alliteration -- all used to make the verse sparkle like rich, irregular crystals in the gleaming flow of the poet's limpid thought."  

Poetry is an art and its complete and perfect execution transcends science. But underlying even art there may be some real science. Hopkins feels that music and architecture enjoy an advantage over poetry in that their science is clearly formulated and is at hand to be studied and practiced, whereas rhetoric, or the science of poetry, has been only imperfectly formulated and expounded. His own age, Wordsworth in particular, suffers from not having at hand the common and teachable

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5 R.E., 72-73; 147.

6 346.
elements in literature. Hopkins himself never formulated the science of rhetoric but he did make some worthwhile remarks about various particular points of rhetoric.

In "Verse and Poetry", previously mentioned, Hopkins implied that a poet reveals just how much of the science of rhetoric he has mastered by his Parnassian, by his characteristic dialect. He asserts, of course, that to be real poetry Parnassian must be sublimated by inspiration. Rhetoric alone is sham-poetry.

A special point of rhetoric which is very characteristic of Hopkins is that he felt that the full power and polish of rhetoric should exist in even the smallest element of a poem. His own efforts to concentrate meaning, music, and effect into every word often ran over into the vices of queerness and obscurity. But he was honestly aiming at something good which he found in Handel's music: "The immediateness of the impression must be due, I suppose, to his power being conveyed into smaller sections of his work that other men's and not needing accumulation for its effect."  

An example of his insistence upon great care with each detail is his defense of the occasional use of vulgar -- obvious or necessary -- rhymes. He argues that the poet must aim only at the most telling, most effective rhyme. If that rhyme be a vulgar rhyme, it need not for

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7 R.B., 249; R.W.D., 138-142.

8 R.W.D., 137.
that reason be rejected. It holds its place as all rhymes should when the poet can say, "Show me what better I could have said if there had been a million". 9

Examples of detailed analysis of parts of the science of rhetoric may be found in two of his letters to Dixon (19 and 21) during October of 1881. In the first letter he gives a detailed description of the mechanics of the Shakespearean sonnet. In the second he compares the English sonnet with the Italian and finds the English "in comparison with the Italian short, light, tripping, and trifling". He explains exactly the weakness of the English sonnet and enumerates possible ways to remedy it -- concluding with the suggestion of his own remedy, outriding feet. 10

As his poems prove, Hopkins knew well how to value and use imagery. Herbert Read says "Hopkins ... had the acute and sharp sensuous awareness essential to all great poets .... passionate apprehension, passionate expression and equally that passion for form without which these other passions are spendthrift." 11 Yet he knew too the value of restraint, of spareness; he warned Patmore that "extreme ingenuity and turns of pure fancy in art are in great danger of frigidity." 12

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9 R.E., 169.
10 R.W.D., 86 Sq.
11 Criterion, X, 557.
12 F.L., 172.
Negatively, Hopkins' most frequent criticism in matters of rhetoric was that a poem was not "perfectly achieved" or was not adequately executed. He complains against lagging verses, feebleness, padding, affectation, "echoing" or lack of originality, ambiguity, failure to make the meaning clear.

Many times, especially to Dixon, Hopkins expresses his opposition to the use of archaic language as a rhetorical device. And he believes that paradox likewise should be used with great restraint. It should be merely an introduction, used to attract attention and then dropped.

Obscurity

The intensity of Hopkins' efforts at perfect expression even in the smallest detail sometimes led him to the defeating of his own purpose. His correspondents frequently reminded him of this. In the introduction to Hopkins' Poems Bridges censures the author for oddity.

13 R.W.D., 156.


15 Although gentle and respectful in tone Patmore's letter to Hopkins (March 20, 1884) makes the most overwhelming protest against Hopkins' obscurity I have anywhere read. Patmore saw in special signs or notations in the text only further complexity and no practical help. (F.L., 204-205). Hopkins himself was suspicious of the value of these private diacritical marks. He attempted to restrain their use as much as possible and admitted that they were offensive and not always consistent. (R.B., 189). Much later he says "I do myself think, I may say, that it would be an immense advance in notation (so call it) in writing as the record of speech, to distinguish the subject, verb, object, and in general to express the construction to the eye; as is done already partly in punctuation by everybody, partly in capitals by the Germans, more fully in accentuation by the Hebrews. And I daresay it will come. But it would, I think, not do for me; it seems a confession of unintelligibility." (R.B., 265).
and obscurity. Herbert Read finds Hopkins' thought corroded with surface beauties. Hasty readers despair of him. Hopkins realized that sometimes at least he must have been at fault. "Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or inscape to be distinctive and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped."\(^{16}\)

He knew that the matter of just how obscure a poet may legitimately be was a delicate one, that it was a sort of balance between the demands of artistry on the one hand and the demands of actual expression on the other hand. The poet's aim is to express effectively. If too much emphasis is laid on to express, expression may be enervated to prose of tick-tick verse. If too much emphasis is placed on effectively, the expression may not express at all. That he was fully cognizant of both sides of this balance Hopkins tells us in his letters. Several times he warns Patmore against obscurity. "If I understand this at all, it seems to me a thought condensed beyond what literature will bear."\(^{17}\) Again he complains against even a line which is obscure only when it is read without forethought.\(^{18}\) He knew at the same time that he had his friends scurrying to each other for cribs to his own verses and he words his dilemma

\(^{16}\) R.B., 66.

\(^{17}\) F.L., 170; cf. 166-171.

\(^{18}\) F.L., 158.
in this way: "Obscurity I do and will try to avoid so far as is consistent with excellences higher than clearness at first reading." Hopkins placed great value on "excellences higher than clearness". At one time he resolved to express his "idea" in prose and then to elaborate it in verse upon which clearness would make little demand.

"One thing I am now resolved on, it is to prefix short prose arguments to some of my pieces. These too will expose me to carping, but I do not mind. Epic and drama and ballad and many, most, things should be at once intelligible; but everything need not and cannot be. Plainly if it is possible to express a subtle and recondite thought in a subtle and recondite way and with great felicity and perfection, in the end something must be sacrificed in so trying a task ... and this may be the being at once, may perhaps even the being without explanation at all, intelligible." In his poems he strove to attain the necessary balance between art and communication. But he strove harder than is common amongst poets. A little leaning of the balance one way or the other would not do. For him the balance had to be perfect.

Hopkins' poems certainly do not make easy reading; they can not be hurried through. In a sense they are certainly obscure. But the question to be asked is this: Is his obscurity legitimate or not? The answer is this: Although in a few pieces, as in "Tom's Garland", his obscurity is not legitimate, on the whole his difficulty, rather than obscurity, is entirely legitimate.

19 R.B., 54.
20 R.B., 265-266.
The fundamental cause of Hopkins' difficultness is his great earnestness, his desire always to say something, his desire to make each word a precious gem. "C'est cette rigueur de volonté poétique qui explique le long labeur du poète et excuse la fatigue du lecteur. Les heurts poetiques viennent de cette tension." Two derived causes of difficulties are: first, his efforts to make his poetry musical; secondly, his efforts at concentration.

About the first of these derived causes it is the mind of J. Middleton Murry that sometimes Hopkins forgot the medium with which he was working, that he used words as if they were notes only for their indicated sounds. "Musical elaboration is the chief characteristic of his work, and for that reason what seem to be the strangest of his experiments are his most essential achievements. (e.g. 'The Golden Echo') ... But the relative constant in the composition of poetry is the law of language which admits only a certain amount of adaptation. Musical design must be subordinate to it."22

The extreme concentration in the poetry of Hopkins is at once apparent to the most casual reader. This concentration leads to the virtues of terseness and impact, but likewise "une des causes de son obscurité est qu'il veut tout exprimer parfaitement."23 "E un' oscurità per effetto di eccessiva concentrazione e per mancanza di passaggi, nella quale egli si è intricato."24

21 Bremond, loc. cit., 34.
22 Murry, loc. cit., 425-426.
23 Bremond, loc. cit., 25.
24 Croce, loc. cit., 92.
But we must be careful to notice that this difficultness is not in itself a fault. It may easily become a fault, but in itself it is perhaps a virtue. Even those who seem to chide Hopkins grant that in general he is more than clear, for Murry says about one of the sonnets, "there is compression, but not beyond immediate comprehension, music but music of overtones; rhythm, but a rhythm which explicates meaning and makes it more intense;" And Croce says, "La sua tendenza generale e alla chiarezza espressiva."25 At least three critics find Hopkins' difficultness a thing wholly to be admired. They are I. A. Richards, F. R. Leavis, and Laura Riding.

"Modern verse", says Richards, "is perhaps more often too lucid than too obscure. It passes through the mind (or the mind passes over it) with too little friction and too swiftly for the development of the response. Poets who can compel slow reading have thus an initial advantage."26

Christ minds; Christ's interest, what to avow or amend
There, eyes them, heart wants, care haunts, foot follows kind,
Their ransom, their rescue, and first, fast, last friend.
(No. 10)


26 Dial, LXXXI, 195.
No one can catch the meaning of these lines with a careless glance; yet, without further reference, anyone with patience can in the end find the meaning. "The more the poems are studied, the clearer it becomes that their oddities are always deliberate. They may be aberration, they are not blemishes. It is easier to see this today since some of his most daring innovations have been, in part, attempted independently by later poets." In his earlier years Hopkins wrote in a more conventional style; and in this style, for his years, he wrote with distinction. Some of his poems were prize poems. Even in his later years his presentation pieces were in a simpler style. Most of his Marian poems were meant to be hung or published for a community and were simple yet not without poetic virtue. But writing for himself or for his three intimate friends, in his more characteristic mood, "he had", says Leavis, "positive uses for ambiguity and he presumed to expect from the reader prolonged and repeated intellectual effort." He deliberately arranged to allow time for a complex response to develop. And besides, "he aimed to get out of his words as much as possible unhampered by the rules of grammar, syntax, and common usage." 

The office of a poet is to give mankind a second-hand sense of the universe, to show his fellowmen what they should see, how they should respond, to crystalize for them their own feelings, to give

27 Ibid, 196.

28 Leavis, op. cit., 164; 165; 162.
them a way of saying what they have often felt but could never say. When the poet succeeds in fulfilling his office, mankind seizes upon his language and repeats it until it has become stereotyped. Then the poet must search out a new means of expression; he must use language in a fresh way. It might even become necessary for him to add to the existing language or to do it violence, in a sense, to re-make the language. Laura Riding is very confident that Hopkins was a poet who was fulfilling his office very capably. She sees in his experiments a sound effort at perfect expression. By analysis she proves the value of some of his private expressions like "Jack-self", "God knows when, God knows what", "stallion stalwart and very violet sweet", and "betweenpie". To her, all of Hopkins' efforts -- even those that failed -- were praiseworthy; they were in the right direction. "One of the first modernist poets to feel the need of a clearness and accuracy in feelings and their expression so minute, so nearly scientific, as to make of poetry a higher sort of psychology was Gerard Manley Hopkins, a Catholic poet writing in the eighties. We call him a modernist in virtue of his extraordinary strictness in the use of words and the unconventional notation he used in setting them down so that they had to be understood as he meant them to be, or understood not at all (this is the crux of the whole question of the intelligibility of modernist poetry.)"29

Prosody

It is not the purpose of this paper to explain in detail the mechanical aspects of the art of Hopkins. In the last section I tried to show that Hopkins recognized the value of knowing the mechanics of versification. Such demonstration would be enough for the purpose of this paper if it were not for the fact that Hopkins has made some contribution to the mechanics of poetry as well as to its art. He did this by his theory of Sprung rhythm.

E. Clarke accuses Hopkins of being too involved in technique, of being more a technical experimentalist than a poet. But this is an unsound accusation. In the early poem, "Floris in Italy", Hopkins implies that mechanics in verse are entirely secondary to the art. Claude Abbott feels that Sprung rhythm was no system at all. I. A. Richards says that Hopkins used complete rhythmical freedom "But disguised this freedom as a system of what he called Sprung rhythm." And this amounts to what William Gardiner says when he defines Sprung rhythm as "expressional rhythm ... a vital fusion of the internal rhythm of thought-and-emotion and the external rhythm of sounds." The internal rhythm guides and controls the external. Rules can be made for the external after the poem is finished.

Hopkins elaborates his theory of Sprung rhythm in two places, in the "Author's Preface" to the Poems and in a letter to Dixon on December 12, 1880 (R.W.D., 39-40). He admits three kinds of rhythm: first,

running rhythm or the common rhythm of English; secondly, Sprung rhythm; thirdly, mixed or logaoedic rhythm (dactyls with trochees or anapests with iambae). Running rhythm is, of course, measured by feet of never less than two nor more than three syllables. Each foot has one stress or accent and one or more unaccented syllables (slack syllables). A foot with the stress first is called a falling foot; one with the stress last is called a rising foot; one with a stress between the slack syllables (e.g., amphibrach) is a rocking foot. Sometimes in running rhythm variety is achieved by reversing feet or by counterpointing them. Feet are reversed when the stress is where the slack should be and vice versa. Counterpoint is the repetition of reversal in two successive feet, especially so as to include the sensitive second foot. Counterpoint really constitutes a superimposing or mounting of a new rhythm on the old one. And the effect is that when the mind notes the new or mounted rhythm, it at the same time reverts to the standard foregoing rhythm; thus the mind has before it two rhythms at once.

Sprung rhythm is likewise measured by feet, feet which regularly contain from one to four syllables. In Sprung rhythm the stress is all important. Each syllable has only one stress, which is always scanned as the first syllable. For a particular effect any number of weak or slack syllables might be used. On the contrary, one stress alone is enough to constitute a foot. Thus it is possible that two or more stressed syllables might come running. Regularly, then, in Sprung rhythm there are four possible feet: a single accented syllable;
an accentual trochee; a dactyl; a first paeon ('vvv -- a paeon is a metrical foot of four syllables, one long and three short, named according to the position of the long syllable first, second, third, or fourth paeon.)

In running rhythm there may be mixed or logaoedic rhythm; but in Sprung rhythm there can be only the one rhythm. Running rhythm can be counterpointed; but Sprung rhythm cannot, because the underlying rhythm is not regular enough to be held in mind counter to a mounted rhythm. However, since Sprung rhythm is already so varied, it does not need counterpointing. All feet in Sprung rhythm, as in running rhythm, are assumed to be equally long. Their seeming inequality is made up for by pause or stressing. A virtue which Sprung rhythm enjoys over running rhythm is that it allows dochmiac or antipastic effects -- i.e., abrupt changes from rising to falling movement. Yet no account is taken of it in the scanning and no irregularity is caused; it scans always as rising rhythm.

There are two special characteristics of Sprung rhythm which might be noted: roving over and hangers or outriders. Roving over is running the scansion from one line over into the next line. Scanning begins with the stanza and goes unbroken to the end. A syllable missing at the end of one line may be found first in the next line. Hopkins liked lyric verse to be over-rove but preferred dramatic verse to be "free-ended" and each verse to be scanned by itself. Hangers or outriders are one, two, or three slack syllables added to a foot and not counted in the nominal scanning. "They hand below the line or ride backward and forward from it in another dimension than the line itself."
Diction

In the matter of diction Hopkins' ideas remained consistent throughout his lifetime. His over-all theory of the diction proper to poetry was that it should be the speech current and common in the day and the age of the poet but used with a concentration and heightened effect not found in prose or conversation. In his "Journal" he takes issue with Wordsworth's "Preface" to the Lyrical Ballads. He cannot agree that "the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written." To his way of thinking the chief difference between poetry and prose is the use of artifice in poetry, artifice of such a nature that in itself it helps to communicate. The whole of effect of artifice is concentration. But concentration is foreign to common speech. Therefore the language of poetry cannot be exactly the same as that of well written prose.31 "It seems to me," he says, "that the poetic language of an age should be the current language heightened, to any degree heightened and unlike itself, but not an obsolete one. This is Shakespeare's and Milton's practice and the want of it will be fatal to Tennyson's Idylls and plays, to Swinburne, and perhaps to Morris."32

32 R.E., 89.
Sometimes Hopkins approaches an almost conversational tone, a
diction rather (for him) Wordsworthian:

This seeing the sick endears them to us, us too it endears.
My tongue had taught thee comfort, touch had quenched thy tears,
Thy tears that touched my heart, child, Felix, poor Felix Randal.
(No. 29)

But even in such lines he is different from those, say of "Lucy Gray". In these there is abruptness; each line is broken, the first between the repeated personal pronoun, the second after "comfort", the third after "heart". There is an intangible air of strength or reserve in the marshalling of words. And "Child, Felix, poor Felix Randal" is subtle but too definitely a diminuendo not to be artifice rather than conversation.

More characteristic are:

I admire thee, Master of the tides,
Of the Yore-flood, of the year's fall;

... Ground of being, and granite of it; past all
Grasp God, throned behind
Death with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but abides.
(Deutschland, v. 32)

... Birds build - but not I build; no; but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
Mine, O Thou lord of life, send my roots rain.
(No. 50)

From a consideration of these lines two things are apparent:
1) That Hopkins heightens the effect of current idiom.
2) That his characteristic language is monosyllabic Saxon.
The diction of Hopkins is taken from current speech but not from common speech. It is a compact, economic, cryptic speech. It is not "poetic diction" in the conventional sense, in the sense it is understood when applied to Tennyson and Swinburne, but it is the language of a poet, and language which on the whole the common man could understand, but which he could never achieve. F. R. Leavis says, "Hopkins belongs with Shakespeare, Donne, Eliot ... He departs very widely from current idiom (as Shakespeare did) but nevertheless current idiom is ... the presiding spirit in his dialect."33

When one averts to the fact, Hopkins' language is almost glaringly monosyllabic and Saxon. Hopkins had averted to this himself and regards the fact with no little complacency. "And my style tends always more towards Dryden ... He is the most masculine of all our poets; his style and his rhythm lay the strongest stress of all our literature on the naked thw and sinew of the English language ... the praise ... one would give in Greek to Demosthenes, to be the greatest master of bare Greek."34 In discussing Hopkins' poetry in Italian for Italian readers B. Croce gives prose translations for the poems, not, he says, because of the ordinary difficulties connected with the translation of verse but because in this case reproduction of the rhyme, the rhythm, the verse, and the mixture of language (impasto della lingua) of Hopkins would

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34 R.R., 267-268.
require another Hopkins -- "Per esse di necessita un artista come l' Hopkins."35

Hopkins had an instinct for short, powerful words. But he was a poet with a rich background of classical study. He did not use primitive words in a primitive way; he used them with all their primitive force. Yet he forced them into smooth expression -- more than just smooth, into rhythmical, musical speech. "He employed native words, root words of old stock, rhythms of speech, and compelled them as did hardy, by the sheer poetic force and integrity of his mind; but while with Hardy the words remain sometimes awkward, local or antique, like tough old bits of furniture, in Hopkins they are knocked together, swept along in the one rush of his passion."36

Another proof that Hopkins had an authentic grasp upon the language was the independent way in which he used it. He felt that the language had sources of power as yet untapped and so he attempted to tap them. He did two things: he invented new words and he made new combinations of words. Some of his own words we have already mentioned, for example, "betweenpie" and "Jack"; there are others, "Shivelight", "firedint", and more. His combinations run from solid compounds like "fallowboot-fellow" to "cast by conscience out", which is to be taken as one word.

35 Croce, loc. cit., 85. M. Bremond has, however, rendered some of the poems into French verse.

Examples of combinations are: "spendsavour salt", "dare-gale", "day-labouring-out", "dapple-dawn-drawn", "hearse-of-all", etc. He took other liberties like "Sheathe-and shelterless thoughts", "brim, in a flash, full", "wind-lillylocks-laced"; "throughter" (syncopation -- through the other); "your offering, with dispatch, of!

Hopkins was markedly conscious of the faults of his fellow Victorians. His own efforts were towards a virile and finely accurate expression of experience. He complained against the use of all words which sounded forth, perhaps even melodiously, but did not inscape. The conventional device of the inversion of word order had its place in poetic technique but was to be used with great restraint and deliberation. Old-fashioned words should find no place in a poet's vocabulary; they were of yesterday -- his experience of today. An over use of "untos and thereafter and _ ethos" he finds offensive.\[37\] He looked upon archaic language as a blight. Even when it was well used he was reluctant to admire it.\[38\] The introduction of foreign words has a frigid effect. "I nowhere remember an exception ... It is illegitimate ... destroys the seriousness of the style, makes it maccaronic."\[39\] The use of dialect has the advantage of heightening the effect of what is said. The reader admires the expression not only for what it says but

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\[37\] F.L., 82; cf. R.E., 87-89.

\[38\] F.L., 148.

\[39\] F.L., 200.
for its apparent age as well, as he might the more admire the architecture of a building just because it was old. On the other hand the use of dialect very much narrows the field of possible thought and emotion. 40

The Communication of Poetry

Early in this paper we said that although Hopkins was far from a great musician that through most of his life he showed interest in music and that at the end of his life music seemed to have superseded even poetry in his interest. His interest in music had an indirect but commanding influence on his poetic ideals. He aimed at inscape. I have already quoted Murry, Leavis, and E. Clarke to the effect that inscape is essentially musical. A further key to what Hopkins thought should go into a poem is a consideration of what he thought should be gotten out of a poem. Sound or music had to be in a poem, because to his mind it was impossible to reach the full meaning of a poem unless it was actually sounded in the reader's ear.

In his early notes he says that just as a tune does not exist except when it is played, so poetry does not even exist until it is spoken. 41 Throughout his life he had the tendency to put to music whatever verse he admired, as if he felt the verse incomplete without definite musical annotation. Some of his poems, as we have said, seem to lay more emphasis on sound than upon words as means of expression. (Woodlark, "Binsey Poplars", etc.)

40 R. F., 88.

41 Note-Books, 29.
Hopkins always composed "orally, away from paper -- and I put it down with repugnance". He seems hardly to have considered what his poetry would look like. When he did see it, it shocked him. When, on somebody's returning me the 'Eurydice', I opened and read some lines, reading as one commonly reads whether prose or verse, with the eyes, so to say, only, it struck me aghast with a kind of raw nakedness and unmitigated violence I was unprepared for: but take breath and read it with the ears, as I always wish to be read, and my verse becomes all right." A year earlier he had already warned Bridges "To do the 'Eurydice' any kind of justice you must not slovenly read it with the eyes but with your ears as if the paper were declaiming it at you ... Properly read it is quite a different thing. Stress is the life of it." When he sends Bridges *Harry Ploughman* he says that this too "is for recital, not for perusal (as by nature verse should be)." About this same poem he tells Dixon too that it "cannot be properly taken in without emphatic recitation; which nevertheless is not an easy performance." About "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" he speaks at length,
"Of this long sonnet above all remember what applies to all my verse, that it is, as living art should be, made for performance, and that its performance is not reading with the eye but loud leisurely, poetical (not rhetorical) recitation, with long rests, long swells on rhyme and other marked syllables, and so on. This sonnet should be almost sung: it is most carefully timed in tempo rubato."47

Written with principles like these in mind the poetry of Hopkins is something different from that of most poets -- different at least in degree. He is a writer in "sound-words", "sound-clauses", "sound-sentences". A great burden of communication is laid upon sound. From sound comes tone, atmosphere, meaning. And the sound must never be neglected; it must be attended to "until its intricate spreading patterns of response develop themselves and possess the reader."48

In his letters he does not explicate his theory; he merely begs that the music of his poems be listened to. That music he means to be the explication of his theory and at the same time a proof of its validity. In his poems it is his genius not his intelligence which argues. "When he does succeed one is conscious of a new richness of sound, an orchestration of vowels and consonants and varying feet that makes one wonder if Hopkins' genius, given a freer rein, was not of weight and originality at least equal to any in the nineteenth century. ... He has found combination of sound which apart from their meaning create the emotion he is trying to produce." He does not like

47 Po., 246.
Mallarme and Rimbaud ignore the demands of logic and meaning. "He tries to make a grammatical statement that is at the same time an image of the kind that doesn't need grammar. He was aiming in the direction that was to lead to modern writing." 49

His voice is like a thing of nature; it speaks "with its silences" -- not only with its words but also with its sound. Sometimes it is like the voice of the sea:

... the tide that ramps against the shore;  
With a flood or a fall, low lull-off or all roar.  
(No. 11)

Again, it is the puzzling voice of a strange skylark:

... I hear the lark ascend  
His rash-fresh re-winded new-skeined score  
In crisps of curl off wild winch whirl, and pour  
And pelt music, till none's to spill nor spend.  
(No. 11)

Or, in the end, it may be a muted voice heavy with grief:

No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,  
More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.  
Comforter, where, where is your comforting?  
(No. 41)

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APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IV

Because in the preceding chapter I have given only a broad outline of the prosody of Hopkins, I wish in this brief appendix to indicate where additional information about his prosody may be found.

I. In a lecture, "Rhythm and the Other Structural Parts of Rhetoric - Verse" (Note-Books, 221-240) under five headings he gives conventional treatment of the various mechanics of verse. His treatment is good, not characteristic. The lecture is good reference, however, to some of the terms he uses in his letters and in the "Preface".

II. In a letter to Baillie (F.L., No. 63) and in another to Bridges (No. 148) he mentions work upon a book never found, a treatise on the Dorian measure and on rhythm in general ... on physics and metaphysics.

In a letter to Bridges (No. 137) he gives a long, close, private analysis of rhythm in Pindar.

III. SPRUNG RHYTHM:

1) The origin of Sprung Rhythm (R.W.D., 12-16; R.B., No. 22)
2) The rules of Sprung Rhythm are few but must be firmly adhered to. (F.L., 137)
3) Great freedom of motion is gained under Sprung Rhythm. (Ibid.)
4) Time value of syllables is very important in Sprung Rhythm. (R.B., No. 60)
5) Attention to quantity is very important in English. ("Preface")
6) All poets would use Sprung Rhythm if they knew of it. (R.B., 90)
7) The savagely rhythmical prose of Walt Whitman has only an apparent likeness to the highly wrought lines of Sprung Rhythm. (Ibid.)
8) The Special value of Sprung Rhythm is in that it lends itself to strong expression. (R.B., No. 63)
9) Marks used in Sprung Rhythm: accents, loops, little loops, slurs, musical pauses, twirl. ("Preface")
10) History of Sprung Rhythm. ("Preface")

IV. SPECIAL NOTES:

1) The special qualities of first and last lines. (Note-Books, 71)
2) The special qualities of Alexandrine lines. (R.B., No. 127)
3) Alliteration in vowels. (F.L., 133)
4) Definition of stress. (F.L., 179)
5) Definition of accent, slack. (R.W.D., 22-23)
6) Theory of the "principle of symmetry and quadrature." (R.B., No. 70)
7) Use of Enclitics, proclitics; reaving over as emphasis on thought. (R.B., No. 62)
8) Chiming of Consonants, derived from Welsh. (R.B., No. 30)
CHAPTER V

AN ANALYSIS OF FOUR POEMS

"The Wreck of the Deutschland"

Across the threshold of Hopkins' poetry lies, as Bridges has termed it, the sprawled out dragon of "The Wreck of the Deutschland". Above the dragon's head there are breaking rolls of thunder; around him are swirling clouds of smoke and intermittent iridescences of fire. And the dragon has teeth. Under the grey to momently saffron smoke the dragon will surely wound us before we find him and master him.

For several reasons I have selected "The Wreck of the Deutschland" as an example of Hopkins' poetic theory put into action. The "Deutschland" was the first piece that Hopkins attempted to write entirely in Sprung Rhythm. It came into being after seven years of silence, seven years of waiting and planning. It came into being when the new rhythm, the new discipline was like a flood-tide which a dam could no longer hold. It tumbles out turbulently from the poet's mind. It moves with a tremendous current; within it are dangerous whirl-pools, and on its surface snow-froth is dancing. The "Deutschland" still stands as the longest of Hopkins' poems. In it we find all the characteristic virtues and faults of the poet and his style.

The poem came into being when "in the winter of '75 the Deutschland was wrecked in the mouth of the Thames and five Franciscan nuns, exiles from Germany and the Falk laws, aboard of her were drowned. I was affected by the account and happening to say so to my rector he said he wished some one would write a poem on the subject. On this hint, I set
to work and, though my hand was out at first, produced one. I had long
"had haunting my ear the echo of a new rhythm which I now realized on
paper ... I do not say the idea is altogether new ... but no one has
professedly used it and made it the principle throughout."¹

The poem is divided into two parts. In the first part Hopkins
announces the theme of the poem, expounds a general truth. In the
second part he uses as an illustration of this truth the story of the
wreck of the Deutschland and his own reaction to that wreck. In the
poem there is a sequence of ideas, a logical unity; but the sequence
is clouded over by many digressions. Some of the digressions are
brilliant. And the more brilliant they are the farther they lead us
from the sequence of ideas. The poetic mood of the poem, however, is
entirely consistent. The predominant mood of the poem is one of
storm, powerful unrest, of agitated terror, ending in peace. The mood
is like that of a small Comedia of Dante. It sweeps us from hell up
into heaven. Indirectly the poem deals with one of the most puzzling
aspects of the meaning of life. It deals with suffering, grief, and
catastrophe. And it explains them as "stress" upon the majesty of God,
as things that remind us that we are small and needy while He is Great
and all powerful.

The real theme of the poem is not the actual wreck of the ship.
The real theme is a general truth which is illustrated by the wreck.
That general truth is this: God's majesty must be confessed; His

¹R.W.D., 14.
majesty is everywhere evident, but sometimes men ignore it. Then God forces them to notice His Majesty--by exercising His Power against them.

Though he is under the world's splendor and wonder, His mystery must be instressed, stressed; For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand.  

(\textit{v. 5})

\begin{quote}
\ldots

---Rather then, last or first, To Hero of Calvary, Christ's feet -- Never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it -- men go.

\textit{(v. 8)}
\end{quote}

Be adored among men God, three-numbered form.  
\textit{(v. 9)}

In the first part Hopkins addresses himself directly to God, acknowledges that God made him, and then cries out that now God has frightened him with a display of awful power. (\textit{v. 1.} The display itself--\textit{i.e.,} the wreck, is not described until verses 12-17.) In his terror Hopkins flees to the house chapel and swoons before the divine majesty. (\textit{v. 2}) A terrible question torments him: If there is hell for the sinner and this terrible disaster for the just, what hope is there at all? His only recourse is to trust himself to Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. (\textit{v. 3}) Then, though conscious of his own great weakness, he feels consoled by a gospel truth--namely, that although God's mighty power upholds the world nevertheless at times this power must be emphasized before men will acknowledge and adore it. (\textit{v. 4, 5}) The need for this emphasis, he

\begin{footnote}
The theme of the fragment, No. 73, in the poems is almost identical with that of "The Deutschland". The mood and style are different.
\end{footnote}
realizes, is not part of the plan first ordained by divine Goodness but arises from events in time as a counter-complement of original sin and the subsequent darkening of man's intellect. (v. 6) The greatest emphasis ever laid upon the mastery of God was the passion of Christ. But that was not the only or the last emphasis. This storm is part of that same emphasis. (v. 7) In the end, of course, all men must adore the Mastery of God. At some time they will have no choice. Just as certainly as a man eating fruit must taste something, so certainly all men at some time must come to adore God. (v. 8) So, Hopkins acknowledges the storm as a sign of God's mercy and begs him ever more to give proof of His might -- now, before it is too late! (v. 9)

With an anvil-ding
And with fire in him forge thy will
Or rather, rather then, stealing as Spring
Through him, melt him but master him still:
Whether at once, as once at a crash Paul,
Or as Austin, a lingering-out sweet skill,
Make mercy in all of us, out of us all
Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King.
(v. 10)

In the first part of the "Deutschland", at times under obscure language, there is a consistently developed sequence of thought. But in part two digressions occur, logical digressions if not poetical.

The eleventh verse, on the mortality of man, gets away from the thought immediately at hand in the poem, but it is not entirely a digression. It stands in relation to part two as the "Prelude" of James Russell Lowell stands to the Vision of Sir Launfal. It jars us into the mood of what is to follow:
Some find me a sword; some
The flange and the rail; flame
Fang, or flood goes Death on Drum
...
we ... forget that there must
The sour scythe cringe, and the blear share come.

The last line especially is extremely suggestive of the mood of terror
and unleashed force: consonants are gnashed against each other and
strongly stressed monosyllabic syllables are remorselessly pressed against
each other.

In the next five verses the storm itself is brilliantly described;
here first mention is made of the nun, "a lioness arose ... a prophetess
... a virginal tongue". In verse 19 we are told that she speaks; and in
verse 24 we are told what she said: "O Christ, Christ, come quickly."

(verses 18 and 20-23 are parenthetical. In 18 the poet tells us
that at the sight of the nun his heart is touched not with grief but
with joy. The reason for his joy is not explained until verse 28.
verses 20 to 23 tell who the nun was, one of five Franciscans, exiled
and now to be martyred. William Gardiner calls these verses "an
amazing metaphysical digression" characterized by much splendor and
suggestiveness of diction and great imaginative power. 3)

verses 25, 27, and 28 are an analysis of the nun's prayer, an
explanation of the theme of the poem. "O Christ, Christ, come quickly,"
she had prayed, but what did she mean? Was it that she desired to die
for Christ as He had for her? Was she longing for heaven? no. no.

3Loc. cit., 145-146.
The weary, the worn ask for, hope for death. Those excited by terror would beg rather for life. The prayer means only what it says, "Come!" The meaning is tremendous, grand. The nun calls the Master. That is all.

She calls the Storm-Sender; calls her Lord. He can help her to live; He can take her from life; she does not care. She asks only that He be present. "Come quickly!" -- "Be at Thy Mastery", she means. "Thy will be done. Fiat. Do, deal, Lord it." Here is the meaning of the whole poem. God is Master. When we feel His Hand upon us, heavy or light, we should acknowledge Him. "Be adored ... Thou are lightening and love ... Father and fondler of heart thou hast wrung." (v. 9)

"Make mercy in all of us, out of us all Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King." (v. 10) "I admire thee, master of the tides." (v. 32)

Verse 26 is a bold but beautiful digression. At the mention of heaven in his analysis of the nun's prayer he suddenly gives a bold and original picture of paradise. If even May, by day and by night, can be so lovely, how lovely must heaven be? The imagery is strong and unconventional. The diction softens from "Down-dugged ground-hugged grey" to "moth-soft Milky Way". Possibly the verse is meant to accentuate its context by contrast.

In the three verses which follow the analysis of the prayer (29, 30, 31) the poet expresses great admiration for the nun, conjectures about the richness of her reward, and prays for all those who, less wise than she, do not understand the meaning of God's heavy hand.

The last four verses are a return to the explicit statement of the theme already made in part one. Verses 32 and 33 are a prayer of
adoration; verse 34 is a prayer for mercy; and the last verse is a special prayer for England.

The analysis of the prayer (vv. 25-28) varies in merit. The negative exposition is clear and easy to follow. But the positive declaration of the meaning is merely suggested and not unmistakably suggested. It is given in verse 28. This verse is very characteristic of Hopkins. At a key point in the poem he is not anxious that we get the meaning of what he says -- he is anxious that we get the full meaning, the gigantic import of the truth. He is not taking a chance that we might misunderstand. We must either understand or not understand at all. The lines of this verse are jerky, are frantic. They poke, they prod our minds; they force our minds.

But how shall I ... make me room there:
Reach me a ... Fancy, come faster --
Strike you the sight of it? look at it loom there,
Thing that she ... There then! the Master,
Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head;
Do, deal, lord it with living and dead;
Let him ride, her pride, in his triumph, dispatch and have done with his doom there.

The broken, faltering utterances of the first lines suggest the magnitude of the truth to be expressed. By his abrupt rhythms the poet forces his intensity upon the reader as an orator might upon an audience by abrupt rhetorical questioning and gesturing. Ipse is a Latin word. According to Hopkins' principles the introduction of a foreign word is always a fault. But here it is introduced to show the intensity of the struggle for expression. Name is run into name; Master, Christ, King, Head, only One, Ipse. They are all one. But
no one name is enough; all together they are not enough -- the poet reaches out far, *Ipse, Ipse*, even that is not enough. The next line does not mean that Christ was asked to save the nun’s life or to take her to heaven. (Such interpretation is excluded by verse 25-27.)

It means the same thing as *Ipse*, Christ, King, Head! It means that He was to cure her merely by being present to her, by accepting her homage. The next two lines are almost parenthetical. In them the poet himself seconds the nun’s prayer. With three abrupt imperatives he prays for all "Do, deal, Lord it with living and dead." And then he re-applies the prayer to the nun. "Let Him, who is her pride, triumphantly ride, dispatch, have done with his mastery there." These last four lines are an example of parallelism. They repeat the same idea four times; they "over and after" a thought.

Notice how much of Hopkins there is here. The rhythm is irregular, scattered, broken. Notice the Sprung Rhythm, the short words, the spareness of

"Do, deal, Lord it with living and dead."

The rhythm here is surely what I. A. Richards would call license and William Gardiner would call expressional rhythm. The obscurity of the last four lines is characteristic because it is deliberate. The central truth of the poem is poured out in a torrent of words, piled up names, a simple statement, a triple command, a mild command. If it is to touch us at all, we must feel its power, perhaps be bruised. "Her pride" is a characteristic rupture of normal word order. Note the complexity of the rhymes -- "room there", "loom there", "doom there"; "faster", 
"master", "cast her", "head", "dead"; (ababcbca). Notice the internal rhymes in the last line: "him ride, her pride" and "done" and "doom". Notice the alliterations and the assonances:

...... *fancy* come faster;
    Strike you at the sight of; look at it loom there.

What at first appears to be a disorganized tangle of verbiage is revealed by close examination to be a work of great artifice deliberately aiming to convey and in large measure succeeding in conveying not a truth nor a feeling but an inscape, a true, moving glimpse of reality. The verse shows the power Hopkins could exert; it shows the means -- and the liberties -- he took to express himself. It shows the "Difficultness" with which he deliberately left his poems. The verse is from his first poem in the new style. Age and experience will develop his powers and purify the style.

To consider the poem as a whole we might make the following remarks:

Inscape, we have said, means three things which result in a fourth:

**In general**

1 - Inscape is the key to some definite reality

2 - Inscape is the poet's glimpse of this key

3 - Inscape is the poet's method of expressing his glimpse

4 - Inscape is a new reality, that of a poem.

**In the Wreck of the Deutschland**

1 - The key here is a truth: Suffering is the key to God's display of mastery. (Part I)

2 - His glimpse of this truth was a realization of the meaning of the death of the nun. (Part II)

3 - The style of the "Wreck of the Deutschland".

4 - The poem itself.
Hopkins demanded that a poet have a serious thought in mind, that he have a serious purpose in view, and that his subject matter be of some importance to himself and to his reader. In the "Deutschland" Hopkins dealt with a problem of universal interest and import, that of human suffering. He dealt with it in a most serious and solemn way and suggests "its only tolerable solution". The intensity of his mood and the felicity of his style reveal that he was inspired. Through all his lines there comes bursting forth like a bright inner light the great chastity, humility, integrity of his character. "The first thing, admirable always, terrifying in him, is his directness. All that would have softened the poem to timid ears he gloriously refuses. If we are to have our joy, we who dare to wear the insignia of Christ, we are to have it in the majesty of its conquest, in the shattering beauty of the crucified Incarnate God. Comfort he flings aside. We are dazed, dazzled, wonderfully elated in the high heart of the tall nun. ... Reason, breathless, lagging, big with stupendous truths, is consumed in vision. Pain has become sacrifice, has become joy. Christ is the priest; Christ the victim; Christ the joy of the accepted sacrifice. Everywhere one face only."4

In the style of this poem there are things to be praised and things to be deplored. Among its faults we might list:

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1 - Obscurity. For example, in verse 2:

... the hurl of thee trod
Hard down with a horror of height:
And the midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with fire of stress.

Here there is a lack of sufficient reference, "Height" is in no way identified or defined; neither is "midriff", which could be that of a ship or of a man.

2 - The use of private words. For example, the key word "stress" in verses two, five, six, etc. (and all the pronouns which have stress for an antecedent) is a private word in the way Hopkins uses it. It is hardly legitimate to make "voel" (v.4) mean any mountain just because the Welsh mountain, Voel, was familiar to him.

3 - Mixed-imagery. For example, in verse four waters are spoken of as being "roped" together.

4 - Incomplete expression. In stanzas six, seven, and eight one must guess at half the meaning. (This is, of course, different from merely working out a meaning difficult of attainment.)

5 - Awkward Images. The second image in verse four is awkward and confusing. The image in verse eight is grotesque.

6 - Omission of words. Passim. e.g.,
"She that weather sees one thing" for "in that weather".

"The men woke thee" for "men who woke thee".

These faults are the results of the strenuous, sincere efforts Hopkins was making at perfect expression. We cannot condone them; but we can understand them. And against them we can throw the weight of great achievement:

1 - Strong, powerful language. The language of the "Deutschland" is simple but rugged.

Thou mastering me God.
Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh
And after it almost unmade, what with dread, Thy doing.
2 - Delicate language: Hopkins' characteristic ruggedness might lead us to forget that his language was often as delicate as filigree. "Stealing as Spring through him ... melt him."
"A lingering-out sweet skill."

3 - Brilliant images: For example, the one of the hourglass in verse four.

4 - Mastery of Style:

a) With him the use of assonances and alliteration is organic and useful. For example, the alliteration in "cipher of suffering" (v.22) serves to identify the words, as the author means that they should be identified. And the assonance in "fall" and "all" serves to emphasize the contrast between God's "fall-gold mercies" and His "all-fire glances". (v.23)

b) The descriptions in the poem are functional; they are not sea-scape executed for their own sakes. They contribute to the gathering horror of the wreck.

"The sea flint-flake, black-backed in the regular blow
... whirlwind-swivelled snow."

(v.13)

He was pitched to his death at a blow
For all his dreadnought breast and braids of thew.

(v.16)

And the inbord seas run swirling and hawling;
The rash smart sloggering brine
Blinds her.

(v.19)

c) Meter is a means of communication: The feeling of agitation is effected in stanza 18 when "as with a sob, each line stumbles and falters over the threshold of the next. Each line borrows just two syllables of the next, and the regularity of this encroachment sets up a cross-current of pure expressional rhythm without disturbing the basic meter." Contrast this with the restraint of stanza 30.5

Ah, touched in your bower of Bone
Are you! turned for an exquisite smârt
Have you! Make words break from me here
all alone

Do you! mother of being in me, heart.

5 Gardiner, loc. cit., 130.
5 - Freshness of perception and expression:
"Lovely-asunder starlight."
"dappled-with-damson west."
"warm laid grave of a womb life gray."

6 - Felicities of sound:
"Under the world's splendor and wonder."

7 - Inevitable words:
Thou art lightening and love, I found it winter and warm;
Father and fondler of heart thou hast wrung
Hast thy dark descending and most art merciful then.

With anvil ding
And with fire, in him forge thy will.

In spite of its difficulty this poem is a great one; its
greatness derives from many things. The chief of these are the
grandeur of the theme and the "terrible pathos" of the author. It is
a great "inscape" in the sense that it is the sincere expression of an
authentic poet upon an important subject. And it is a great "inscape"
in another sense, because the style of the poem is great. Its diction
is powerful and original. Into it are crowded many beauties of sound --
of rhythm, of alliteration of assonance -- all of these together as an
actual totality. And scattered through the poem are jewels of
perception or of imagery or of expression.
"The Windhover"

After finishing "The Wreck of the Deutschland" Hopkins wrote forty five other complete poems. Of these thirty four were sonnets. Perhaps his most famous, and most discussed poem is the sonnet called "The Windhover". I will discuss this poem because it is so well known but more because it is so characteristic of Hopkins.

In a sense, this sonnet is a dangerous one to analyze. I. A. Richards, Empson, Read, Phare, Sargent, Pick, and others have each a different analysis of the meaning of the poem. I have another. To my mind each of these people try to get more out of the poem than it was ever meant to carry. The meaning I attribute to the poem is a literal, face value meaning. And I believe it goes far enough.

On June 22, 1879 Hopkins wrote to Bridges (Letter 61) that "The Windhover" was "the best thing I ever wrote". We should notice the date at which this statement was made and recall that Hopkins had nine fruitful years of poetic activity before him when he made the statement; we should never consider it as a final statement on a first choice from the whole body of his poems. Nor does the statement imply that somewhere in the poem we must find a statement of some great central idea of life or art -- an explicit statement, I mean, no matter how obliquely expressed.

The poem is dedicated to "Christ Our Lord". But this is a dedication, not a key to the meaning of the poem. A poem needed not, for Hopkins, to be about Christ to be for Christ. Any worthy poem should be dedicated to Him. His best poem most of all should be
dedicated to Him. "The only just judge, the only just literary critic is Christ, who prizes, is proud of, and admires, more than any man, more than the receiver himself can, the gifts of His own making." 6

The theme of the poem springs from a central concept in the esthetic and philosophy of Hopkins, springs from what is called his sacramental view of nature. He believed that every individual thing had an innate beauty which was to be realized in some way. This realization comes about when the individual thing exerts itself to the full extent of its individual powers -- when it is most fully itself. By realizing itself perfectly each individual thing proclaims the glory and power and majesty of God. The mountain by being a mountain proclaims God's massive power and enduring, eternal life. Fruit by ripening proclaims God's Providence. A bird lovely in flight proclaims God's thrilling Beauty. Each thing by being itself proclaims God. "Why", Hopkins asks, "did God Create?" 7 Not for sport, not for nothing ... God has a purpose ... a meaning in His work. He meant the world to give Him praise, reverence, and service; to give Him glory. It is like a garden, a field He sows: what should it bear Him: praise, reverence ... It is a bird he teaches to sing ... It is a book He has written, ... a poem of beauty: what is it about? His praise ... His glory." Hopkins says that the world is a bird, a poem of beauty. Three things: world, bird, poem of beauty -- they are the same. By metonymy the bird is the world, the part is the whole, the little poem is the great poem of beauty.

6R.I.D., 8.
7Note-Books, 301.
Only in the sense that the falcon stands for the whole of
creation or for any other creature fully realizing itself can the
bird be said to be metaphorical.

In "The Windhover" Hopkins is striking glory from one thing
of all the things "charged" with the glory of God, from a bird hurled
against the "rebuff" of the big wind, a falcon fully realizing all
the possibilities of its nature in glorious flight. Like the storm-
fowl in "Henry Purcell" with a stir of wings, it reveals "the sakes"
of him, the inner, marvelous secret of his being.

"La magnifica celebrazione dell' uccello nel movimento del suo
volo ... si espande nelle due quartine." The first two quatrains
are a magnificent statement of reality, are a perfect inscape. The
most communicative element of these lines is their rhythm. They must
be read aloud to be appreciated:

THE WINDOVER
To Christ Our Lord

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

8 Croce, loc. cit., 92.
The rhythm moves in waves like the undulating movement of a bird under stress but strong in flight. Sometimes the bird takes a long, diving sweep: "In his riding of the rolling level underneath him steady air." For a brilliant moment he is poised against the wind, "and striding high there". Then, like a banking plane, still poised and spread, he reels against the sky, "how he rung upon the rain of a wimpling wing in his ecstasy!" He chops the air with the effort of recovery, "then, off, off" -- again to come level in long smooth ripples of flight, "forth on swing, as a skate's heels sweeps smooth on a bow bend; the hurl and gliding rebuffed the big wind."

Enraptured, the poet speaks, "My heart in hiding stirred for a bird -- the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!"

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume here

Eukle! And the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion

Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down

Sillion

Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,

Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

In the flight of the bird there is not the beauty alone of inanimate things -- of feathers or of air -- or even of static qualities of living things: courage, pride, form; here is the greater, the exquisite beauty of all of these united in living action.

"Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume here Eukle (in this flight are joined, fused)."
From speaking to us the poet turns to speaking to the bird itself -- his chevalier. "AND then" he says "when your powers are not merely potencies but when they are all in full act, when you are not a mounted bird but a bird in an ecstasy of life, then your beauty is like a fire bursting from you, dangerous to consume the eye that dares to look at you. It is no wonder that this living beauty should be so 'dangerous'". The poet is still speaking to the bird, but with the reader in mind -- Slow drudgery makes a plow shine along a furrow and even blue-bleak embers, with no life in them at all, by falling can gall themselves, rainbow themselves into beauty.

I. A. Richards, and others after him, throw undue emphasis on "my heart in hiding". His interpretation, it seems to me, is entirely impressionistic, not warranted by the text, and based upon the mistaken idea that Hopkins become Jesuit was running away from life. His interpretation would make the poem one of remorse, or defeat. But the whole tone of the poem is that of joy. He would mistakenly place emphasis on "gall" in the last line as if it bore the connotation of bitterness (as gall: bile, bitter drink). In the last line fall, gall, and gash are haloed "gold vermilion". The simpler interpretation is confirmed by Hopkins' use of a similar expression, in a similar sense, "Ah, touched in your bower of bone are you! ... heart." ("Deutschland", v.18) That the tone of the poem is one of joy is confirmed by a remark in the "Journal" (November 8, 1874). Hopkins had seen a "vast multitude of starlings making an unspeakable jangle". He watched --
and described -- them wheeling and sweeping, like black flakes falling only to hurl back into life. And he concludes. "I thought they must be full of enthusiasm and delight hearing their cries and stirring and cheering one another." The thrill of delight he felt to be in the flight of the falcon he communicates to the poem.

That he should first narrate and then address now the reader, then the bird has precedent in "The Deutschland". In Part I, verses one, nine, and ten he speaks to God. In verse two he speaks to Christ. In verses three to eight he speaks to the reader. In Part II he narrates, addresses his own heart, God the Orion of Light, St. Francis. His thought leaps from the boat to heaven, back to his own chapel, to the boat again; it flashes again and again from narration to prayer.

The capitalization of AND is sufficiently explained as an attempt to emphasize the thrilling effect of the preceding summation. Buckle (join) all these things and put them in motion (here) And -- the static inscape will become incandescent with beauty.

"Ah, my dear" is too tender to refer to the reader, but not to the bird -- considering the poet's mood of exhilaration. The rhyming points to the identity of chevalier and dear. The insertion of the phrase between "embers" and "fall" is a kind of counterpoint, with the lesser beauty spilling before our eyes he recalls the greater, "Ah, my dear" and in the climax forces us to hold both beauties in mind at once. Both are beauties, and the lesser underscores the greater.

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9 Note-Books, 215.
In the poem everything is motion and life. Each line spills over into the next. The rhythm follows the wings of the bird, ignores the ends of the lines, sweeps and swirls. (The poem is scanned variously, cf. Lahey, p. 103). Words crowd upon each other. Because of alliteration we can not leave one word till two more are on our lips: "morning morning's minion" or more "Daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn". Subtle half rhymes like "minion" with "kingdom" lace the words together. Whole groups of words are logically resolved into one word: "The rolling level underneath him steady" is a single adjective. All the words are liquid flowing. \( L, m, n, r \) are liquids: see them all in the octet. Then in the long glide mark the lengthening effect of the alliterated s's and the sustaining force of the long vowels: "Sweeps smooth on a bow bend."

The octet is characteristic of Hopkins' successful poetic efforts. He has an authentic grasp on a reality, the exquisite joy of a living creature fully realizing its possibilities. His observation is full and accurate. And he exercises every faculty in communicating this glimpse of reality, this inscape. There is no time for showmanship, no thought for himself, no padding, no bejeweling; there is an austere, chaste, but intense effort at expression; the "terrible Pathos" is exercised. His rhythm is daring, powerful, "expressional". His language is strong, masculine, yet lovely in its fluidity. Every where there is art, not for the sake of art but for the sake of inscape. The imagery is bold and versatile: the bird is a minion, then the prince of dawn; he rides the air like a skiff; he pulls against it
like a horse on rein; he "bow-bends" across it like a skater's heel.
He chops the wind with his wings, mocks it with his hurl and glide,
with his supreme poise rebuffs it. Yet the unity of the octet is
perfect; every image, every rhythmic sound of movement, every internal
and end rhyme, each grace and artifice dovetails into a perfect
picture -- no, more than a picture, an inscape, a picture alive with
more than visual power, a picture that seizes at once the eye, the ear,
the imagination, the sense of rhythm. Seeing such an inscape is as
close as we can come to actually seeing the falcon.

The sestet of "The Windhover" is characteristic of Hopkins in his
less successful efforts. Here again there is strong language, strong
rhythm, bold imagery. But here we cannot be fully sure that we have
our finger on the pulse of the rhythm; we can not be positive that we
understand the imagery. The key word "buckle" is unruly. It can mean
"to break" or "to join" -- with variations. It can be a statement or a
command. The word "here" and the emphasis on "AND" are not altogether
unmistakable in their meaning -- nor are "chevalier" and "dear". In
these six lines the concentration is too intense. Some necessary
reference has been squeezed out of them. These six lines are like the
surface of a volcano's crater. Under them we feel warmth and movement;
out of them come the rumblings of powerful forces moving; in the cracks
we see glowing fire; but all the rest is lost beneath the surface.

The explanation which I have ascribed to the poem is, I believe,
correct. It gives an adequate explanation of every word and show of
emphasis in the poem. It is the direct and simple meaning of the text itself, calling upon no outside reference for its explanation. It is perfectly consonant with Hopkins' esthetic and style. The explanation is consonant with his esthetic because it illustrates the central idea of that esthetic, viz; a creature is very beautiful when it perfectly realizes itself. It is consonant with his style because Hopkins is not given to allegory, to various levels of direct meaning. "Harry Ploughman" Hopkins says, "is a direct picture of a ploughman, without afterthought." We may believe then that the octet of "The Windhover" is a similar direct picture, and that the sestet is a philosophical addendum to the effect that it is life (in act) which makes the bird so lovely.

Other meanings may be superimposed upon this direct meaning. Hopkins himself would allow this. In every poem he thinks there is an overthought (the obvious meaning of the text) and an underthought (an echo or shadow of the overthought). This underthought is "often only half realized by the poet himself, not necessarily connected with the subject in hand but usually having a connection."10 Morton Zabel says of Hopkins' poems "Like greatest poetry ... they come to us at a very advanced stage of realization but the final phrasing ... and the completed meaning still hover -- alluring though intangible -- beyond the grasp of the reader."11 As I have already suggested, by synecdoche

10_ Zabel, Poetry, XXXVII, 160.
the falcon could represent the whole world or any other creature fully realizing itself. The falcon could represent the man "who keeps grace", for in sonnet No. 34 Hopkins proclaims that man fully realizes himself when through grace he becomes Christ.

... the just man justices;
keeps grace: ...
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is —
Christ.

The falcon could be man after resurrection, with even inchoate perfection sublimated into final, full realization of human possibility.

I am all at once what Christ is, since He was what I am, and This Jack, joke, poor potsher, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond Is immortal diamond.

The falcon could be Christ on the cross, fully realizing His redemptive mission. The falcon could be many things. That is why the poem is fruitful. But in the poem itself the falcon, the chevalier, the dear is only a bird rebuffing a big wind.
"Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves"

"Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" is a poem which marks the apex of Hopkins' development in one direction. In this poem, we have richness, almost lushness, of diction, symbolism, rhythm, and sound. This richness, in the end of Hopkins' career, was to give way to the spareness of the "terrible sonnets". But here we have language like that of Masefield's "Cargoes", only more significant, like Coleridge's "Kubla Kahn" only less mysterious, with more substance beneath the sound.

The poem opens with a brilliant description of evening dissolving into night and all the world slipping to sleep -- "disremembering, disremembering all now." The poet asks his heart to remember that its evening is approaching, "our night whelms, whelms, and will end us." He asks his heart to recall that as night falls upon it, all the variety of its living will be threaded on two spools, one black, one white -- that of right and wrong. "Beware of a world", he says to his heart, "where only right and wrong really count, and where ascetic thoughts (thoughts in groans) are racked by selfish, unguarded, vain thoughts."

The tone of the poem is solemn. The meaning of the poem is "Beware!" It is an oracle speaking. We might imagine the majestic Sibyl of the Sistene Chapel had uttered a word -- "Beware!" Categorically, "Beware!"

"It is one of the finest things that he ever did", says F. R. Leavis. "It exhibits and magnificently justified most of the pecu-
liarities of his technique."\textsuperscript{12} "In comparison with such a poem of Hopkins as this, any other poetry of the nineteenth century is seen to be using only a very small part of the resources of the English language. His words seem to have substance and to be made of a great variety of stuffs. Their potencies are correspondingly greater for subtle and delicate communication."\textsuperscript{13}

Earnest Earthless, equal, attuneable, vaulty, voluminous ... stupendous Evening strains to be time's vast, womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night.

In the very first line of the poem we find assonance and alliteration deepening our curiosity as to what is "earnest...vaulty, etc." "In Hopkins assonance, alliteration, and inversion serve to call the maximum attention to each word." "Time's vast, womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night", is a brief, brilliant "Thanatopsis".

Her fond yellow hornlight wound to the west, her wild hollow hoarlight hung to the height Waste; her earliest stars, earl stars, stars principal, overbend us, Fire-featuring heaven.

Of these lines I. A. Richard says: "I cannot refrain from pointing to the marvelous third and fourth lines. They seem to me to anticipate the descriptions we hope our younger contemporary poets will soon write. Such synaesthesia has tempted several of them, but this, I believe, is the supreme example."\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12}op. cit., 182.

\textsuperscript{13}Idem, 186; cf. sq.

\textsuperscript{14}I. A. Richards, loc. cit., 200-201.
In the poem there is a most wonderful progression in thought, mood, and sound. We pass from the solemn deep melodies of "Earthless, equal, attuneable" to the brittle silhouettes "beak leaved boughs draggonish". It is almost mysterious the way everything changes on our lips; liquidity freezes, light becomes dark; soft becomes harsh -- "groans grind". An air of melancholy hovers over the poem, a subtle, poignant regret that evening must go, that the "dapple", must fade, that there must be the "awful dichotomy of right and wrong".

In the last lines, terrible lines, there is grief, there is pain; but there is no surrender, no bitterness of disillusionment, no doubt. The poet warns his heart to face a fact: "Beware!" he says -- that and no more. I. A. Richards and Leavis read defeat into the poem. It does not exist there. The soul-wringing grief of sonnets 41, 44, 45, 47, and 50 is implicit in the poem. But no more! Sonnet 40 tells us that the poet would not yield to despair. No. 46 tells us that patience will bring him peace. No. 49 (to Alphonsus Rodriquez) tells us that the poet himself is conscious of real, if hidden, achievement. And No. 48 tells us that his grief will be turned to joy -- that this "Jack, joke ... is immortal diamond."

"Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" is rich in phonetic beauties. But the great charm of this symphony of sound is that it is not independent of the text: it is a part of it. It is a singing of the meaning.

Hopkins was in sensibility not only a poet but a musician and a painter ... In Hopkins we have the unusual case of a great poet who can use his sensibilities as a musician and painter, not merely in
the by-practice of these arts, not merely as an enrichment or addition to his poetry, but as an integral part of his poetic genius."15

15 G.W. Stonier, loc. cit., 836.
Sonnet No. 50

Justus quidem tu es Domine, si disputem tecum: verumtamen justa
loquar ad te: Quare via impiorum prosperatur? etc.

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?
Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost.
Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend
Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes
Now, leaved how thick! laced they are again
With pretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes
Them; birds build -- but not I build; no, but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
Mine, O thou Lord of life, send my roots rain.

This is a mature poem. The author of all the power in the
"Deutschland" is here, of all the magic and beauty of "The Windhover",
"Binsey Poplars", "Spring", "Sibyl's Leaves", "The Leaden and the
Golden Echo". But here he is different, austere, sure. He has the
dignity of one who has suffered but yet trusts and loves. He has the
stature of the battle-tried. His style has the finish of a master.
Something wells out from deep within him, something which overwhelms
style, strips it to the nerves of power. This poem is beautiful in
its restraint, its disciplined power, its unaffected simplicity and
directness. It speaks for itself: I am at a loss: it has great
power and art and yet it is a miracle of simplicity. "le miracle
poetique est ici, que l'art est a la fois supreme et spontane, que
l'emotion du tourment sacre y parle toute pure ... Hopkins ...
atteint la force de l'age et du genie. Son art se serait simplifique;
il aurait atteint cet equilibre Miltonien auquel il tendait."16

16Bremond, loc. cit., 46; 49.
Here is beautiful symbolism: "Why do sinners' ways prosper?"
Here is superb diction: "In spare hours more thrive than I." Here is brilliant description: "See, banks and brakes, now, leaved how thick." Here is motility: "fresh wind shakes them." Here is assonance and alliteration: "Not one word that wakes." Here are all the conceits of artifice; but they are no longer artifice -- they are simple, direct expression.

The poem is spare. Nothing, no nuance of its expression is superfluous. Out of the heart a word of trust is breathed, "Thou art indeed just, O Lord."; out of the heart there is a sigh of sorrow, "look, ... but not I build;" deep within the heart a prayer is born, "Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain."
Special Aspects of the Poetry of Hopkins

The various facets of the poetry of Hopkins derive from the soundness of his theory of "inscape", from his great capabilities, and from his enormous sincerity. Certain aspects of his poetry are very individual.

1 - Hopkins loved life, motion: Two of his better known poems, "Deutschland" and "Eurydice" deal with storm-violence. But in all of his poetry there is a peculiar, proper motility or dynamism. The sky is not a stillness of blue: it is:

The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness
(Spring)

To him the stars are not gold in the night; they are "quick-gold".

And clouds do not sit in the sky, or even drift lazily:

Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows flaunt forth, then
chevy on an air--
built thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers, in gay-gangs they throng;
they glitter in marches.
(No. 48)

2 - Hopkins had extraordinary powers of description: His "terrible" masculinity, chastity, humility, earnestness (call it what you will) made him a patient observer of nature and men, and an honest one -- not a trifler. His genius made him a keen, a subtle observer. His earnestness removes his descriptions from all sentimentality and makes it the "terrible crystal". His genius makes his description a grace, a song, a new beauty. As we have already noted, I. A. Richards gave high praise to lines three and four of "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves". Those lines were not an isolated success.
... What is Spring?
Growth in every thing --

Flesh and fleece, fur and feathers,
Grass and greenworld all together;
Star-eyed strawberry-breasted
Throstle above her nested

Cluster of bugle blue eggs thin
Forms and warms the life within,
And bird and blossom swell
In sod or sheath or shell.

When drop-of blood-and-foam-dapple
Bloom lights the orchard apple
And thicket and thorpe are merry
With silver-surfed cherry

And azuring-over grey bell makes
Wood banks and brakes wash wet like lakes
   And magic cuckoocall
   Caps, clears, and clinches all --

This ecstasy all through mothering earth
Tells Mary her Mirth till Christ's birth.
("May Magnificat") No. 18

"That", says J. Middleton Murry, "is the primary element manifested
in one of its simplest, most recognizable, and, some may feel, beautiful
forms."17 Praise equally generous is given by Abbott, Kelly, Zabel,
Bremond, Stonier. Many other examples might be given. One is "Spring"

Nothing is so beautiful as spring--
   When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely lush;
   Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
   The ear, it strikes like lightenings to hear him sing;
   The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
   The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?
   A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden, -- Have, get, before it cloy,
   Before it cloud, Christ, Lord, and sour with sinning,
   Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
   Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

17 Loc. cit., 425.
One of the distinguishing characteristics of the descriptive power of Hopkins is his synaesthesia, that is, his ability to apprehend things by more than one sense and to communicate the multiple impression made upon him. In the poem just quoted the sense of rhythm is stirred by the motility of the imagery, "weeds, in wheels, shoot", "blue all in a rush". For the eye we have "eggs look little low heavens". For the ear we have "the echoing timber". For the tongue we have "What is all this juice?" "before it cloy...sour". For the finger we have "the glassy peartree" "Weeds ... long and lovely and lush." With Hopkins the description is not static -- it is alive, moving; one thing flows into another.

Hopkins' descriptive power -- rather power to represent, is not confined to descriptions of objects of nature, static, or as he loved them, in motion; it reaches out too to the communication of psychological phenomenon. I. A. Richards asks us to consider the following lines "as a means of rendering self consciousness";

Only what word
Wisest my heart breeds  dark heaven's baffling ban
Bars or hell's spell thwarts. This to hoard unheard,
Heard unheeded, leaves me a lonely began.

(No. 44)

Soul, self; come, poor Jackself, I do advise
You, jaded let be; call off thoughts awhile
Elsewhere; leave comfort root room; let joy size
At God knows when to God knows what; whose smile
's not wrung, see you; unforeseen times rather -- as skies
Betweenpie mountains -- lights a lovely mile.

(No. 47)
Hopkins' poetry is original: Originality is almost too obvious in the poetry of Hopkins to bear mention. A glance at any example already quoted shows that Hopkins mimics no one, "is devoid of echo and reference". Hopkins hews to the inscape. The inscape is his only reference. Language, symbolism, rhythm serve it. They are not ruled by the conventional, by a model, by a remembered phrase, by a fad; ruthlessly they are ruled by the inscape. "Hopkins' originality was radical and uncompromising."

"Hopkins ... writes only of his own experience. He is never derivative. Perhaps one must go back to the seventeenth century to find in English an equal solidity of spirit."

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18 Zabel, Idem, 154.

F. R. Leavis, op. cit., 167.

H. Pickman, loc. cit., 126.
APPENDIX TO CHAPTER V

Because of the difficult language which Hopkins uses to express the ideas of the "first part" its meaning is not clear in every detail. In order to indicate the meaning I found in each word of "part one" I am here appending a paraphrase of each verse of "part one".

1) God, my master, giver of breath and life and of bread and of the earth and the sea, Lord of the living and the dead, you have made me -- and then with fear almost unmade me (destroyed your doing). And now you touch me. I feel your touch, and feeling it, I find you.

2) When it lightninged and I saw your rod (of power and vengeance) I adored you (said yes to your power). You heard me truer than tongue confess your might -- i.e., by a swoon of my heart. You know the chapel and its walls and altar and the very hour of the night that my heart swooned before you, a heart beaten down by the force of your power (that the sweep and the hurl of you trod down hard with a horror of height) I was as one bowed over, trodden on, my middle astrain with the effort to keep even somewhat erect under the burden of fear, my back laced (?) with the feel of your power. ["Stress" here is evidently the stress of stanza 5 and 6, where it means the emphasis necessary to bring out the glory of God hidden in nature.]

3) With God's frowning face before me and the abyss of hell behind me -- where could I find a place of refuge. I whirled out wings during that crisis and flew to the heart of the Host. I can say that my heart then had the wings of a dove -- I can boast that it had the
wit of a carrier pigeon to fly from flame to flame (trouble to Master of trouble -- or, from truth to truth) and from grace to grace.

4) I am like sand in an hour glass, steady against the glass but in the middle undermined, steadily drifting to the fall -- I am like water in a well, steady, poised but always joined (roped) all the way down from the mountain's side (voel's flank) with a gospel truth, pressure or principle. (The meaning seems to be: I am very weak myself but I take courage because of a gospel truth: God's stress is only meant to show us his awfulness.)

5) Since I have been stressed -- i.e., since I have been made to realize God's awfulness, I kiss my hand to the stars and the starlight which now tell me of Him. I glow and glory in thunder and again kiss my hand to the sunset west. The stress is necessary, for though God's image lies under the world's splendor and wonder it must be brought to our attention -- and I adore Him (greet Him) and praise Him only when I am made to realize His might.

6) Although few realize the fact the emphasis upon His awfulness, communicated alike by stars and storms, hushing guilty, thrilling and melting hearts, comes not from His eternal nature but from the necessities of time as such. (This truth demands strong faith from the faithful and is completely missed by the faithless.)

7) This emphasis on his awfulness, this stress (it) dates from His going to Galilee, from Mary's womb, from the manger, the maiden's knee, from the passion -- that was the flood tide of this emphasis, though it was felt before and even now is strongly felt.
7-8) What no one would have known about God's awfulness [here "it" means "awfulness" and not "emphasis on awfulness"] is now made known only because the heart has been driven to bay (has been stressed).

8) Oh, we lash with the best or worst word last [? we save the most telling word -- whether best or worst, to the end: bring it home with emphasis: so this truth must be brought home.] Just as certainly as a lush-kept, plush capped plum will, when bitten fill a man (the man being in a flash brimful with it) with a sweet or sour taste so certainly all men sooner or later come to Christ's feet (never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it).

9) Be adored amongst men, Triune God; With wrecks and storms chastise Thy rebel -- man's stubborn malice. You are at once a terrible lightning and a love sweet beyond saying. Beyond ability of the tongue to tell; You are a winter, yet warm; Father and fondler of the heart which Thou hast wrung; Thou chastiseth and in so doing art most merciful.

10) In man forge Thy will with an anvil ding and with fire -- or like Spring steal within him and melt him, but master him still. Make mercy in all of us, either suddenly as with St. Paul or with lingering out sweet skill as with St. Augustine. Show us Thy mastery; be adored; be adored King.
There is a close resemblance between verse 9 of the "Deutschland" and Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven", vi, 11, 15, 29:

Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, same only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou mightest seek it in my arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise clasp my hand, and come!

Halts by me that footfall;
Is my gloom afterall,
Shade of his hand, outstretched caressingly?
Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am he whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.

Ah, must--
Designer Infinite! --
Ah, must thou char the wood, ere thou canst limn with it?

Thompson's theme is that chastisement, stress, is necessary to bring out God's loveableness which underlies the world. Hopkins' theme is that stress is necessary to bring out God's adorableness.
In a letter to Bridges on August 21, 1877 (No. 37) Hopkins defends "The Wreck of the Deutschland" against various charges which Bridges had made.

1) "I may add for your greater interest and edification that what refers to myself in the poem is all strictly and literally true and did all occur; nothing is added for poetical padding."

2) "With the exception of the Bremen stanza (12) which, I think, was the first written after ten years silence before I had fixed my principles, my rhythms are rigidly good -- to the ear." He claims that he is more strict than any poet in history -- according to his own system of sprung rhythm.

3) There is no counter-pointing: it is excluded by sprung rhythm.

4) "My verse is less to be read than to be heard ... it is oratorical, that is the rhythm is so ... If it is obscure do not bother yourself with the meaning but pay attention to the best and most intelligible stanzas, as the last two of each part and the narrative of the wreck."
CHAPTER VI

THE INFLUENCE OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

The Channel of Hopkins' Influence:
The Literary-Pelagian Mind.

Something about Gerard Manley Hopkins which seems simply to be taken for granted without analysis is the slow growth of his influence. It is true that the fact that he never published his poems and that he forbade his friends even to give notice to them naturally delayed the spread of his influence. However, we might ask ourselves why Bridges waited until 1918 (from 1888) to publish the poems and their merits even then were so slowly to be commonly recognized. It is probable that Bridges felt that the literary world was not prepared to receive the poems of Hopkins. He introduced the poems gradually into various anthologies; and when he felt that the possible readers had acquired some interest in Hopkins and enough faith in him to survive shock, he published most -- not all even then -- of the poem and fragments. It was left to Charles Williams in 1930 to publish the remaining fragments.

There are two facts which explain why Hopkins was slow to be recognized. First, he was an innovator in rhythm and in the use of diction, in directness and in sincerity. It took readers some time to shake themselves loose enough from old expectations to recognize the new values in sound and execution. It took them time to realize how earnest Hopkins was, not in using words but in inscaping -- in communicating reality. Furthermore Hopkins is a difficult poet. And it took time for a notable number of patient readers to pass upon his work and agree upon its merit. But the second explanation is at least equally
as illuminating as the first. Hopkins' poetry came to us from Oxford: It came because it was great poetry. But because it was the poetry of a Catholic priest it came clouded over with misunderstanding.

Bridges, Abbott, Mrs. Phare, I. A. Richards, J. M. Murry, Gardiner, the men who presented Hopkins to the world all had a certain mentality or frame of mind which I am going to call the Pelagian Mind. The Pelagian Mind is like the moon; it is lighted on one side but the other side is always dark — and sometimes we forget this darkness. The Pelagian Mind, as I use the term, is passionately devoted to literature and is in factual and mechanical knowledge uncannily knowing. Its judgment upon these matters is sound. There is no higher recourse. The soul of literature,

1The choice of a name for this mentality has been difficult. Pelagian must be understood in a very special sense. It refers primarily to the men I specifically name; and, since it is a word of my own choosing, it has the implications which I give to it. It is meant to describe a group of English men of letters who, like Matthew Arnold, find literature a religion in itself. They are Pelagian precisely in the sense that they presume human nature entirely good in itself and, especially when enhanced with an austere, earnest tradition and spirit, sufficient to find and satisfy its own aims in life. They are Anglican in the sense that they give evidence of not understanding the Catholic Church and of being repelled by it. This repulsion, of which they seem unconscious, is deep within them, coming to them as part of their tradition, subtly communicated by many things they touch, by the books they read, by their associations with each other. They do not reason about it. It simply is. The Pelagian is defective because there is something (which actually exists) which he feels he need not examine or reason about. He feels, a-rationally, that he knows religion and the Church are baneful or foolish.
however, is life -- living men and the living world. There is a subtle interplay between even the mechanics of literature and an author's concept of the meaning of life. But above all there is an ineradicable relationship between a poem's or a poet's philosophy of life and the ultimate "meaning" he wishes to convey to his audience. Sometimes it is possible for a poet and a critic or an audience to have different philosophies of life and yet to understand each other perfectly. The critic's understanding may derive from one of two things:

1) Either that the poet speaks only of things common to the philosophies of both himself and the critic

2) Or that the critic is capable of and willing to assume for the moment the frame of mind of the poet.

Thus, for example, an atheistic critic could fully appreciate the characters of the Catholic Chaucer's "Canterberry Tales", the heartiness of the Host, the delicacy of the nun, the coarseness of the wife of Bath. He could appreciate the patience of Griselda or the dangers of gold, because even as an atheist he sees the human foibles of men and recognizes patience as a virtue and too much gold as a danger. Or again any monotheist can understand and appreciate the polytheistic literature of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Hindus, or the mythology of Greece and Rome, if he is willing to learn the facts involved and enter into the mind of the poet.

But if the critic either fails to realize or refuses to realize that the author is attempting to communicate an experience which the
critic himself never had, the critic will miss the poem -- it will get by him. Thus a poem about the joy brought by ancient memories means nothing to a ten year old boy, and the "Angel in the House" would be repulsive to the Manichaen Cathari. A critic, then, who does not understand the experience of an author or who consciously or unconsciously is repelled by the author's experience is incapable of full appreciation of the author.

The Pelagian Mind understood a great deal about Hopkins, appreciated a great deal in his poetry -- more than any one else did, but there was a fork where the two minds walked away from each other. Hopkins went his Catholic way. The others went their (Anglican) eclectic way.

The Pelagian Mind is very proud of its achievement (which, in its own field, is very great); nevertheless it is a mind limited by nescience and prejudice. These limitations go far back. They go back to the establishment of the Church of England. With the passing of years the tenets of Anglicans shifted and divided. The center of gravity for Anglican belief was still Rome. All doctrines were measured by one standard: Towards Rome? Away from Rome? The High Church, in the course of time, became a hollow shadow of Rome. The sustaining belief of the Low Church was and is that Rome is Babylon and its Church is Anti-Christ. The Broad Church or Latitudinarianists scorn dogmas in favor of "sweetness and light". The Pelagian Mind comes from the Broad Church. It has deep roots in the revolt against the church of Rome. Somewhere in its tradition that spirit of revolt hardened against all dogmas, rituals, and believers; it believed that man was sufficient unto himself. To God --
to conventions it said "Non Serviam!" In Mathew Arnold, the esthete, (as I have previously pointed out) the Pelagian Mind made its own god, became idolatrous and knelt down before words. In Bridges, it seems to have remained purely Pelagian, for, as Abbott says, "Religion meant for him not assent to a particular creed but a manner of life dependent upon the discipline of his own mind and body."²

The Pelagian Mind does not permit itself to be questioned. It is a law unto itself. It has a tradition of which it is proud. According to its own judgment literature is the greatest thing in life and the Pelagian Mind has contributed mightily to the development of English literature. The Pelagian Mind does not ask, "If we are not right -- with our austerity, our tradition of earnest scholarship -- who could be right?" It simply entrenches itself: "We are right." The Pelagian Mind is a proud mind -- not a vain or frivolous, but proud, admitting no norm beyond itself.

As a result of this pride (and perhaps of an unconscious fear that it may be wrong) the Pelagian Mind, ostrich-like, hides its head from reality. Some reality it simply denies; it refuses to examine, to know. Hopkins says cryptically to Bridges, "You say you don't like Jesuits. Did you ever see one?"³ To some reality its tradition forces it to react not with its intelligence but with its emotion. The Pelagian Mind in its inner heart is automatically afraid of the Catholic Church, of

²R.B., Introduction, xlvi.

³R.B., 40.
Jesuits -- automatically repelled by the word "priest", automatically revolted by the word "confession" or "sacrament", automatically contemptuous of a Catholic.

Therefore, while the Pelagian Mind is brilliantly prepared to evaluate Hopkins' language, his diction, his rhythms, his prosody, his purely natural feelings and emotions, and a considerable body of his thoughts, it is very much unprepared to understand the very heart of his feelings and some of his deeper thoughts:

1) From ignorance of what the Catholic Church is.
2) From ignorance of what the priesthood is.
3) From ignorance of what the Society of Jesus is.
4) From a difference in viewpoint on the final values in life.
5) From the purely emotional reaction of repulsion and fear at the sight, sound, or thought of "Roman Catholic".
6) Above all, from its inability or unwillingness to see that it does not understand or that it is biased.

I am not making charges or accusations, not entering into a controversy. I am simply making a statement. I am making an explanation. The Pelagian Mind simply does not understand Church, priest, Jesuit, grace, beatific vision. Words are only symbols -- and these words have no proper denotation for the Pelagian Mind and they connote something big, bad or foolish, but somehow indestructible.

Claude Abbott is the Pelagian Mind in every turn and facet of his thinking. The experience of Hopkins as a priest, as a Jesuit, mean no
more to him than the experience of a monk in a lamasary in secret
Indo-Asia. In his introduction to the letters to Bridges, Abbott
develops the thesis that Hopkins was never a religious poet but
rather was a poet of nature who tried to give a religious twist to
his poems. He finds Hopkins' poems sensuous, full of original
observations of nature, of feeling for it, of joy in it; but he does
not believe the poetic joy in reality is ever perfectly wedded to the
religious exemplum or moral turn.

He regards Hopkins as genius with great powers of observation,
a severe honesty, a powerful originality, great feeling for and
mastery of words and rhythm -- as one capable of being perhaps the
greatest poet in the English language. Then, he finds, Hopkins'
conversion and entrance into the Jesuits threw him off balance.
Hopkins thereafter led a troubled life, and lost some of the poise
and surety characteristic of Bridges. Hopkins' conversion did not
throw Hopkins off balance nearly so much as it threw Abbott off his
trail.

With the Pelagian Mind there is no effort to get into the Catholic
mind -- as there would be to get into the Hedonistic mind of the Persian
Khayyam or the Greek mind of Homer. "To Bridges the priesthood raised an
insuperable barrier:" says Abbott, "He had, and rightly, a profound
distrust of the Society of Jesus." (xliv) There you have it. The priest-
hood is not something to be examined, its effects were not to be looked
for or evaluated -- No. Gratuitously, it is a barrier, no more. He dis-
trusted the Society of Jesus -- "and rightly". Why rightly? My point
is not whether or not Mr. Abbott is correct. My point is this: why does
Abbott make this assertion? On what grounds? He gives no grounds. He merely asserts.

He frowns upon dogmas, beliefs, "the discipline of a church," because they are narrowing. But Bridges "accepted the discipline of tradition and found freedom therein." Both are disciplines -- but gratuitously, one narrows, one does not. There is no discussion. The Pelagian Mind has spoken. Ipse dixit.

The Pelagian Mind, the self-sufficient mind deliberately confines itself to blindness. It admits no law beyond itself. It will decide what reality is to be examined and what is not. Reality will not coerce the Pelagian Mind -- nothing will. Some reality is given no audience.

To someone -- not necessarily a Catholic but one acquainted with Catholic ideas -- the nature poetry of Hopkins is not a "concession to the weaker side of him". It is on the contrary the gathering to an ooze of a deep inner conviction of the sacramental purpose of nature -- to exhibit in its own way the glory of God, to give news of God. To Abbott and to a mind informed on this subject the terrible sonnets -- most of the poems mean something different. To Abbott they mean something a little futile, a little mean, the whimperings of a man who wants to give up a pagan love of nature and worship of words but cannot bring himself wholly to do so. To Abbott they mean the regrets, the realization of a man with a mistaken ideal. To one who understands Hopkins they mean the real sufferings of a man struggling with ill health, with spiritual difficulties, with his work, with lack of singing
inspiration. The poems are electric with pain, but they are full of patience, of resignation of hope. There is wrestling with God (No. 40) but no cringing in despair. The suffering is not that of aridity, as if faith had dried up his soul: Hopkins is willing to weary-march with One he loves. "Mark Christ our King. He knows war, served this soldiering through." He does not count his life wasted -- that of Roderiguez was not! His life was not all darkness: "God's smile ... unforeseen times rather ... lights a lovely mile." He is not a strayed Pelagian, wanting to come back: self is not enough -- "I see the lost are like this, and their scourge to be as I am mine, their sweating selves." He does not look back -- he strived to "keep grace" and hopes for the day in which "This Jack is immortal diamond." Hopkins would never have turned into a pillar of salt.

Abbott -- the Pelagian Mind -- had a religion. "Poetry is, in itself, a religion." (xlvi) Hopkins had another. Because the Pelagian Mind could not or would not bring itself to see what that meant to Hopkins, in many things it simply could not understand him. It was as if he used a familiar, gleaming medium with a foreign significance.

"As it stands", says E. E. Phare, "Felix Randal" fails, though it is difficult to say why, and the rather peevish fault finding in which I have been indulging does not make clear why it should be so. It seems that the motion of accepting or rejecting a poem comes from the very quick of the will; it is rarely possible to give a wholly satisfactory account of one's reasons for doing one or the other." Yet the reasons

for her rejections are not far to seek. The experience described is one which means nearly nothing to her. She has, if any, only the vaguest idea of what a priest would do on a sick call and next to no idea of how he would react to his task. Unconsciously, perhaps, she finds the whole situation somehow, "from the very quick of the will" repulsive, a priest, anointing, sacraments.

Half the length of her book later she says, "I sometimes suspect that we are many of us so certain that becoming a Jesuit must involve some unnatural and undesirable deformation or repression that we are prepared to see oddities in a Jesuit poet where there are none."5

William Gardiner says, "To others (than the ardent Catholics) it ("The Wreck of the Deutschland") will perhaps rather suggest the tragedy of faith and the triumph of pure poetry." What tragedy for faith?

I kiss my hand
To the stars, lovely-asunder
Starlight, wafting Him out of it.

How could Abbott understand " Heraclitean Fire and the Resurrection" who said "It is our good fortune that his name belongs to literature and not to hagiography. " (xlvi)

To Bridges devotion to Mary or the Trinity was "mannerisms".6

To Gardiner "Trinitarianism, Marianism, martyrology, saint-worship are fervent irrationalities."7 To I. A. Richards "traditional morality"

5Idem, 141.
6Notes to Poems, 96.
7Loc. cit., 151-152.
is -- gratuitously, of course, "a night". "Intellectually Hopkins was too stiff, too cogged and cumbered with beliefs, those bundles of invested emotional capital." The supremely assured, the name-calling Richards misses the real Hopkins completely. "The poet in him was oppressed and stifled by the priest ... All Hopkins' poems are in this sense poems of defeat." Richards does not understand the pain of Hopkins because he does not understand the struggle of Hopkins. He does not understand the struggle because he misunderstands why Hopkins struggles. He identifies pain with defeat simply because to him, Richards, pain would be defeat. He accuses Hopkins of emotionalism because his own emotional bias has closed for him the door to that part of reality upon which the intellect of Hopkins was acutely working.

Poems of defeat?

Away grief's gasping ...
Across my foundering deck shone
A beacon, an eternal beam ...
In a flash, at a trupet crash
I am all at once what Christ is.

J. Middleton Murry thinks that Hopkins suffered from "a starvation of experience which his vocation imposed upon him." What is experience? At its best experience is contact with living reality. The Pelagian Mind (which presumably has sufficient experience for literary purposes) has absolutely no experience of supernatural reality, which, since reality admits of no degree, is as real as anything can be -- but is eternal and

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8 Loc. cit., 203; 199.

9 Athenaeum, loc. cit., 426.
not just temporal in its implications. In human experience Hopkins, the
convert -- with the struggle that involves --; the priest -- the
confessor, the teacher, the comforter; the professor -- Hopkins with
his sensitive soul, his acute awareness of things and people, Hopkins who
suffered -- had far more valid experience than most of the representaives
of the Pelagian Mind, who are fenced in by bookishness and smugness. The
Pelagian Mind may not be able to understand much of the experience of
Hopkins but that does not subtract reality from it.

Considering "those bleak corridors of the religious life" into which
Hopkins had walked, Hester Pickman thinks that he preferred Scotism
because "it was a reaction against the rigidity of the Summa, a theology
allowing more freedom for individual thought and so more scope for
mysticism." This amazing sentence reveals that Miss Pickman understand
neither Scotism, the Summa, mysticism, nor -- more to our point --
Hopkins. She thinks that Jesuit training "tends to desiccate the average
man; and certain temperaments of the creative and artistic type are unsuited
to it." Jesuit training does not desiccate; it un-sentimentalizes.
And in an artist, purging of the emotions is wholesome. No one ever
accused Hopkins of being unemotional; nor did anyone ever accuse him of
being sentimental. His emotions, trained not "thwarted", are true.

The Pelagian Mind meant to be kind to Hopkins -- it meant, in a way,
to take him back into its fold -- but it defeated itself: "An instance
of grave critical insufficiency is the harm done to a poet, Gerard Manley
Hopkins ... By some process of critical winking they ignored his religion.

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10 Loc. cit., 120; 121.
his worship of God in nearly everything he wrote. ... But there are two facts about Hopkins -- that he was a Victorian in style, outlook and feeling, and that he was a Catholic priest who wrote poetry to the glory of God. -- These facts have been recognized by no critic whom I can trace.

... Religion hardened him morally and intellectually, provided him with a background infinitely better to his genius than Greek myth, and brought into his poetry the polyphony of style, parti-colour of pattern, and the expanding, realistic and passionate force of his great work.\(^1\)

It would be unjust only to complain against the Pelagian Mind in its relationship with Hopkins. Any admirer of Hopkins must be very grateful to the Pelagian Mind. Bridges sincerely loved and admired Hopkins and his poetry. When a Jesuit magazine was rejecting the poetry of Hopkins, Bridges was devotedly saving it, saving the letters of Hopkins. He encouraged Hopkins, helped him, gave him every means of respect and honor -- the Catholic, the priest, the Jesuit, whom he could not, in some ways, comprehend. Others, too, of the Pelagian Mind prospered Hopkins' fame by their attention to him, their praise of his art. But it is a fact, nevertheless, that when Hopkins walked out of Oxford and into Rome and Manresa, he crossed the bourn into an undiscovered country to which the Pelagian Mind would not go. And what dreams did come to him there the Pelagian Mind did not understand. But the unfortunate part -- on the purely critical level -- was that it did not know that it did not understand. It often made Hopkins appear a

puzzle to others because it misunderstood him. The whole attitude of the Pelagian Mind tends to cast a cloud of obscurity around Hopkins. They praise him for technical strength, daring, originality, for fineness of spirit, sincerity, earnestness, intelligence, and then confute their praise with slurs of "weak", "emotional", "defeated". There is confusion; but it is in the Pelagian Mind more than in that of the poet. The poet went out into

the sea flint-flake, black-backed in the regular blow

but came through to

where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb
Out of the swing of the sea.

The Pelagian Mind sits on the shore he left and says, "There is no Peter's bark; there is no Noah's ark. If the waves beat against him, he is defeated. What he does out there we can know and measure from here. -- He says the deluge of falling waters makes a "Golden Echo" as well as a "Leaden Echo". They never did from here. He is wrong, poor man --

So be beginning, be beginning to despair
0 there's none; no, no, no, there's none;
Be beginning to despair, to despair
Despair, despair, despair, despair.
The Nature of Hopkins' Influence

The influence of Hopkins has been and will be spiritual and not technical. To Hopkins the "inscape" was the only important thing. And inscape is individual, unique — either an individual reality, an authentic grasp of reality, or an "individually distinctive beauty of style". Hopkins himself would not want the "juniores" to borrow his vision, his vocabulary, or his style. He would want them to look, to see, to say for themselves. He wants no one to echo him. He wants each poet, artistically, to be himself. There is, however, a spirit, an atmosphere, an air about Hopkins. Others, after him, have caught this spirit or breathed this atmosphere. They have found it good; and now they walk in it. "He is now felt to be a contemporary, and his influence is likely to be great. It will not necessarily manifest itself in imitation of the more obvious of his technical peculiarities ... but no one can come from studying his work without an extended notion of the resources of English." 13

12 This section is not a study of the actual, detailed influence which Hopkins has exerted. It is a summary comment on the nature of the influence he has and will exert. The nature of his influence — spiritual rather than technical — flows from the character of his poetry (and poetic principles) which has been the object of study in this thesis.

13 Leavis, op. cit., 192.
His influence has been exerted in three ways:

1) He has shown that the key to beauty is authentic realism — that is, "inscape", a true glimpse of some actual reality. He has led others to accuracy in observation, to rigid honesty in appraisal and judgment of physical or psychological fact.

2) He has been boldly original. He has validated any break from convention or tradition which is sanctioned by sincerity and technical knowledge. His originality is at once a barrier and an invitation. It is a barrier because demands so much to sanction it. To be so original a poet must have the "avant toute chose" which J. Middleton Murry admires in Hopkins. He must never be original just for effect but always for the sole purpose of explicating an inscape. The originality of Hopkins is further a barrier because it is so full of art, of device, of classical training and skill. It is not the often barbarous originality of Whitman — a scorning of tradition, of the collected learning of the past. It is rather an originality which takes full account of the past but refuses to stop with the present. Hopkins does not break with the past; he builds upon it. His originality is an invitation because it has resulted in a strong, distinctive beauty of expression.

3) His return to the spare root of the English language, his use of rhythm and sound have opened new visions for poets.
"Hopkins, as far as can be judged, has done posterity a signal service; so far from setting up a Chinese wall, he has broken down several barriers which no longer served any purpose; and the publication of his poetry in 1918 has left English poetry in a condition which seems to have many new possibilities."14

Some Judgments Upon Hopkins

To emphasize the greatness of the achievement of Gerard Hopkins Bremond points to the fact that both Bridges and Dixon had to overcome serious difficulties of religious difference in order to appreciate Hopkins: yet they did. He explains away Bridges' coldness in the "Introduction" to the notes by asserting that Bridges commented on only the faults of Hopkins because he thought the virtues of Hopkins to be of so high an order that they needed no comment. He called the "Deutschland" a dragon not only because it had a forbidding aspect but also because it guarded a treasure.

To Claude Abbott Hopkins remains to the end a poet thwarted, yet a poet whom we cannot consider "without marveling at the individual imprint he gave even to work admittedly occasional. To a poet endowed with senses so rare, understanding so deep, so fine a sense of rightness and so masterly a power over words, anything would seem possible."15

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14 Phare, op. cit., 7.
"He is likely to prove, for our time and for the future, the only influential poet of the Victorian age, and he seems to me the greatest," says F. R. Leavis.\textsuperscript{16}

In his "Collected Essays in Literary Criticism" Herbert Read says, "Hopkins is among the most vital poets of our time, and his influence will reach far into the future of English poetry." And in the "Criterion" he adds "When the history of the last decade of English poetry comes to be written by a dispassionate critic, no influence will rank in importance with that of Gerard Manley Hopkins."\textsuperscript{17}

Mrs. Phare says, "Hopkins' work is never better than in the terrible sonnets and the 'Windhover'." They represent the deepest point touched by his poetry, which runs in a channel exceptionally pure and deep; though it is not, like Shakespeare's, a springing river with many tributaries. Using Arnold's touchstone method, the critic might easily find that Hopkins' best poetry is not dimmed or made seem trivial by comparison with the best of Shakespeare and Dante. He has not their variety but his best poetry is not inferior to theirs in kind. Arnold's phrase "high seriousness" describes most justly the quality of Hopkins' greatest poems. His poetry is that of a man with exceptional intelligence and exceptional sensibility, who is constantly taking into account all the facts of his experience; he uses religion not as a solution but as an approach, a way of keeping all the facts in mind


\textsuperscript{17} Op. cit., 149.
without losing sanity. ... Hopkins in his best work comes as near as, say, Dante, to making his experience available to all: he merits the extreme of popularity which he himself, a critic as just as modest, thought his due."

We may apply Cardinal Newman's definition of a great author to Hopkins and witness how closely, how accurately the definition describes him. Using other words it repeats a definition of "inscaping". "A great author, Gentleman, is not merely one who has a copia verborum, whether in prose or in verse, and can, as it were, turn on at his will any number of splendid phrases and swelling sentences; but he is one who has something to say and knows how to say it. ... He may, if so be, elaborate his compositions, or he may pour out his improvisations, but in either case he has but one aim, which he keeps steadily before him, and is conscientious and single-minded in fulfilling. That aim is to give forth what he has within him; and from his very earnestness it comes to pass that, whatever be the splendour of his diction or the harmony of his periods, he has with him the charm of an incommunicable simplicity. Whatever be his subject, high or low, he treats it suitably for its own sake ...

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"He writes passionately, because he feels keenly; forcibly, because he conceives vividly, he sees too clearly to be vague; he is too serious to be otiose; he can analyze his subject, and therefore he is rich; he embraces it as a whole and in its parts, and therefore he is consistent; he has a firm hold of it, and therefore he is luminous. When his imagination wells up, it overflows in ornament; when his heart is touched, it thrills along his verse. He has always the right word for the right idea, and never a word too much."

The highest tribute -- if it be understood -- to "the roll, the rise, the carol, the creation" of Hopkins' verse is that which he unconsciously paid himself when he said:

I caught this morning morning's minion, ...

in his riding... high there.

And the highest tribute to the poet, the man, the priest who was Gerard Manley Hopkins is that he always remembered to

Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, beauty, back to God, beauty's self and beauty's giver.

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19 Idea of a University, p. 291.
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THE POETIC PRINCIPLES OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

by

Thomas J. Grady

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Master
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Vita

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CHAPTER I

FORMATIVE INFLUENCES WHICH ACTED UPON GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

To make an intensive and accurate study of a poet's principles of art one may not be satisfied with an examination of only the principles themselves. The principles must be illuminated and explained. Obviously, the study of a man's poetry will make clearer and perhaps amplify his statement of poetic principles. A study of the language of the poet's age or a study of his own characteristic language may throw new light upon his statement of principles. A study of the literary opinion of the poet's time -- of his adherence to convention or rejection of it -- may throw his opinions into bolder relief. A study of the man behind the principles may well deepen our understanding of the objective meaning of the principles themselves.

In the explanation of the poetic principles of Gerard Manley Hopkins many things are involved; some of these things are not primarily literary or esthetic but are personal. As a poet and a critic Hopkins was individual, independent, and human. His principles, when they most interest the critic, are peculiarly his own. His personality pervades his esthetics and his art. So I will begin this paper with a chapter in which I will discuss the personality of Gerard Manley Hopkins and then Hopkins' sympathy for his literary contemporaries.

Gerard Manley Hopkins was born into a family of artists. His father, Manley Hopkins, had published a book of verse, a history
of Hawaii, and a book on marine insurance. One of Manley Hopkins' sisters gave her nephew, Gerard, an early training in music and painting. Uncles on both sides of the family were painters. His brothers, Arthur and Everard, were to become artists. One of his sisters was facile in sketching, another in writing verse, a third, Grace, in composing music.

Gerard himself was of that bent of nature which we call "artistic". At the age of five or six he showed precocious ability in music and drawing. Although at Highgate and Balliol his interests were ex professo intellectual, he found time to sketch and draw and to make and write down innumerable observations on clouds and trees and waves and winds. After his "confession" to Lidden his chief concern in life was steadfastly religious and spiritual, and his occupations were parochial or pedagogic; yet he still found time to catch the "inscapes" of lovely things, to visit art galleries, to study and compose music, to write and criticize poetry.

Hopkins' interest in art was never more than that of the dilettante. Before he entered the Society of Jesus in 1868 he frequently illuminated the notes in his diaries with sketches; but afterwards he drew very little. On February 12, 1868 in a letter to A. W. M. Baillie Hopkins says: "You know I once wanted to be a painter ... the higher and more attractive parts of the art put a strain upon the passions which I should think it
unsafe to encounter.¹ This sacrifice of ambition, this forging of his gifts "into a pattern that should bear witness to the glory of God" was generous but was not so regrettable as Claude Colleer Abbott would seem to imply.² In one of his own appendices to the Correspondence with Dixon, Abbott gives a brief account of the extant sketches by Hopkins and concludes with these words:

The impression left by this work (except for the early drawing) is in contrast to that conveyed by the poems. The attraction lies in the careful, sustained observation of detail and beautiful finish rather than in bold grasp or freshness of approach. Here is charm, not strength; acceptance, not discovery: and the charm has in it small sign of future growth.³

Hopkins' talent for and amateur practice in art did, however, have a noticeable effect upon his poetry and his ideals of art. He has the sensibility of an artist; he sees colors and light and shadow truly; he has a just sense of form, of composition, of the balancing of masses. He has the artist's firm grip upon detail.

¹Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited with Notes and an Introduction by Claude Colleer Abbott, Oxford University Press, New York, 1938, 84. (In the footnotes to come this volume will be referred to as F.L.).


My aspens dear ....
Not spared, not one
That dangled a sandalled
Shadow that swam or sank
On meadow and river and wind-wandering weed-winding bank. 4

Rose moles all in stiple upon trout that swim. 5

Above all, it would seem to be from his early artistic reveries
and studies of nature that he came upon the notion "inscape". In his
early note-books and papers the word is often used. Such a fruitful
meditation may be found in his "Journal" under the date of August 10,
1872. On that day he had been studying the waves, watching their
contour and the pattern of their breaking.

About all the turns of the scaping from the
break and flooding of the wave to its run
out again I have not yet satisfied myself.
The shores are swimming and the eyes have
before them a region of milky surf but it
is hard for them to unpack the huddling and
the gnarls of the water and law out the
shapes and the sequence of the running. 6

Later, we shall see how he posed as the chief aim of the poet to find
the "scape" of things, "to law out" their reality and reproduce it in
verse. In "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and in "The Loss of The
Eurydice" we find him attempting to "law out" in verse the swirl and
turmoil of storm-waves.

4"Binsey Poplars", No. 19.
5"Pied Beauty", No. 13.
6The Note-Books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited with
Notes and a Preface by Humphry House, Oxford University Press,
New York, 1937, 164. (In the footnotes to come this volume will
be referred to as Note-Books).
Hopkins deliberately put art out of his life. It had a place in his early life; it had an effect upon his mind. In his later years only the effect remained. The chronology of his interest in music, however, is different. We know that he had an early training of some sort in music, but he seems first to have taken serious interest in music only in the year he began his Theological studies at St. Bueno's, 1874. In a letter of January 22 of that year he tells Bridges that he has begun to learn to play the piano "not for execution's sake but to be independent of others and learn something about music." During the next six years he often mentions his interest in music, tells of examining some music by Bridges, tells of admiring Purcell and Charles Weber.

In June of 1880 he speaks of having composed some music to the "Spring Odes" (the music has never been found) and says:

I sorely wish I knew some harmony ...
I wish I could pursue music; for I have invented a new style, something standing to ordinary music as sprung rhythm to common rhythm; it employs quarter tones. I am trying to set an air in it to the sonnet 'Summer Ends Now'.

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7 The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, edited with Notes and an Introduction by Claude Collee Abbott, Oxford University Press, New York, 1935, 30. (In the footnotes to come this volume will be referred to as R.B.).


9 Ibidem.

10 R.B., 102.
In 1884 he again mentions his "new art". He is putting Collins' Ode to Evening to music. And he describes his music as unusual in air and harmony. "What came out was very wild and very strange and (I thought) very good ... as near a new world of musical enjoyment as in this old world we could hope to have."\(^{11}\) The air is that of plain chant where it is most different from modern music.\(^{12}\) The harmony is more advanced, he says, than that of any modern music. The result is a "new art; the effect is unlike anything I have ever heard. The combination of the two things (air -- harmony) is most singular ... also most solemn ... something very good."\(^{13}\)

Apparently Hopkins was very well pleased with his progress in music when in May of that same year he wrote: "Do I mean to rival Purcell and Mozart? No. Even given the genius, a musician must be that and nothing else, as music now is; at least so it has been with all the great musicians."\(^{14}\) During the next three years of aridity, he was unable to write much verse and he seemed to turn to music for the relief of his creative capacities. During 1888

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\(^{11}\)R.B., 199-200.

\(^{12}\)Hopkins admired plain chant very much. "The only good and truly beautiful recitative is that of plain chant; which indeed culminates in that. It is a natural development of the speaking, reading, or declaiming voice and has the richness of nature." (R.B., 280.).

\(^{13}\)R.B., 211.

\(^{14}\)R.B., 220.
Hopkins' interest in music loomed so large that Bridges upbraided him for it and Hopkins defended it.\textsuperscript{15} In his last letter to Patmore, May 20, 1888, he ends his correspondence speaking of music which he has sent to Sir Robert Stewart for correction. In his last letter to Bridges, April 29, 1889 he likewise ends his correspondence speaking of his music.

Although Hopkins himself seems to have been confident of the worth of his music, in the judgment of the critics who saw it, especially of Sir Robert Stewart, there was in it no great merit or valid originality but rather a certain amateurishness, a stubborn unorthodoxy and flare for unschooled invention.\textsuperscript{16} Bridges begrudged Hopkins the time he took away from poetry to spend on music. Abbott notes that while Hopkins worked under grave disadvantages in music, the work was not barren.

One is tempted to think that music instead of poetry became his dominant passion. Did he perhaps believe it possible for him to glorify God more completely and wholeheartedly in this sister art? Notes are more impersonal, less earth bound and dangerous than words. Or had he reached that stage in poetry when music rather than words seemed the natural creative continuation?\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{15}R.B., 277; R.B., 295.

\textsuperscript{16}R.B.D., Appendix III, 167-170.

\textsuperscript{17}R.B., Introduction xxxiii.
"Binsey Poplars" and especially "The Leaden Echo and The Golden Echo" would give some plausibility to this last statement. It is certain, however, that Hopkins' interest in music strongly colored his ideas about poetry and the poems he wrote. As we will see later he composed orally and meant his poems to be communicated orally, to be declaimed. He frequently put the poetry of others to music and several times stated that his poems should be "almost sung". His poems were to be strongly rhythmical and were to be pregnant with delicate sound effects or internal rhyme, alliteration, assonances.

Charles Trueblood has gone so far as to define the poetry of Hopkins as a "sound pattern". And E. Clarke says:

Monosyllabic Saxon is at the root of Hopkins' architectural method. But he was also a musician, and it is not difficult to detect a mechanized musical notation tapping like a little hammer along his lines. In this -- and in this alone -- is he unique among the poets. Generally speaking, poetry is not so nearly related to music as to sculpture. It is specifically lapidary. Hopkins knew this but enriched the whole tradition of English verse by embroidering into it the conceits of the violin and the piano without in any way destroying its fundamental simplicity. Therein lay his genius.

A fact often neglected in considerations of the mind of Hopkins is this, that while art and music and even poetry were avocations with Hopkins, classical study in a certain sense was

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19 "Gerard Hopkins, Jesuit", Dublin Review, CLXXXVIII, 133.
his life-long vocation. At Highgate and at Balliol he was a brilliant student. In 1859 he wrote a prize poem, "The Escorial". In 1862 he won a gold medal for his prize poem "A Vision of Mermaids". In 1863 he won an Exhibition for Balliol College. In 1867 he took a double first in Greats. And no less a person than Jowett called him the Star of Balliol and referred to him as one of the finest Greek scholars he had ever seen at that college. In 1867 he taught at the Oratory School, Birmingham. In 1873 he taught classics at Manresa House, Roehampton. In 1882 he taught classics at Stonyhurst. From 1884 until his death he held the Chair of Greek at the Royal University, Dublin. His published lecture on "Rhythm and the Other Structural Parts of Rhetoric - Verse" is a conventional treatment of the mechanics of verse under five general headings, but it is bristling with classical reference and formidable terminology derived from Greek prosody. In a letter to Bridges on October 21, 1886 he announces his intention to write a book upon the Dorian rhythm. In February of the next year he tells Baillie that this book on Pindar's Dorian measure is "nominally on this but with an introduction on the philosophy (for the speculation goes pretty deep) of rhythm in general." In the same letter he speaks at

\[\text{Note-Books, 221-248.}\]
\[\text{R. B., 233-235.}\]
\[\text{F. L., 128-134.}\]
length of his Homeric studies. In English verse his two great models and authorities and prophets were Milton and Shakespeare. Many of his ideas about rhythm are referred to his studies of Milton, especially of the Samson Agonistes. In practical criticism, for Hopkins the final, the ultimate norm was comparison with Shakespeare, the great master. It is very important to remember Hopkins' broad and deep classical background. Then we will begin to notice that his critical ideas follow a strictly classical pattern and that he is if anything too strict in his insistence upon rule and conventional science. We will notice that his verse forms are conventional. Then we will be prepared to look upon his innovations with a proper perspective, seeing in them not a break from classical traditions in English poetry but an opening up of new possibilities within traditional forms.

Suffering and The Poet

A man who has suffered has an outlook which is different from that of a man who has not. Suffering either ennobles or embitters; of its nature it cannot leave one unmoved. Poor health brought no small measure of suffering into the life of Gerard Hopkins and had an effect upon his poetic theory and upon his poetry. In a letter to Arthur Hopkins, C. N. Luxmore describes Hopkins as a schoolboy, a boy who was admired, well liked, who got into games, but who evidently was not very robust since he went under the name of "Skin". 23

23 F.L., Appendix I, 247-249.
In a Page of Irish History Father Darlington, a contemporary of Hopkins, says: "Though he was not subject to actual attacks (of epilepsy) he suffered more or less continuously from nervous depression, and like Curtis, he died at a comparatively early age."

He himself puts it in this way: "I have no sickness -- but I am always tired, always jaded though work is not heavy, and the impulse to do anything fails me or has in it no continuance." In letter after letter he complains of ill health; in one he goes so far as to say "I think my fits of sadness, though they do not affect my judgment, resemble madness. Change is the only relief. And that I can seldom get." He finds that Lent is hard upon him, with its change of diet. Examinations put a great strain upon him; even lecturing wears him down. Long hours in the confessional made him sick even to vomiting. Circumstances of his life conspired to make his health worse; His conversion to Catholicism was a great spiritual struggle which left him physically exhausted. From Birmingham he writes to Baillie that he has almost no energy and

\[24^R.R., 183.\]


\[R.W.D., Letter 27.\]

\[F.L., Letters 39, 42, 50, 51.\]

\[26^R.R., 216.\]
that teaching exhausts him, "that one sees and hears nothing and nobody here" ..... "But if I am a priest it will cause my mother, or she says it will, great grief and this preys on my mind very much and makes the near prospect quite black."

Father D'Arcy points to Hopkins' Victorian brittleness:

"They have startled and still startle the traditional Catholics by their inability to unbend." He hated the smoke and the dirt of the cities; and their puny, deformed citizens revolted him in spite of himself. "My Muse turned utterly sullen in the Sheffield smoke-ridden air." "One is so fagged, so harried and gallied up and down. And the drunkards go on drinking, the filthy, as the scripture says, are filthy still. Human nature is so inveterate. Would that I had seen the last of it." In the very last years of his life his "exile" in Ireland, his lack of inspiration, and his spiritual aridity all combined to make him suffer most intensely. That Hopkins was exquisitely sensitive to this pain -- "turned for an exquisite smart" -- is abundantly clear both from his letters and the "terrible" sonnets. In a letter to Baillie he says:

27 F.L., 84-85.


29 R.E., 85.

30 R.D., 110.
Three of my intimate friends at Oxford have thus drowned themselves, and a good many more of my acquaintances and contemporaries have died by their own hands in other ways; it must be, and the fact brings it home to me, a dreadful feature of our days. The melancholy I have all my life been subject to has become of late years not indeed more intense in its fits but rather more distributed, constant, and crippling. One the lightest but a very inconvenient form of it, is daily anxiety about work to be done, which makes me break off or never finish all that lies outside that work. It is useless to write more on this: when I am at the worst, though my judgment is never afflicted, my state is much like madness.31

In a letter to Bridges he says: "In mind or body or both I shall give way." Then he speaks of the commonness of suicide, and, while suffering himself from gout of the eyes, tells how a sick boy tore out his own eyes.32 So when Hopkins cried out in anguish in those last sonnets, he was crying from the depths of his own soul:


32_R.B., 282-283.
I am gall, I am heartburn.

(No. 45)

Wert Thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me?

(No. 50)

I cast for comfort I can no more get
By groping round my comfortless, than blind
Eyes in their dark can day ......

(No. 47)

But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me
Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lionlimb against me? scan
with darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones.

(No. 40)

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them
cheap who ne'er hung there.

(No. 41)

"Never, I think", Aldous Huxley has written, "has the just man's
complaint against the universe been put more forcibly, worded more
tersely and fiercely than in Hopkins' sonnet. God's answer is
found in that most moving, most magnificent and profoundest poem
of antiquity, the Book of Job."33

33Quoted by John Pick in Gerard Manley Hopkins Priest and Poet,
Oxford University Press, New York, 1942, 153. The sonnet
referred to is No. 50.
Perhaps it is because he was so familiar with hard things that Hopkins did not hesitate to propose poetic ideals that would be hard to realize. He demanded an all but impossible concentration. Thought was to be stripped to its essence, to its inscape. Feeling was to be intense yet austere. Language was to be spare yet full of music. Symbolism was to show distinction yet never to be mere ornament. And all of these things were to be fused into a living oneness, into a single "bright and battering sandal". Each poem is to ring out its own music:

............each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;

He knew the value of following out rules with fierce fidelity:

Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;

Yet the rebellious wills
Of us we do bid God bend to him even so.

And so we find him a stickler for rules; the few rules of sprung rhythm must be adhered to absolutely; the caesura must always break the Alexandrine line; the structure of the sonnet is inviolable, etc. Suffering made him sober; there is no dreaminess in either his theory or his poetry. Suffering made him realistic; he is not the effete Swinburne or the placid Tennyson. Suffering taught him the patience that made him wait seven years for the birth of the "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and the realization of the experiment in rhythm which "for long had been haunting my mind". Suffering contributed to the patience with which he clung
to his theories and practice in spite of the rebuffs and misunderstanding of his small audience. Perhaps, too, it ennobled his natural patience in the observation of nature, human nature in particular, his patience in struggling for more than le mot just, for the right inscape. Above all, suffering gave him a profound humility which is one of the most attractive characteristics of his personality and of everything that he ever wrote, a humility that was not timid but was reverent, strong, virile, and very earnest. It was this humility which made him a Catholic and a priest; it was this humility which made him hate sham and charade in verse, that made him recoil — in spite of their recognized abilities — from Whitman because he was a "great scoundrel", 34 from Carlyle because that "gigantic genius" was not earnest and did "not fight fair in the field of fame", 35 and from Ruskin because "his wrongness undoes all his good again". 36 It was this humility that made him see the world charged with the grandeur of God and made him vividly feel the loveliness of creatures as creatures, and made him strive to make the creatures of his own mind so lovely.

34_ R. B., p. 155.

35_ R. W. D., 59.

36_ F. L., 166.
"Hopkins' genius was as much a matter of rare character, intelligence and sincerity as of technical skill: indeed in his great poetry the distinction disappears; the technical triumph is a triumph of spirit." 37

Jesuit Poet

The great turning point in the life of Gerard Hopkins as a poet and priest was his conversion to the Catholic Church in 1866 and his entrance into the Society of Jesus in 1868. He had gone to Balliol from a moderately high church family. At Oxford he found two "religions", aestheticism with an undercurrent of hedonism, and liberalism, which was counteracted by the Tractarian Movement. The religion of aestheticism had been given its original impetus by Ruskin when he published Modern Painters. Keats was in full sympathy with this spirit of Ruskin. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, with Dante Gabriel Rossetti as their chief representative, were the trustees of the aesthetes. From 1857 to 1867 Mathew Arnold, the high priest of pure aestheticism, held the Chair of Poetry at Oxford. Pater, who ultimately formulated his refined hedonistic ethic of Cyrenaic intensity, was a teacher and friend of Hopkins. Hopkins seems to have been affected only slightly by aestheticism as a religion. He did however retain throughout his life a love for pure beauty as intense as that of the aesthetes. He was as

competent as they in recognizing and fashioning pure beauty in verse. But he learned what they did not, the nature of absolute Beauty and the proper perspective in which to hold "pure beauty". Hopkins at Oxford first leaned towards rationalism or liberalism, but in 1864 he returned to the high Church with Liddon as his confessor. In 1866 he became a Catholic; two years later he became a Jesuit.

Many, like Bridges, Baillie, Abbott, Phare, and John Gould Fletcher think that Hopkins' entrance into the Society of Jesus blighted his poetic career. It seems to me that these people are mistaken; their attitude will be more specifically treated in the last chapter of this thesis in a discussion of what I call the "Pelagian Mind". Others think that the peculiar genius of his poetry came precisely from the fact that he did become a Jesuit. They grant that he already had natural talent, genius, fine classical training; but they rightly assert that the discipline and sufferings and consolations of his spiritual life ennobled and enriched his powers. From his spiritual life he received new, solid inspiration and new, workable subject matter. The aestheticism of Arnold is barren and sterile; it reminds one of the blue-white lip of a tall glacier frozen against the sky; there is beauty but a bitter coldness. Though he became poet-laureate Bridges lacks force and greatness. He was a craftsman; he had fine feelings; but he lacked depth and his work lacked substance. It is Hopkins the Jesuit whom we find warm and human; it is he not they who arouses
us, who searches our hearts, who moves us; he communicates true
rapture before natural beauty and true grief in pain; he speaks
of a world we know -- of men -- of children we know; he speaks from
a man's heart, Hopkins the Jesuit. He made the "Morning, Midday and
Evening Sacrifice", (No. 24). He sacrificed his "poor Jackself" and
found his humanness

Never flees more, fastened with the tenderest truth
To its own best being and its loveliness of youth: it is an ever-
lastingsness of, O it is an all youth! (No. 36)

Daniel Sargent draws a long a priori argument on the masculinity
effected in Hopkins by his becoming a Jesuit. He argues from the
fact that the spirit of the strong willed Ignatius predominates his
society and that the development of a strong will is the chief aim of
the training of a Jesuit. As an a posteriori and more cogent argument
he adduces a comparison of "The Wreck of the Deutschland" with the
effeminacy of the pre-Jesuit poems. John Pick makes a great body
of Hopkins' poetry seem to be meditations in verse adapted directly
from the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius.

These facts about the relationship of his priesthood and his
poetry are clear:

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38 Daniel Sargent, Four Independents, Sheed and Ward, New York,
1935, 117-186.
(1) His entrance into the Society of Jesus interrupted his production of poetry from 1868 to 1875 and caused him to burn whatever manuscript poetry he had at hand in 1868.39

(2) It curtailed the quantity of his poetry and the amount of time he could give to theorizing. In 1879 he declares any intention of ever publishing his poetry, although he does like to have it in one place. "I can not in conscience spend time on poetry, neither have I the inducements and inspirations that make others compose. Feeling, love in particular, is the great moving power and spring of verse and the only person I am in love with seldom, especially now, stirs my heart sensibly and when he does I cannot always 'make capital' of it, it would be sacrilege to do so. Then again I have of myself made verse so laborious."40 Just before entering upon his thirty day retreat for the tertianship he declares his position with regard to composition:

39 R.W.D., 14.
40 R.B., 66.
I shall, in my present mind, continue to compose, as occasion shall fairly allow, which I am afraid will be seldom and indeed for some years past scarcely ever, and let what I produce wait and take its chances; for a very spiritual man once told me that with things like composition the best sacrifice was not to destroy one's work but to leave it entirely to be disposed of by obedience. 41

And during the break day of the retreat he repeats his resolution to write only under obedience. He comments that brilliance does not become his order and that he is prepared to leave his poetic aspirations entirely in the hands of Christ. 42 He refused to give Dixon permission to give his poetry notice in an "abrupt footnote" saying that he had no thought of publishing until all circumstances favor. "One of them should be that the suggestion to be published should come from one of our own people. I could wish that my pieces could at some time become known but in some spontaneous way, so to speak, and without my forcing." 43 Apparently the rejection of the "Deutschland" and the "Eurydice" by the Jesuit magazine Month made him fear that anything he ever would want to publish would not get the "Cum Permissu Superiorum". 44 In 1885 he says

41 R.W.D., 88.

42 R.W.D., 96-99; "Christ," he has said, "is the only just judge, the only just literary critic." R.R.D., 8.

43 R.W.D., 27.

44 R.B., 200.
"I can scarcely believe that on that or anything else, anything of mine will ever see the light of publicity."45

(3) His entrance into the Society of Jesus gave him new subject matter -- that is, not just the world -- but now the world charged with the glory of God. "God's Grandeur", "Pied Beauty" and "Hurrahing in Harvest" come very close to being verse statements of the "First Principle" of the Spiritual Exercises.46 The last sonnets are very much like the "Discernment of Spirits" in the Exercises; they describe the phenomenon of spiritual aridity and give the standard remedies. John Pick's study of Hopkins is a long elaboration of the point I merely suggest here.

(4) His entrance into the Society gave him a new stature as a man. The suffering, the work, the discipline which it involved, the unpleasant surroundings into which it brought him served to make him a fuller man. His renewed love of God, his genuine charity in spite of natural repulsions, his devotion to the Blessed

45 R.B., 221.

46 See the Spiritual Exercises themselves or, more pertinently, Hopkins "Sermon, Based on the Principle or Foundation" (Note-Books, 201) Compare this with the poems mentioned, or even with the "Windhover".
Virgin Mary gave him a finer heart. His natural sincerity and honesty were developed into a profound chastity of mind, a temper of soul which Dixon has called "terrible pathos", which colored and made great his own writings as he said the gentlemanliness of Dixon colored and ennobled his writings.

(5) It gave occasion to the development of his experiments in verse. For the development of truly great work the classical Romans believed that leisure was needed, a certain freedom from strain, "otium". Hopkins' seclusion from the field of professional poetry gave him just such a freedom from strain. He had no need to keep in the current of the day; he had no need to cater to critics, to the public or to financial support. For seven years the idea of sprung rhythm hung in his mind like an echo. With no violence but by insistent attractiveness the rhythm assumed a full mastery over his mind, a mastery strong enough to survive the rejection of the "Deutschland" and the "Eurydice", the bewilderment of Bridges, the gaping horror of Patmore, and the respectful astonishment of Dixon.

(6) His entrance into the Society influenced even his purely poetic principles. Poem No. 34 gives a "Jesuit" explanation for his demand for absolute honesty and earnestness. Spareness is very characteristic of the Jesuits; as
Hopkins himself said, brilliance does not become them. Jesuits are soldiers in the Company of Christ; individuals are not important, the glory of God is important. Therefore with the Jesuits there is no fuss about manner or about individuals; there is no flare, no pretention. The Jesuit's idea is to get to the essentials, to do what is to be done as quickly and as well as possible for objective reasons -- and that is pretty close to Hopkins' idea of poetry, to get to the innscape and realize it with concentration and sincerity.

All of Hopkins' poetry, poem by poem, bespeaks the man, the poet, the priest: the three inextricably one. His poetic principles bespeak the Jesuit certainly not exclusively but nevertheless noticeably. "L' Hopkins fu un gesuita-poeta, e non gia un poeta-gesuita."47

**Hopkins' Friends**

Of incalculable importance to the development of Hopkins as a poet and critic was his friendship with Bridges, Dixon, Patmore, and Baillie. A poet must have an audience. An experimentalist must have someone upon whom he can test his findings. Because he never published, Hopkins was deprived of a public. But these friends gave him an audience. Perhaps

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it was just as well this way. The public would have been struck with horror at Hopkins' poetry; critics would have berated him. His small audience was indeed made very uneasy by his poetry, but it was patient with him. It admired him and knew his true value; it was willing to suffer something in order to enjoy something. Bridges is something of an enigma in his relationship with Hopkins. Bridges had a great talent for friendship and he had great appreciation for true poetic ability. He loved Hopkins and -- to the amazement of Fatmore -- he loved the poetry of Hopkins. To Bridges the spiritual and religious life of Hopkins was a natural mystery in which he had no great interest but which he regretted in Hopkins because he felt that it interfered with his poetry. Being in most cases the first ever to see Hopkins' poems, he was struck by them with a shock more intense than we of a later day would feel. His "Preface" to the poems -- as well as a great deal of his correspondence -- points to his awareness of the faults in Hopkins' poetry. The fact that he kept more accurate and more complete copies of Hopkins' poems than their author points to the fact that he valued them. Bridges was a real friend. He gave Hopkins serious attention, he criticized him, he encouraged him, he sympathized with him. Sometimes Bridges is

48 F. L., 208.

49 "Bridges came up and Rover bit him." "Bridges came up" means that Bridges liked Hopkins. "And Rover bit him" means that Hopkins often baffled Bridges. Note-Books, 117.
pedantic, superior, bigoted; but he did great service to Hopkins and he has done great service to all who have read Hopkins. Fortunately, Richard Watson Dixon was slow to attune his ear to the rhythms of Hopkins and he provoked him to many explanations of his poems and theories. He gave Hopkins less artistic appreciation than Bridges but a better human understanding. Patmore gave great admiration but little appreciation. Baillie was sympathetic to certain of Hopkins' theories of language, but he distracted Hopkins into fruitless interest in Oriental languages.

Hopkins and His Contemporaries

The literary world of Hopkins' day certainly had an influence upon him. Just what that influence was is very difficult to determine. Hopkins exercised a confident, independent judgment upon all the Romanticists and Victorians. He was certainly a disciple of no one of them, as he might be said to have been of Shakespeare and Milton. But he read them carefully, studied their faults and their virtues, and in his correspondence speaks freely of them. The only evidence we have is that Hopkins did actually have definite opinions about his immediate predecessors and contemporaries. These opinions certainly occasioned the statement of many of his poetic principles; perhaps they even contributed to the formation of some of them. We cannot say: the evidence is not conclusive. I prefer to use these

50 F. L., 204-205.
statements in their proper places in the exposition of what Hopkins thought a poem and a poet should be (chapters II, III, IV); but I will, nevertheless, give a summary of his ideas about these men.

In a letter to Patmore on January 3, 1884 he remarks on an examination given with a prize for the best arrangement of living authors. The winner, he said, placed Browning first; but he felt that the usual run was Tennyson, Ruskin, Newman, Mathew Arnold, Browning.51 Thus he names for us the leading literary figures of his day.

In another letter he tells Dixon how he classifies the men of his day into four schools:

I must hold that you and Morris belong to one school, and that though you should neither of you have read a line of the other's. I suppose the same models, the same masters, the same tastes, the same keepings, above all, make the school. It will always be possible to find differences, marked differences between original minds; it will be necessarily so. So the species in nature are essentially distinct, nevertheless they are grouped into general they have one form in common, mounted on that they have a form that differences them. I used to call it the school of Rossetti: It is in literature the school of the Pre-Raphaelites. Of course that phase is in part past, neither do these things admit of hard and fast lines; still consider yourself, that you know Rossetti and Burne Jones -- was it the same or your sympathy for him? This modern medieval school is descended from the Romantic school (Romantic is a bad word) of Keats, Leigh Hunt, Hood, indeed of Scott early in the century. That was one school; another was that of the Lake poets and also of Shelley and Landor; the third was the

51 F.L., 201.
sentimental school, of Byron, Moore, Mrs. Hemans, and Haynes Bailey. Schools are very difficult to class: the best guide, I think, are keepings. Keats' school chooses medieval keepings, not pure nor drawn from the middle ages direct but as brought down through the Elizabethan tradition of Shakespeare and his contemporaries which died out in such men as Herbert and Herrick. They were also great realists and observers of nature. The Lake poets and all that school represent, as it seems to me, the mean or standard of English style and diction, which culminated in Milton but was never very continuous or vigorously transmitted, and in fact none of these men unless perhaps Landor were great masters of style, though their diction is generally pure, lucid, and unarchaic. They were faithful but not rich observers of nature. Their keepings are their weak point, a sort of colourless classical keepings: when Wordsworth wants to describe a city or a cloudscape which reminds him of a city it is some ordinary rhetorical stage-effect of domes, palaces and temples. Byron's school had a deep feeling but the most untrustworthy and barbarous eye, for nature; a diction markedly modern; and their keepings any gaud or a lot of Oriental rubbish. I suppose Crabbe to have been in form a descendant of the school of Pope with a strong and modern realistic eye; Rogers something between Pope's school and that of Wordsworth and Landor; and Campbell between this last and Byron's, with a great deal of Popery too, and a perfect master of style. Now since this time Tennyson and his school seem to me to have struck a mean or compromise between Keats and the mediævalists on the one hand and Wordsworth and the Lake School on the other (Tennyson has some jarring notes of Byron in Lady Clare Vere de Vere, Locksley Hall and elsewhere). The Lake School expires in Keble and Faber and Cardinal Newman. The Brownings may be reckoned to the Romantics. Swinburne is a strange phenomenon: his poetry seems a powerful effort at establishing a new standard of poetical diction, of the rhetoric of poetry; but to waive every other objection it is essentially archaic, biblical a good deal, and so on: now that is a thing that can never last; a perfect style must be of its age. In virtue of this archaism and on other grounds he must rank with the mediævalists.

52 R.W.D., 98–99.
In another letter he adds to this:

The strictly poetical insight of our poetry seems to me to be of the very finest, finer perhaps than the Greek; but its rhetoric is inadequate -- seldom first rate, mostly just sufficient, sometimes even below par ... Wordsworth ... with great spiritual insight into nature ... but not knowing that sonnets have a natural charpente and structure never or at least seldom to be broken through: for want of knowing this his inspired sonnets ... suffer from 'hernia', and combine the tiro's blunder with the master's perfection. 53

In criticizing the poetry of Henry Patmore, Coventry's son, Hopkins says:

What first strikes in the poems is the spontaneous thoughtfulness, the utter freedom from the poetical fashion and the poetical cant of the age and all that wilderness of words which one is lost in in every copy of magazine verse one comes across ... But if the poems have a shortcoming beyond points of detail it would be in flow, in the poetical impetus and also in richness of diction: they are strong where this age is weak -- I mean Swinburne and the popular poets and, I may say, Tennyson himself -- in thought and insight, but they are weak where this age is strong. 54

The four schools, then, are: The Romantic School, the Lake School, the Sentimental School, and Tennyson's School. The Arch-Romantic is Keats; with him are Leigh Hunt, Hood and Scott. These are great realists and observers of nature. They are weak, however, in that they depend for their subject matter upon material inherited from the middle ages through the Elizabethans. The Lake School includes the poets of the Lake and also Shelley and Landor.

53 F.W.D., 141.

54 F.L., 188-189.
The great virtue of this school is its diction, which is pure, lucid, unarchaic, after the manner of Milton's diction though not of the same high quality as his. The members of the Lake School are faithful but not rich observers of nature. Their subject matter is classical and colorless. The Sentimental School includes Byron, Moore, Mrs. Hemans, and Haynes Bailey. Not so much is to be said in praise of this school. Its diction is modern but its observation of nature is false and its subject matter is exotic triviality. The School of Tennyson represents a compromise between that of Keats and that of the Lake poets. Swinburne is a unique poet, orientally fluent but weak in thought and feeling.

To the age as a whole Hopkins attributes, in general, two virtues and two faults. The poets of the age enjoy fine poetical insight — a deep, true vision of beauty — and an admirable flow and richness of diction. On the other hand they lack an adequate science of verse writing, frequently lack thought, and sometimes lack character.

The poet about whom Hopkins made his most complete declaration of opinion was John Keats. His criticism of Keats is a valuable revelation of his own deep feeling for beauty (which, I think, made Keats attractive to him), of some of his own poetic principles, and of his opinions of the age of Keats. Hopkins had a very high opinion of Keats: "Keats' genius was so astonishing, unequalled at his age and scarcely surpassed at any, that one may surmise
whether if he had lived he would not have rivaled Shakespeare."\(^{55}\)

For Hopkins such comparison with Shakespeare represents the highest possible praise. Apparently Hopkins had all his life a rather settled opinion about Keats: he was a youth, ill-instructed, with the highest talents and deepest feeling for beauty, who died too soon. To Bridges he early called attention to Keats' "deep feeling ... for concrete beauty, wild or natural beauty."\(^{56}\)

He considered comparison to Keats in some things very high praise.\(^{57}\) Still he found in Cap and Bells, in spite of its good rhythmical qualities, "such a piece of nonsense that I had not the patience to read it through."\(^{58}\) His opinion was never questioned or developed until in 1887 he read a review by Patmore of Colvin's book on Keats. Then he wrote two letters which give his complete criticism of Keats. The first letter represents his life-long opinion. The second letter represents a somewhat though not essentially modified view.

\(^{55}\)R.W.D., 6.

\(^{56}\)R.B., 132.

\(^{57}\)Vide R.B.3; R.W.D., 37; 133.

\(^{58}\)R.W.D., 78.
His poems are, I know, very sensuous and indeed they are sensual. This sensuality is their fault, but I do not see that it makes them feminine. But at any rate (and the second point includes the first) in this fault he resembles, not differs from Shakespeare. For Keats died very young and we have only the work of his first youth. Now if we compare that with Shakespeare's early work, written at an age considerably more than Keats's was it not; such as Venus and Adonis and Lucrece, it is, as far as the work of two very original minds ever can be, greatly like in the virtues and its vices; ...

He was young; his genius intense in its quality; his feeling for beauty, for perfection intense; he had found his way right in his odes; he would find his way right at last to the true functions of his mind. And he was at a great disadvantage in point of education compared with Shakespeare. Their classical attainments may have been much of a muchness, but Shakespeare had the school of his age. It was the Renaissance: the ancient Classics were deeply and enthusiasmely studied and influenced directly or indirectly all, and the new learning had entered into a fleeting but brilliant combination with the medieval tradition. All then used the same forms and keepings. But in Keats's time, and worst in England, there was no one school; but experiment, division, and uncertainty. He was one of the beginners of the Romantic movement, with the extravagance and ignorance of his youth ... About the true masculine fibre in Keats's mind Mathew Arnold has written something good lately.59

Since I last wrote I have reread Keats a little and the force of your criticism on him struck me more than it did. It is impossible not to feel with weariness how his verse is at every turn abandoning itself to an unmanly enervating luxury. It appears too that he said something like 'O for a life of impressions instead of thoughts!' It was I suppose, the life he tried to lead. The impressions are not likely to have been all innocent and they soon ceased in death. His contemporaries, as Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and even Leigh Hunt, right or wrong, still concerned themselves with great causes, as liberty and religion; but he lived in mythology and fairyland the life of a dreamer. Nevertheless I feel and see in him the beginnings of something opposite to this, of an interest in higher things and of powerful and active thought ...

His mind had, as it seems to me, the distinctively masculine powers in abundance, his character the manly virtues, but while he gave himself up to dreaming and self indulgence of course they were in abeyance ... Reason, thought, what he did not want to live by, would have asserted itself presently and perhaps have been as much more powerful than that of his contemporaries as his sensibility or impressionableness by which he did want to live, was keener and richer than theirs ...

He was, in my opinion, made to be a thinker, a critic, as much as a singer or artist of words ... one of his last works shews a deliberate change in style ... Even when he is misconstructing one can remark certain instinctive turns of construction in his style, shewing his latent power.60

60 F.L., 237-239.
About Wordsworth, too, Hopkins had a great deal to say. And in Wordsworth too he found much to admire and much to deplore. In his Platonic dialogue "On the Origin of Beauty" he makes his own mouthpiece say: "I must not allow anything against Wordsworth." Against a charge of Canon Dixon Hopkins warmly defends the greatness of the "Ode to Immortality":

Now the interest and importance of the matter were here of the highest, his insight was at its very deepest, and hence to my mind the extreme value of the poem ... The execution is so fine.

But in an early essay (1865) on "Poetic Diction" Hopkins takes issue with certain statements in the "Preface" to the Lyrical Ballads and argues that the concentration necessary in the language of poetry necessarily differentiates it from the language of common speech. In a letter to Bridges he complains that in the sonnets of Wordsworth there is an "odious goodness and neckcloth about them which half throttles their beauty." But his chief complaint against Wordsworth is that he often drapes the language of poetry around prose-thought.

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64. *R.R.*, 38.
In Tennyson Hopkins finds superior workmanship. "Infallibly telling freedom of stroke, which is indeed half of art." Yet he too wears the neckcloth of odious goodness. But the great charge against Tennyson is that he is a "genius uniformed by character". "I sometimes wonder at this in a man like Tennyson: his gift of utterance is truly golden, but go further home and you come to thoughts commonplace and wanting in nobility." When marking out the faults of Keats or Wordsworth or even Tennyson, Hopkins always speaks with a tone of regret; he admires these men in spite of their faults; as an artist he seems to have a certain reverence for them. But it is with gusto that he speaks of the limitations of Swinburne. He has an unfaltering certainty that Swinburne was a small man with one astonishing capability. Swinburne has "not feeling, much less character. Swinburne's genius is astonishing, but it will, I think, only do one thing". That one thing is "a perpetual functioning of genius without truth, feeling, or any adequate matter to be at function on". He adds that Swinburne

65 R.B., 139.
66 R.B., 38.
67 R.B., 95.
68 R.B., 79.
69 R.B., 304.
has no real understanding of rhythm, though he sometimes "hits well". But where credit is due, Hopkins gives it -- but not without a parting punch. "For music of words and the mastery and employment of a consistent and distinctive poetic diction, a style properly so called, it is extraordinary ... it could be only in Persian or in some other eastern language that a poetical dialect so ornate and continuously beautiful could be found. But words are only words."70

70 R.W.D., 156-157. In his review of the first edition of Hopkins' poems J. Middleton Murry (Athenaeum, June 6, 1919, 425-426 and repeated in Aspects of Literature, Knopf, New York, 1920, 52-62) recognizes the effect of Hopkins' opinion of Swinburne even from the poems alone. "Swinburne ... appears hardly to have existed for Hopkins, though he was his contemporary." Murry also discerns "an echo of Keats ..., aspiration after Milton's architectonic in the construction of the later sonnets and the most lucid of the fragments, 'Epithalmion'."
We have already seen what opinion Hopkins had of certain other men. Carlyle was a gigantic genius but insincere. Ruskin has the "insight of a dozen critics, but intemperance and wrongness undoes all his good again". About Browning's work he says: "I greatly admire the touch and the details, but the general effect, the whole offends me, I think it repulsive." In several letters Hopkins praises Robert Louis Stevenson as a novelist; he admires his characterization, plot construction, and "consummate style".

As can easily be seen from the last stanza of the "Deutschland" from the theme of the "Eurydice" from sonnet No. 44 and from the fragment No. 59 Hopkins loved England very dearly. He encourages Tennyson to write: "Your poems are a good deed done for the Catholic Church and another for England, for the British Empire." And to Bridges he says: "We are Englishmen. A great work by an Englishman is like a great battle won by England." Perhaps it is because of this that in the many times he speaks of the Irish, he never has a good word to say for them. Nevertheless there is a certain amount of justice in his criticism of the Irish poets:

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71 See notes 35, 36.
72 R.E., 137.
73 R.N.D., 114; R.E., 235.
74 F.L., 219.
75 R.E., 231.
"Irishmen are not poets ... though much alive to what we vaguely call poetry in nature and language ... They always mistake the matter of poetry for poetry." 76 Of the poetry of Samuel Ferguson he says: "He was a poet as the Irish are ... full of feeling, high thoughts, flow of verse, point, often fine imagery and other virtues, but the essential and only lasting thing left out -- what I call inscape, that is species of individual beauty of style." 77 About Walt Whitman, the American, he speaks several times; but one letter sums up all he has to say:

I always knew in my heart Walt Whitman's mind to be more like my own than any other man's living. As he is a very great scoundrel this is not a pleasant confession. And this also makes me the more desirous to read him and the more determined that I will not ... There was to the eye something in my long lines like his, that the one would remind people of the other. And both are in irregular rhythm. There the likeness ends. The pieces of his I read were mostly in an irregular rhythmic prose. 78

With regard to the poetry of Bridges, Dixon, and Patmore we might suspect that Hopkins' judgment might fail because of the bias of love and friendship. But we should recall that in each case it was the poetry which first attracted Hopkins to the man.

76 R.B., 229.

77 F.L., 225-226.

78 R.B., 155.
In the poetry of Bridges he admired richness of phrase, sequence, constant music, but above all "character throughout and human nature ... the finest foundation for all the more inimitable graces, itself not inimitable." In Dixon he admired absence of affectation, a gentlemanliness, a purity and directness of human nature which he termed "'pathos', the deepest, I think, that I have anywhere found." In Patmore he balances "Bad rhymes, continued obscurity; and, the most serious, a certain frigidity when, as often, the feeling does not flush and fuse the language" against "For insight he beats all our living poets, his insight is really profound, and he has an exquisiteness, farfetchedness, of imagery worthy of the best things of the Caroline age."

79 R.B., 72-73.

80 R.W.L., 37; R.B., 137-140.

81 R.B., 82.
CHAPTER II

THE LEADING AESTHETIC IDEAS AND PRINCIPLES OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

The poetic principles of Gerard Hopkins brought forth poetry of finished beauty; but the principles themselves sprang from deep springs; rather they were the melting waters that ran down in the springtime from high thoughts about Beauty and Nature and the various functions of nature. In this chapter we will consider some of the high thoughts or esthetic principles of Gerard Hopkins which were the fountainheads of his poetic principles. In the first part of this chapter we will consider beauty as it is most immediately presented to us: the external aspect of beauty; then we will consider the Source of Beauty. The significant link between beauty as it exists in itself and beauty in art is a study of the relationship between art and nature; such a study -- according to the mind of Hopkins, of course -- will be made in the second part of this chapter. The first and second parts of this chapter will lead us to the conclusion that concretely beautiful objects in nature or in art are a specific mixture of matter and form. The third and most considerable part of this chapter will be a discussion of the principles which Hopkins posited with regard to the matter of a poem. The entire third chapter -- the very heart of the thesis -- will be concerned with the principles which Hopkins laid down with regard to the form of the poem.
Beauty: The External Aspect

For a competent observer beauty is unmistakable; yet it eludes even patient analysis. It cannot be formulated; it cannot be "tagged". With their customary adroitness the French invented a word like eclat and the use of "Je ne sais quoi" as a noun so that they could point to the beauty of a thing without even attempting an analysis. But for a long time men have been speculating about the nature of beauty. Like the early Ionian philosophers and their successors, like Plato, whom he admired, Hopkins seems first to have been moved to the philosophical analysis of beauty by the contemplation of physical beauty in nature. He tells us his ideas about the external aspect of beauty in three essays: "On the Origin of Beauty", "Poetic Diction", and "Parmenides".¹ The "Origin of Beauty" is an imperfect Platonic dialogue; the Socratic method fails Hopkins because his questions lack true leading forces. The teacher asks a disciple to contemplate the fronds of a chestnut tree, and to note how the leaves conform into a branch, into a fan. He emphasizes the regularity of the pattern in spite of innumerable variations in the leaves. Then he directs the disciple's attention to the manner in which individual leaves are formed by radiation; here again inevitable regularity is found to be combined with delicate, individual irregularities. The master then concludes that beauty must essentially contain both regularity and

¹Note-Books, 54-102.
irregularity. The sky at sunset is a grand pattern of dominant colors; but within the regularity of that pattern swim vagrant shadows and shades and tints of the dominant colors. Bringing these contemplations into focus the teacher explains that in a picture half painted the yet unpainted half is essential, though it in itself could not either be a picture. Beauty he concludes is a composition or a comparison of things: a relationship of leaf to leaf in a fan, or of one radial vein to another in a leaf, or of color to color in a sunset. Beauty is a contrast or an antithesis of things which are at once alike and dissimilar.

It is the peculiar property of poetry above other arts to express simultaneously likeness and unlikeness. Parallelism, ranging from Hebrew to the modern use of rhythm, rhyme, assonance, alliteration is the way of expressing this antithesis. In a play or a poem this beauty consists in the relationships of line to line or stanza to stanza or part to part. Rhythm is beautiful because it is the regular repetition of the same accent in different syllables. Meter is beautiful because it is a regular sequence of rhythm. Rhyme is beautiful because it is the repetition of the same vowel sounds in different syllables. These thoughts lead directly into Hopkins' conception of what a poem is: a parallelism expressing the antithesis in two similar things, or, in other words, a restressing of an inscape, of an individual concrete

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2 Many examples of antithesis may be found in Note-Books, 87-89. A more complete, though not very clear discussion of parallelism may be found in the "Journal", Note-Books, 92-93.
mixture of being and non-being; but this matter we will leave to the third chapter and proceed at the moment to an investigation of Hopkins' ideas about the Source of Beauty.

The Source of Beauty

All things counter, original spare, strange:
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

If the beautiful things of this world are adazzle or dim it is because each one in a different individual way reflects an Original Beauty, which in Itself is immutably Perfect, is all Light. To Hopkins the world is the mirror of God, a bird that sings to God, a book that tells the story of His Glory. In a sermon based on the "Principle or Foundation" in the Spiritual Exercises Hopkins tells why God created the world:

Not for sport, not for nothing. Every sensible man has a purpose in all he does, every workman has a use for every object he makes. Much more has God a purpose, an end, a meaning in his work. He meant the world to give him praise, reverence and service; to give him glory. It is like a garden, a field He sows: what should it bear him: praise, reverence, and service; it should repay him glory. It is a leasehold he lets out: what should its rents be: Praise, reverence, and service. Its rent is His glory. It is a bird he teaches to sing, a pipe, a harp he plays on. It is a glass he looks in ... It is a book he has written, of the riches of his knowledge, teaching, endless truths, full lessons of wisdom, a poem of beauty ... it tells him of his glory. It is a censer fuming ... It is an altar. 3

3 Note-Books, 201.
A truth about which the "faithless fable and miss" is this: to admit God's mastery over the world is not to lessen the beauty of the world but is rather to enhance that beauty. Plato loved the beauty in the physical world around him; but he loved it more as a suggestion of a greater beauty than as an ultimate reality in itself. For Plato each thing he saw around him was a reminder of the original, immutable, all perfect Idea of that thing. Somewhere beyond the stars, for him, there existed a sort of heaven where all the original Ideas of things existed, each with pristine, perfect, unmarred splendour. The center of this heaven was the Idea of Good, which irradiated all the other Ideas and gave new glory to them. The glory of the visible world was to be a reflection of an invisible world. Wordsworth, the great prophet of the love of nature, loves nature not precisely for itself but rather for something within it. The inspiration for poetry comes, he tells us in the "Preface" not upon the immediate sight of physical beauty but in tranquil recollection.

In the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" he reminds us that the child is nearer to nature than the adult is. "Heaven lies about us in our infancy", in the sense that the child is, as it were, more lately derived from nature and more immediately responsive to it but the chief joy that comes from the contemplation of nature lies in the thoughts which this contemplation engenders:

To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.
Hopkins too had a "mystical" view of nature, or as John Pick has called it a "sacramental view", but without the faults of the Pantheistic view of Wordsworth or the view of Plato, which left no logical explanation for non-being, \( \emptyset \). As a matter of fact, the view of Hopkins is not "mystical"; it is accurately realistic. Many would reject his view ostensibly because of its alleged religiosity but in reality either from a lack of understanding of what the view really is or from fear of the moral consequences involved in admitting such a view of nature. Hopkins as well as any man can love everything in nature -- everything -- everything because it is precisely what it ontologically is. He can love a bird or a flower or a fellow human being; for him bodies are not evil: they are in themselves good. For him art is not religion; art is an entity itself and can be loved for itself. He can love beauty of achievement in verse, "pure beauty" as intensely as Mathew Arnold. Everything that has a positive entity he can love for itself. But the chief, the fiercest, the most exquisite beauty of each individual thing is that it has a transcendental relationship with its Creator: that all its goodness is derived; that all its beauty is derived. Each individual thing is something like the jewel in an engagement ring; it is lovely in itself but lovelier still because of a relationship which it bears. In his notes on "The Contemplation to Obtain Love" Hopkins says:
All things therefore are charged with love, are charged with God and, if we know how to touch them, give off sparks and take fire, yield drops and flow, ring and tell of him.  

The world is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  

Like the engagement ring, the more beautiful the thing is in itself the more worthy a reminder of the giver is it. Hopkins was an intense lover of individual things just insofar as they were individual. The great link between himself and Scotus seems to have been an intense love of individuality. So we must never suspect that for Hopkins individual things in nature or in art became mere characterless symbols, factory made sign-posts, all of a piece. Individual things were for him sign-posts, in a certain sense were symbols. But the wonder of them is this: that each one points in its own way, that it points best by being its own self.

Each mortal thing does one thing and the same: Deals out that being indoors each one dwells; Selves -- goes itself; myself it speaks and spells, Crying what I do is me: for that I came.

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4 Ibid., 342.
5 "God's Grandeur".
God could, Hopkins tells us, show us the world as it were enclosed in a drop of water -- or, in fact, in a "drop of Christ's blood by which everything what ever was turned to scarlet, keeping nevertheless mounted in the scarlet its own color too". 7

In the comparatively small body of Hopkins' poetry the theme that God "is under the world's splendor and wonder" appears a remarkable number of times. It appears, as in the line just quoted, in "The Wreck of the Deutschland", in "God's Grandeur", in "Pied Beauty", "To What Serves Mortal Beauty", "On the Portrait of Two Beautiful Young People", "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", "Hurrahing in Harvest", etc. In many of his poems this theme is implicit. For example he himself assures us that he meant the poem "Harry Ploughman" to be "A direct picture of a ploughman, without afterthought ... a vivid picture before the minds eye." Yet even this was implicitly religious because it showed "delight in natural acts perfectly performed." 8

To quote Bremond: "Il voit Dieu en tout ce qui est délectable, toute beauté, et toute bonté." 9 But he saw beauty not only in the bluebell and the "silk-sack cloud"; he saw it also in man. "When a man is in God's grace and free from mortal sin, then everything that he does, so long as there is not sin in it gives God glory." 10

7 Unpublished MS quoted by Pick, op. cit., 44 and 50.

8 See Bridge's note to poem No. 43; Pick, op. cit., 151.


10 Note-Books, 304.
For men "... their correspondence with grace and seconding of God's designs is like a taking part in their own creation, the creation of their best selves. And again the wicked and the lost are like half-creations and have but a half-being."¹¹ As men give glory to God so too do their works. Their works indeed give more glory to God than those of nature. "Elles ont, dirait la scholastique, une valeur spécifique de louange." Hopkins therefore believed that each work which a man performed he should perform as perfectly as possible. If a man is to create a work of art, he should create it perfectly according to the nature of the medium in which he is working: "For a work to be perfect there ought to be a sense of beauty in the highest degree both in the artist and the age, the style and keepings of which the artist employs."¹² Hopkins' sacramental view of nature had a strong influence upon his poetic principles. For him a poem was a poem; it had its own nature, its own entity, its own being. This being was good in itself -- this poem was good in itself. The more perfectly it was itself, a poem, the more perfectly it would give glory to God. Something half a sermon and half a poem would be imperfect. He decries "mawkishness" and "the neckcloth of odious goodness". Phare notes that he does not confuse his dogmatic content and his poetry but that he "takes his Catholicism for granted; it has become a part of him."¹³

¹¹Ibid, 344.
¹²R.B., 142.
He knows that every prayer is not in the strict sense poetry; but he also knows that every perfectly achieved poem is a prayer, at least materially. He wants his poems to preach to us not as the preacher does from the pulpit, but as the sun and the stars do from the sky:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven ...
His everlasting power also and divinity --
being understood through the things that are made. 14

He wants to be true to nature, to his nature as an artist. He knows that thus his works will have a value: To conclude the quotation begun above: "Et si elles (the works of men) viennent a etre connues, le monde en est plus beau et meilleur, miuex oriente vers Dieu. Je voudrais avoir convaincu le lecteur, au moins de cette haute valeur spirituelle du poete Gerard Hopkins et de son oeuvre."15

The Relationship of Art and Nature

From what we have already seen of Hopkins' sacramental view of nature, we must realize what reverence he had for the individual natures of things. It will therefore be no surprise for us to find that even as a boy of fifteen he had already written, "The ways of art best follow nature".16 In the poem "Inversnaid" he tells us that he loves nature untrammeled:

14Rom. I, 18, 20. (St. Paul)
15Fremond, loc. cit., 49.
16"Escorial", Note-Books, 126.
What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and wilderness? Let them be left,
0 let them be left, wilderness and wet;
Long lives the weeds and the wilderness yet.

And in "Duns Scotus's Oxford" he finds that the "towery city and
branchy between towers" has been soured by the encroachment of "a base
and brickish skirt". In one of the fragments he left (No. 56) he finds
that nothing "sighs deep poetry" to his mind as much "as a tree whose
boughs break in the sky. Say it is ash-boughs". But it is in the
poem "Binsey Poplars" that he is most explicit in warning us that any
departure from nature is a mistake. Nature is as delicate as the
human eye-ball; the slightest prick spoils it completely. We should
not try to improve upon nature, because "even where we mean to mend
her we end her".

When we hew or delve:
After-comers cannot guess the beauty been.
Ten or twelve, only ten or twelve
Strokes of havoc unselve
The sweet especial scene,
Rural scene, a rural scene,
Sweet especial rural scene.

Therefore we can readily understand why Hopkins called unreality in
art "the worst fault a thing can have". He accuses Bridges of having
fallen into this fault in his "Ulysses". There the unreality consists
in two things: first, in the introduction of goddesses as if they
were real persons, secondly, in an unsuccesful use of archaic
language.17 And to Dixon he says

"Any untruth to nature, to human nature is frigid ... A true humanity of spirit, neither mawkish on the one hand nor blustering on the other, is the most precious of all qualities in style ... After all it is the breadth of his human nature that we admire in Shakespeare." He accuses Dickens of mawkishness, of false pathos and he accuses Browning of frigidity or untruth to nature. For Hopkins the supreme expression in art is to arrive at nature's self. The artist Millais was accused of leaving the school of Oxford.

Hopkins argues that he did not leave the school except in the sense that he outgrew it; his art began to approach nature with a fidelity that was beyond any school. He represents Millais as "passing through stage after stage, as at last arriving at Nature's self, which is of no school -- inasmuch as different schools represent Nature in their own more or less truthful different ways, Nature meanwhile having only one way." The poet's task is to "Law-out" nature -- to immobilize it -- to catch it -- to hold it, as here it is caught:

... and thrush
through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightenings to hear him sing.

18F.L., 74.

19F.L., 54.

20"Spring", No. 9.
The Matter of Poetry

We have already seen that in his criticism of the Irish poets Hopkins distinguished the matter of poetry from the form or inscape of poetry. There he indicates that "feeling, high thoughts, flow of verse, point, fine imagery and other virtues" pertain to the matter of poetry. By the "matter" of a poem, he meant the raw material of the poem -- the pig iron out of which the tempered steel of poetry was to come. It is the body which must be informed by a soul (inscape) before a living organism will ensue. Thought, subject matter, inspiration, and a serious purpose are a part of the matter of poetry which must exist before the actual execution of the poem begins. In the execution of the poem organic unity, originality, honesty, feeling, objectivity, and common sense must be achieved. We will consider each of these matters in turn.

Thought

Hopkins' chief criticism of the literature of his own day was that it lacked thought. It wrote a "wilderness of words"; and "words are only words". The poetry of Swinburne he found astonishing but watered out of greatness because beneath it there was no thought. In Tennyson it was a fault to lack nobility of thought. In Henry Patmore, however, "spontaneous thoughtfulness" is commended as a high artistic virtue.²¹ Bridges is praised for the "vigorou thought" in his Prometheus.²² In his practical criticism of the

²¹See C.I., Note 52.
²²See R.E., 147.
poetry of his three chief correspondents — and of others — the words insight and thoughtfulness are constantly at his pen's point.

He admires sudden turns and "recoils" of thought. According to Hopkins a meaning or a significance should "explode" upon the reader, should be inevitably communicated. When Hopkins said that there should be some thought behind a poem he did not, of course, mean that every poem should be didactic. He meant that it should have an intelligible element; it should be more than word pagentry. His own poems are the best indication that he considered thought essential to poetry, for as Herbert Read says:

The thought in Hopkins tends to be overlaid by surface beauty. But the thought is very real there, and as the idiom becomes more accepted, will emerge in its variety and strength.

Serious Purpose and Important Subject Matter:

For Hopkins a poem was no trifle. When, upon entering the Society of Jesus, he burned his early poems, he was offering a holocaust of something very dear to him. He began to write again only at the suggestion of his superior, and he wrote not just to while away time, to amuse himself or others, to "live in a world of sensations" like Keats, or to anaesthetize himself against the

23 R.V.D., intro. xxviii. In the letters themselves, passim, without undue search.

circumstances of his life. He intimates as much to us in the letter to Bridges in which he enclosed the first copy of "The Wreck of the Deutschland". "It seems that triolets and rondels and rondeaus and chant royal and what not and anything but serving God are all the fashion."25 And the "Deutschland", "lying like a dragon" before his poetical output is a sure token that he was to write in no light mood. Claude Abbott justly compares Hopkins to Wordsworth in seriousness of purpose.26 And Wordsworth is the high-priest of poetry. Bremond notes that Hopkins is "toujours serieux, earnest, toujours d'une intensite presque tragique, meme dans la joie."27 Perhaps the clearest impression that anyone could give us of the seriousness with which Hopkins wrote is the impression which Dixon sent to Hopkins during his tertianship:

25 R.E., 43.

26 F.L., introd., xx.

27 Bremond, loc. cit. 34.
I can understand that your present position, seclusion and exercises would give your writing a rare charm -- they have done so in those I have seen; something that I cannot describe, but know to myself by the inadequate word terrible pathos, something of what you call temper in poetry: a right temper which goes to the point of terrible; the terrible crystal. Milton is the only one else who has anything like it; and he has it in a totally different way: he has it through indignation, through injured majesty, which is an inferior thing in fact. I cannot tell whether you know what I mean.  

If a man who is a critic and a poet demands of poets, and exemplified in his own poetry, a seriousness which can be termed "terrible", we may safely conclude that he will demand that the subject matter of poetry be not trivial but important. And Hopkins does make such a demand. "On the other hand the pathetic touch by itself, as in dramatic pathos, will only draw light tears if its matter is not important or not of import to us."  

28 Dixon to Hopkins, F.L., 80. This expression terrible pathos has been much misunderstood. It is conceived to refer somehow to the sufferings of Hopkins' life and especially to the tone of the so called "terrible" sonnets. But these "terrible" sonnets are dated by Bridges as not preceding 1885. Dixon communicated the expression to Hopkins on October 26, 1881. Dixon refers to a "temper" of soul, a "voluntas", a grim determination of the will to give the truth, the reality, the inscape of the thing. It is an uncompromising honesty which others have variously called humility or chastity and which Hopkins himself calls manliness. The "terribleness" of this pathos is the intensity or fervidness with which it exists in Hopkins.  

29 Note-Books, 128.
characteristics in Bridges which attracted Hopkins to him personally was his fine masculinity. And one of the characteristics of the poetry of Bridges which Hopkins much admired was this same masculinity or character. "And finally I must say how pleased and proud I am ... it does me good the freshness and buoyancy and independence I find in your poems, marked with character throughout and human nature and not 'arrangements of vowel sounds' as Mallock says, 'very thinly costuming a strain of conventional passion, kept up by stimulants, and crying always in a high head voice about flesh and flowers and democracy and damnation.'"30 A theme of importance to the reader and the poet is necessary not merely to justify the time and talent consumed in writing and reading the poem but rather because the importance of the theme has a direct bearing on all the other aspects of the poem. The subject matter of a poem is like something dropped into the alembic of the poet's mind and held over the flames of his talent, genius, and inspiration. If the something dropped into the flask is dirt, it will remain unchanged; if, however, it is gold, it will glow and grow lovely-malleable. A plain person can be handsomely dressed but he cannot be made handsome -- and only the handsome will do for poetry. Hopkins expounds this theory in a letter to Dixon in which he places Wordsworth's "Ode to Immortality" amongst the half dozen great odes of the world. He admits that Wordsworth's insight varied, but here,
he says it was great, and because of the importance of the subject matter:

Now the interest and importance of the matter were here of the highest, his insight was at its very deepest, and hence to my mind the extreme value of the poem.

His power rose, I hold, with the subject: the execution is so fine. The rhymes are so musically interlaced, the rhythms so happily succeed (surely it is a magical change 'O joy that in our embers') the diction throughout is so charged and steeped in beauty and yearning. 31

**Inspiration:**

When a poet sets about writing a poem, according to Hopkins, he must have some high, noble thought in mind, must have a serious purpose in view, and must be dealing with a theme of real significance. But these three things of themselves are not enough. There is required something else, an elusive something, something which Plato in his *Ion* calls "a divine madness". Inspiration is required. Until he becomes inspired the poet does not reach his true stature. Until then he is only a man, gifted perhaps and highly trained, but able only to plod along like the man next to him. He may attempt poetry; some may even credit him with poetry, but he will never attain to more than Parnassian. Without inspiration he will write as only poets can write; he will speak on and from the level of a poet's mind. He will use his own peculiar poetic dialect, the inimitable dialect of a great mind. In what he writes there may be found his style, his manner, his mannerisms. But poetry will not be found, because he does not write in the mood of mind in which the poetry of inspiration is written. Parnassian will

31 R.W.D., 148.
pall upon us, will weary us, will trick us into believing we know the poet's secret and could do as well ourselves (though we could not). Parnassian does not delight us, surprise us, enchant us. It is artificial poetry, "that is, the language of poetry draping prose thought, a fine rhetoric such as there is a good deal of in Wordsworth's blank verse." Though as honest as Wordsworth and as capable as he, the poet uninspired writes under an empty "close grey sky" until a moment comes --

A close grey sky --
And poplars grey and high,
The country side along.

The steeple bold
Across the acres old.

And then -- a song: Out of some where unknown, like the song of a lark, "a heart throb against the sky", comes a thrill, a passion, a fervor -- comes inspiration, and then the poet can write the poetry of inspiration. He is in truth a poet.

I think then the language of verse may be divided into three kinds. The first and highest is poetry proper, the language of inspiration. The word inspiration need cause no difficulty. I mean by it a mood of great, abnormal in fact, mental acuteness, either energetic or receptive, according as the thoughts which arise in it seem generated by a stress and action of the brain, or strike into it unasked.

32 F.L., 68-76. Unless other indication is given all the remarks in this section are based on Letter XXXV, to Baillie.

33 R.B., 159.

34 "The Lark", by Lizette Woodward Reese.

35 F.L., 69.
Inspiration is "the gift of genius, (which) raises him above himself". The poetry of inspiration is that which never wearies us; which "sings in its flights". The inspired poet still uses his own dialect but in a different way; it no longer seems reducible to rule, no longer seems imitable. The poem is a happy, an inimitable, an inevitable thing, "a thing of joy forever". "In a fine piece of inspiration every beauty takes you as it were by surprise."35

In the last years of his life one of Hopkins' chief sorrows was his lack of full inspiration

Sweet fire the sire of muse, my soul needs this
I want the one rapture of an inspiration --
...
The fine delight that fathers thought; the strong
Spur, live and lancing like the blowpipe flame.
(Poem No. 51)

Without inspiration he found his soul a "winter world" bleak and cold. And he wrote to Bridges "with some sighs" that this winter world was "our explanation -- if in my lagging lines you miss the roll, the rise, the carol, the creation". (Poem No. 50)

Even a great master of language like Tennyson palls upon us in his longer work because in them he is uninspired. He gives us pleasure "when he is rhyming pure and simple imagination, without afterthought, as in the "Lady of Shalott", "Galahad", "Dream of Fair Women", or "Palace of Art". But "when the inspiration is genuine, arising from personal feeling, as in "In Memoriam", a divine work, he is at his best".36

35 F.L., 69.
The mood of inspiration does not last for long. The poet must work, and work to final perfection while the mood is upon him or he will never fully achieve his poem. Patmore often recognized the justice of various criticisms by Hopkins but at the same time protested that he was no longer able to make correction because the time of inspiration was past. And Hopkins sympathized with Patmore, as he told him:

I think I know very well what you mean when you speak of the danger and difficulty of making more than verbal alterations in works composed long ago and of a bygone mood not being to be recovered. For a time we keep the connection with our past feelings open; they recede, but still we have an insight into them; then something comes between and a long while after looking back, like the tail of a train going round a sharp curve, you see your own self quite from outside. And even verbal alterations will be hazardous, for the stress of mood which dictated and justified the word or image has passed away.37

Sometimes a poet is struck with an inferior sort of inspiration which does not wholly conquer the poet's mannerisms. Then the poet will write Castalian. "You can hardly conceive yourself having written in it, if in the poet's place, yet it is too characteristic of the poet ... to be quite inspiration." (Here he quotes from the sonnet composed on the road to Calais.) "This is from Wordsworth, beautiful, but rather too essentially Wordsworthian, too persistently his way of looking at things." (No. 35)

In rare cases it might happen that true inspiration so bold and powerful might come to one who was normally not capable of even

37 F.L., 165.
Parnassian that he would produce real poetry of inspiration. Someone without the dialect of a great poet or the level of mind of a great poet could be inspired to great poetry.

"I may add there is also Olympian. This is the language of strange masculine genius which suddenly, as it were, forces its way into the domain of poetry, without naturally having a right there. Milman's poetry is of this kind, and Rossetti's 'Blessed Damozel'. But unusual poetry has the tendency to seem so at first." (No. 35)

The Qualities of a Good Poem

The first quality which Hopkins demanded in a poem was unity, complete, organic unity, an absolute fusion of all the elements that went into the poem. The idea of "oneness" both in the sense of individuality and in the sense of organism is so fundamental in the doctrine of Hopkins' poetry that it can not be adequately discussed apart from the notion of inscape. A full discussion of the word inscape will occur in the next chapter. For the present let it be said that the first fruit of inscape, which means everything to Hopkins, is unity.

One remark, however, upon unity can be made here. Unity does not by any means exclude complexity. The contrary is closer to the mind of Hopkins. In a long letter to Dixon on August 15, 1883, Hopkins analyzes unity of action in dramatic verse. Using Agamemnon, Eumenides, and Oedipus Rex as examples of unity and Faust as an example of lack of unity he explains that unity consists not in simplicity of plot but in connectedness of plot.
There is unity of action, as I understand, if the plot turns on one event, incident, or, to speak more technically, motive and all its parts and details bear on that and are relevant to that. In general I take it that other things being alike unity of action is higher the more complex the plot; it is the more difficult to effect and therefore the more valuable when effected.  

What is true in dramatic verse is true of other verse as well. In his own poetry Hopkins attempted to unify great complexity. And that he succeeded, Morton Zabel testifies:

In Peace the shapely unity of the concept does not exclude a rare evocation and interplay of tenuous emotional states -- fatigue, querulous despair, fortitude, and finally abnegation to Providence.

And he notes the exquisite unity in the "Windhover" in spite of the complexity of the imagery, a bird, a minion and dauphin, like a horse on rein. In Hopkins' own poetry, when it is perfectly realized, everything -- thought, imagery, diction, and all the innumerable little graces -- dovetail into a perfect unity, spell an inscape.

Second in importance only to unity Hopkins held originality. Anyone who has seen a few lines of Hopkins' mature poetry would know that he must have honored originality. The musician Henry Purcell strongly fascinated Hopkins. In his poem to Purcell (No. 21) he indicates that he admires the musician chiefly because he has done

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38 _F.L_. , 113.

in music what Hopkins strives to do in verse (and would like to do in music as well). The chief merit of Purcell is summed up in the prose argument which precedes the poem; it is not originality, but originality too is a great virtue:

... It is the rehearsal
Of own, of abrupt self there so thrusts on, so throngs the ear.

In "Inversnaid" we find that he loves things wild, loves them to be themselves; so again in "Binsey Poplars". From "Pied Beauty" we know that he loves things "counter", not conforming to pattern. When he criticized Bridges Poems of 1879 Hopkins thought that in many places they were too reminiscent of Milton or Tennyson or Gray, and he charged Bridges that to echo someone else was a great fault:

They do it (i.e., certain lines echo), they will do it to every ear, and it is a great fault to do it, and they do it.40

In this same year he writes that he expects Tennyson to be one of the age's great poets, but that he finds him weak insofar as his opinions are not original or independent.41

Six years later he still finds echoing "a disease, an evil".42

As has already been pointed out, it was part of Hopkins' sacramental view of things to believe that each thing was at its best when it was most perfectly itself.

40R.B., 69. The italics are Hopkins' own. This is one of the very rare lines of his correspondence which he has underlined.

41R.W.D., 24.

42R.B., 206.
I scarcely understand you about reflected light: every true poet, I thought, must be original and originality a condition of poetic genius; so that each poet is like a species in nature (not an individuum genericum or specificum) and can never recur. That nothing should be old or borrowed however cannot be, and that I am sure you never meant.43

There is danger in originality; and Hopkins was fully conscious of this. Instead of being original work may become eccentric: "Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or inscape to be distinctive and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped."44 "I sent a short piece to Mrs. Waterhouse in commoner and smoother style than I mostly write in, but that is no harm: I am sure I have gone far enough in oddities and running rhymes ... into the next line."45 "To return to composition what I want there, to be more intelligible, smoother and less singular."46 "You give me a long jobation about eccentricities. Alas, I have heard so much about and suffered so much for and in fact been so completely ruined for life by my alleged singularities that they are a sore subject."47 In his notes to the Poems Bridges brings exaggerated attention to the oddities and mannerisms of Hopkins. Time and advances in poetic technique have done much to lessen the number and impact of Hopkins' singularities. Those who understand the origin of his oddities always sympathize with Hopkins

43 F.L., 222.
44 R.B., 66.
45 R.B., 250.
46 R.B., 291.
47 R.B., 126.
and sometimes exonerate him of false charges. The point of issue here, however, is not whether or not Hopkins was guilty of oddity, it is this: Hopkins believed that singularity was a vice. He insisted that originality should be attained and warned that queer-ness should be avoided.

Again borrowing from his ideas about music we may judge that Hopkins demanded that the virtue of objectivity be found in a poem, that the poem be at grips with reality: In the letter in which he sends the sonnet "Henry Purcell" to Bridges he says: "My sonnet means Purcell's music is none of your damned subjective rot." For all of his artistic idealism Hopkins was far from wishing to be lost in a world of harmonious sounds like Swinburne or in a world of dreams like Keats. He was a complete realist. "Commonsense is never out of place anywhere, neither on Parnassus nor on Tabor nor on the Mount where our Lord preached." In a poem, too, there should be a certain virile feeling. Hopkins tells Dixon that he admires his poetry for the "instress of feeling" which he finds there and for a pathos "the deepest, I think, that I have anywhere found." He repeats to Bridges this same admiration for the "tragic feeling" of the verse of Dixon. In Patmore on the contrary he finds that a

48 See Chapter IV.
49 R.B., 84.
50 F.L., 226.
51 R.W.D., 37.
52 R.B., 139.
lack of feeling is harmful to verse, "the feeling does not flush and fuse the language" and "a certain frigidity is the result."\textsuperscript{53}

Honesty should be found in a poem. We can recall that Hopkins decried Carlyle as an artist because he did not play fair and that he chided Bridges for using pretenses for realities (in the matter of the Roman goddesses). He praises the artistic integrity of Boswell, who "hated Mrs. Thrale ... yet her picture comes out ... bright and witty ... because as an artist he was above doing injustice."\textsuperscript{54}

In the poem too there must be a revelation of certain qualities which are proper not so much to the poem itself as to the poet. In a poem Hopkins always searches for a revelation in the author of "a certain male quality", a something which to his mind distinguishes men from women, the ability to get their thoughts on paper objectively. For Hopkins the masculine quality in a poet, combined dispassionateness and consummate craftsmanship.\textsuperscript{55} For anyone who reads the letters, this is an important idea to remember, because Hopkins uses the word "masculine", "manly", "unmanly", "virile", so often, and usually in this sense. Hopkins' virtue of masculinity resembles very closely the "terrible pathos" which Dixon ascribes to Hopkins himself, or that

\textsuperscript{53}R.B., 82.

\textsuperscript{54}F.L., 97.

\textsuperscript{55}R.W.D., 133.
virtue which Bremond ascribes to Hopkins when he says: "Il a
cette vertu des coeurs purs, la simplicité d'intention. Il
suivra son chemin tout droit jusqu'au bout." These last
virtues mentioned cannot in a given poet be isolated from each
other. Feeling, temper of mind, masculinity, chastity of mind,
rigorous honesty, humility -- even some of the others mentioned,
objectivity, commonsense all overlap each other: they are the man.
If we were to try to find one word which would in some measure
include all of these qualities we might settle upon the word
character. Hopkins often chose this word or one similar to it when
giving his highest praise. We have already seen that the chief merit
of the verse of his beloved Bridges was "character and human nature
throughout". Apparently in 1879 Bridges contemplated leaving off
writing poetry and asked the advice of Hopkins in the matter.
Hopkins answered with a long letter in which he establishes a
triple hierarchy of beauty, that of the body, of the mind, and that
of the heart -- in ascending order. "The handsome heart" is to be
most prized. And in Bridges Hopkins finds besides great poetic
talent the more precious gift of character; and so he encourages
him to continue with his poetry.

56 Bremond, loc. cit., 26.
If I were not your friend I should wish to be the friend of the man that wrote your poems. They show an eye for pure beauty, and they show, my dearest, besides, the character which is much more rare and precious; ... but in the point of character, of sincerity or earnestness, of manliness, of tenderness, of humor, of melancholy, human feeling, you have what they have not and seem scarcely to think worth having.  

In Canon Dixon Hopkins admired a "purity and directness of human nature". And in him Hopkins finds a fine gentlemanliness, "and this adds charm to everything Canon Dixon writes". Somehow the man erupts through the work without destroying it and gives the work the warmth of humanness. In Aeschylus we find "swell and pomp of words, touching consideration, manly tenderness, earnestness of spirit and would-be-piety, by which the man makes himself felt through the playwrite".

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57 R.B., 93-99.

58 R.B., 126.

59 R.B., 176.

60 R.B., 256. Here again it may be noted how consistent Hopkins is to his sacramental view of nature. A poem is to be a perfect, individual bit of reality, most perfect when most perfectly itself. Yet it receives new beauty somehow when it is warmed by the personality of its author. So every reality receives new beauty when it is seen to be warmed by the Personality of Its Author.
Hopkins has left us some of his ideas on matters which have only an extrinsic connection with poetry. These ideas are not original, not at all peculiar to him; but since he has made mention of them we will. He found the composition of verse slow and laborious. Recall the "Deutschland" and you will not be surprised at this. He found it easier by far to compose music. He felt that a poet needed publication and fame as a stimulus to work. He continually urged Bridges and especially Patmore to get into print. He felt that his own style would have been purified of many of its mannerism if it had had an audience to corrode its faults.

Great artists owe it to themselves and to their talent to write as much as they can.

You think, as I do, that your modern poets are too voluminous; time will mend this, their volumes will sink. Yet where there is high excellence in the work, labour in the execution, there volume, amount, quantity tells and helps to perpetuate all. ... It was by Providence designed for the education of the human race that great artists should leave works not only of great excellence but also in very considerable bulk.

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61 F.L., 136.

62 F.L., 291.

63 F.L., 211.
With age there comes advancement in the poetic art. "It is recognized by the soundest critics that poets ripen and that faults of youth and immaturity can be found in works which are even masterpieces in other ways." 64 "Richness of imagery belongs especially to youth, broader effects to the mature mind." 65

Apparently Hopkins felt that a preliminary step in grasping a poem -- even for the casual reader -- was its scansion. He forbade Dixon to manage the publication of the "Eurydice" saying, "Few will read it, fewer will scan it, much less understand it or like it." 66 Hopkins knew the difficulties involved in reading his verse. He had received two of his poems back from the Month, had astonished his friends -- had them seeking cribs from each other and finally from him -- had himself been struck with the raw nakedness of his lines. He gave Dixon the sort of advice which Bridges gives us all in the "Preface" to the Poems: to skip the "Deutschland" at first and find him out in his easier pieces and then come back. 67

Finally it is an obvious fact in the life of Hopkins that while he placed a high value on poetry, he placed still higher values on other things. He did not surrender himself to poetry as to a religion

64 F.L., 178. (The letter further develops the idea).
65 R.W.D., 84.
as Arnold did or as to a profession as Bridges did. He gave himself first to his priesthood and only then to his poetry, only "when opportunity will fairly allow". Even, he felt, it was more important to write about philosophical matters than to write poetry. He is not worried about the publication of his poems, he says: if the poems were read they might do some good, but if they are not, no harm is done. In philosophical matters things are different. If he doesn't write correctly some one else will write incorrectly, and he wishes to be first in the field.68

68 _R.W.D._, 150.
CHAPTER III

HOPKINS' DEFINITION OF POETRY AND HIS USE OF THE WORD INSCAPE

Hopkins' Definition of Poetry

The best way to approach Hopkins' definition of poetry is by an indirection. If we consider an individual man, we find him a being composed of body and soul. The body is necessary. If a soul, a pure spirit, were to exist without a body it would be an angel and not a man. The soul is the life giving principle, the individuating principle. It might almost be said to be the man; but it is not. Only the whole composite is the man. The body exists for the man. The soul exists for the man. It is the man who is important.

Man is an individual. He exists, under God, for himself. According to Hopkins man is the most completely individualized created being; he is able to perfect his individuation by the exercise of his own, individual free will. "The just man justices." (No. 34) "Nothing else in nature comes near this unspeakable stress of pitch, distinctiveness, and selving, this self being of my own. Nothing explains it or resembles it, except so far as this, that other men to themselves have the same feeling ... Searching nature I taste self but at one tankard, that of my own being." Man enjoys a perfect autonomy. For Wordsworth man would realize his highest possibilities by a vague swoon into nature, by a pantheistic absorption, by losing his individuality. But

1Note-Books, 309-310.
not at all for Hopkins! Man realizes his highest possibilities as an individual. As an individual, free either to "keep" or not to "keep" as he deliberately chooses, the just man "keeps grace". As this particular man he receives into his soul the gift of supernatural life called grace, a participation in God's own Life, a-sharing-of-life-with-Christ. He, the individual, the one, the man remains wholly himself and becomes Christ, because Christ's life is really within Him.

I say more: the just man justices;
Keeps grace; that keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is --
Christ -- for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his,
To the Father through the features of men's faces.
(No. 34)

Now if we turn to a poem, as Hopkins defines it, we will find that the poem too has what we might call a body and a soul -- but that it does not exist either for the body or for the soul but only for its own self. It too is autonomous. In a poem we might think of the elements of thought, character, significance, etc. as being the body. And we might consider the gift of utterance to be the soul of the poem. And the poem, the individual thing, the raison d'être for the body and the soul is the inscape.

From what has been said in the preceding chapter it should already be clear that Hopkins demanded thought and character in a poem. But he demanded too the life-giving gift of poetic expression. Although he finds in Robert Burns a "fineness of nature" (superior to that of Tennyson), he can allow him only a middle place on the honor
roll of great poets, because in him Hopkins finds a "poverty of language", his best being only "fresh, picturesque, fervent, flowing".2

"In serious poetry", he says, "the standard and aim is strict beauty and if the writer miss that his verse, whatever its incidental merits, is not strict or proper poetry."3

In an essay made difficult by highly individualized language Hopkins explains the relationship between "Verse and Poetry".4

The essay gives a full and very characteristic explanation of the matter here at hand. Verse, he asserts, in order to be poetry must have meaning and must have been composed with excellent finish; yet it must have been composed not for the sake of the meaning conveyed nor for the sake of the excellence of the vehicle. A poem is like a living organism. It has immanent action; it exists for itself, not for the thought it contains, not for the art of expression, but for itself. "Poetry is speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning." Meaning therefore is necessary, but only as a support, a foundation, a body. "Poetry is a shape of speech existing for its own sake. It is speech only employed to carry the inscape of speech for the inscape's sake." It must be held firmly in mind that this inscape is not the inscape of meaning but the inscape of speech itself. It is this inscape or

2 R. B., 95-96.
3 R. B., 133.
4 Note-Books, 250.
shape of speech which is important, which must be dwelt upon.

"Now if this can be done without repeating it, once of the inscape will be enough for art and beauty and poetry but then at least the inscape must be understood as so standing by itself that it could be copied and repeated. If not, repetition, oftening, over-and-overing, aftering, of the inscape must take place in order to detach it to the mind; and in this light poetry is speech which afters and oftens its inscape, speech couched in a repeating figure and verse is spoken sound having a repeating figure." Poetry is a shape of speech as such, that is, it is an inscape of words; whereas verse is an inscape of sound. Poetry connotes speech with meaning. Verse connotes merely the sound of speech.

Hopkins' definition of a poem is consistent at the same time with the traditional, the classical concept of a poem and with his own over-all philosophy of the beauty of individual things as such. As we are reminded by Maritan it is a rule of all art that art operates "ad bonum operis", for the good of the work done, while practical wisdom operates "ad bonum operantis", for the good of the worker. Art as such has no other end than the perfection of the work made, and not the perfection of the man making. Hopkins would heartily have seconded such statements as these. They are perfectly consonant with his idea that each thing is most perfect when it most perfectly realizes its own self being. We must be careful, however, to realize that the

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5 Quoted by Pick, op. cit., 39.
autonomy of poetry did not mean the same thing to Arnold and to Hopkins. To Arnold poetry was a final end in itself. It was the ultimate reason for its own existence. To Hopkins poetry was a proximate end -- that is to say, for Hopkins, this inscape of speech was the end of the work of art as such but it was not the end of life, as it was for Arnold. Arnold was a kind of idolater. St. Thomas says, "The sole end of art is the work itself and its beauty ... for the man making, the work to be done comes into the line of morality, and so is merely a means." The end of the work of art is beauty, but the end of man is God. "If the artist were to take for the final end of his activity, that is to say for beatitude, the end of his art or the beauty of his work, he would be purely and simply an idolater."\(^5\)

Neither in his theory nor in his practice could Hopkins be accused of the error that religious significance alone would make a poem great. Neither for a moment could we imagine that Hopkins did not feel that a finished and polished poem, an individual "bead of being" did not have a certain religious significance, a sacramental aspect. Like any other created thing, a poem -- even without specifically religious subject matter -- was charged with the glory of God. The poem takes its place with

\begin{verbatim}
Earth, sweet earth, sweet landscape, with leaves throng
And louched low grass, heaven that doest appeal
To, with no tongue to plead, no heart to feel.
\end{verbatim}

And is to be used by man to render glory to God

\begin{verbatim}
And what is Earth's eye, tongue, or heart else, where
Else, but in dear and dogged man?\(^6\)
\end{verbatim}

\(^5\)Quoted by Pick, \textit{op. cit.}, 39.

\(^6\)"Ribblesdale", No. 35.
For Hopkins a poem was a part of the "Pied Beauty" of the world, not just another part, but to him a dear and precious part. He wanted the poem to be perfect -- "immortal song ... the roll, the rise, the carol, the creation" (No. 51) and when it was most perfectly that, then it most perfectly spoke to him of God.

Inscape

As we have just seen, a key-word in Hopkins' definition of poetry is the strange word inscape. It is a key-word in his whole ideology of esthetics. So we must try to determine what he meant by it.

To us inscape is a mysterious word. To Hopkins the thing itself was not mysterious; nor was it rare. On the contrary inscapes were everywhere and were everywhere evident. "All the world is full of inscape and chance left free to act falls into an order as well as purpose."7 "I thought how sadly the beauty of inscape was unknown and buried away from simple people and yet how near at hand it was if they had eyes to see it and it could be called out everywhere again."8 He saw inscapes while watching the inner beams and the piled up hay in a shadowy barn, while watching the lazy drift of blown snows, while studying flowers under the microscope.9

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7Note-Books, 173.
8Ibid, 161.
Hopkins felt pity for "simple people" because he felt that they looked upon the individual things of nature without ever seeing them fully or seeing them in their true beauty. "Simple people" looked upon objects of nature and saw complexity, saw diversity of parts, did not see the inner secret of order within the object, did not see its inherent symmetry. They did not "law out" the plan of the object. They did not find its "existence-pattern", its inscape.

But Hopkins studied nature and art precisely to discover the key to its individual order. "About all the turns of the scaping from the break and flooding of the waves to its run out again I have not yet satisfied myself. The shores are swimming and the eyes have before them a region of milky surf but it is hard for them to unpack the huddling and gnarls of the water and law out the shapes and the sequence of the running." He wanted to find the law of the breaking waves, the secret of the order of their spilling, the key to their falling apart. For him the great purpose of observation was not vacuous staring or vague gratification from a general impression but an intellectual grasp of an internal harmony, an appreciation of beauty deriving from the vision of order under divergencies. Hopkins had a very passion for things in whorls -- the waves, the clouds, the leaves, the flowers, the brook, the grass moved by the wind, the snow falling, the whorled design of the side of a fish. Somehow the whorl

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10 Ibid, 164.
seemed to him the best example of complex reality within which there is a secret of simplicity, a key to form, an inscape.

One day Hopkins went to see a sham battle of seven thousand commoners. Apparently oblivious to the excitement of the day he concentrates his remarks on the inscape of some horses which he saw. "I caught that inscape in the horses that you see in the pediments especially and in other bas reliefs of the Parthenon and even which Sophocles had felt and expresses in two choruses of the Oedipus Coloneus, running on the likeness of a horse to a breaker, a wave of the sea curving over. I looked at the groin or flank and saw how the set of hair symmetrically flowed outwards from it to all parts of the body, so that, following that one may inscape the whole beast very simply."11 Here it is very clear that inscape is the secret of inner symmetry and to inscape is to catch or to mark this secret. When he visits the Academy he notes in a picture "some leopards showing the flow and slow spraying of the streams of spots down from the backbone and making this flow-in and inscape the whole animal and even the whole group of them." In another picture he sees a "herd of stags between fir trees all giving one inscape in the moulding of their flanks and bodies and hollow shell of the horns."12 Inscape, then, unmistakably is the secret of the pattern of the individual or of the group; it is the sesame, the key;

11 Ibid, 189.
12 Ibid, 190.
it gives form to the whole; it shows how to find, to follow, to see
the form and the order of the thing. Deep down in things there is
form — inscape — "existence-pattern" — ultima realitas entis. The
observer’s business is to find it, to law it out.

If an artist fails to observe or to communicate attention to
this thread of design, he fails as an artist. Hopkins condemns several
pictures at the Academy for "scattering", "lack of composition". Of
Northwest Passage he says that there is "want of arch-inscape even to
scattering". Of Holman Hunt’s Shadow of Death he complains that
there is "no inscape of composition whatever — not known and if it
had been known it could scarcely bear up against such realism". Here he reaffirms the fact that inscape is the key to composition.
And he also adds another idea — namely, that the revelation of inscape
in art should not take the form of severe realism. The revelation of
inscape should be suggestive. The existence-pattern of the object
should be infallibly indicated. Too much realism tends to crust over
or swallow up the pattern. If the artist is too realistic he risks
the danger of giving only the "scape" or external form of things
instead of the inscape. Then he will fall under condemnation, as
did Hunt and Rembrandt.

13 Ibid, 193.
14 Ibid, 197.
15 Ibid, 194.
Inscape communicates to us the individuality of things; it communicates the order, symmetry and beauty of individual things. It is the artist's duty to observe inscapes and then in his own medium to re-create them, re-realize them. A poet must "law out" reality; he must reproduce it (by inscape not scape). In "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and in the "Eurydice" Hopkins literally tries to mimic the angry swirl of waters, to re-realize it for the reader. In the "Windhover" he tries to "realize" the flight of a bird. In "Birches" and "Binsey Poplars" he uses long, languorous rhythms suggestive of trees. In each poem he tries to use a poetic pattern which will suggest exactly the pattern of reality. "Now this is the artist's most essential quality, masterly execution: it is a kind of male gift and especially marks off men from women, the begetting one's thoughts on paper, on verse, on whatever the matter is; the life must be conveyed into the work and be displayed there, not suggested as having been in the artist's mind." 16

Richard Dixon did not have access to Hopkins' "Journal" as we have. But from the poems themselves he recognized in other terminology what Hopkins was striving after. He remarks that Hopkins' poems have a quality which Taine found in Milton: "admiration ... which reaches its fullness and completeness in giving the exact aspect of the thing it takes: so that a peculiar contentation is felt". 17 This "admiration"

16 R.W.D., 133. The italics are not Hopkins'.

17 R.W.D., 100.
is the "terrible pathos", the "terrible crystal" which Dixon attributes to Hopkins -- the temper, the sincere will to represent (inscape) reality with crystal clarity. "In the power of forcibly and delicately giving the essence of things in nature, and of carrying one out of one's self with healing, these poems are unmatched."18 So clearly does Hopkins aim at reproducing the aspect of individual things that Daniel Sargent calls him a miser. "He wished to have a key whereby he could lock all things beautiful into a world where they should stay forever beautiful."19

When we have understood what inscape is, when we have understood the poetic aim of Gerard Hopkins, then we can fully appreciate the acuteness of the statement: "Toute la poésie, le rythme et l'émotion, est une fonction de l'inscape."20 Inscapology is a kind of tyrant. Everything must be made to serve it. What does not serve it must be cast off. It makes claim to greatness and calls out the poet's best efforts and talents. Above all it must be served -- not the poet's vanity, the common taste, the critic's plea: the inscape alone must be served.

The first fruit of this utter service of inscape will be a perfect, a natural, an organic unity. Everything in a poem has the

18 R. W. D., 32.
19 Sargent, op. cit., 162.
20 Bremond, loc. cit., 40
common purpose of giving an inscape, of re-creating an existence pattern. All the various elements live with a common vitality.

Inscape is a moulding force existing within the elements. "Fineness, proportion of feature comes from a moulding force within which succeeds in asserting itself over the resistance of cumbersome or restraining matter; the bloom of health comes from the abundance of life, the great vitality within."21

Hopkins did not speak much of striving for unity, because he did speak much of striving for inscape in which unity is implicit. In one whom he very much admired, however, he did single out unity as a virtue. "Milton is the great master of sequence of phrase. By sequence of feeling I mean a dramatic quality by which what goes before seems to necessitate and beget what comes after, at least after you have heard it it does."22 For Hopkins there are two elements in a poem, first the "idea", truth,23 thought,24 or feeling,

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21 F.L., 159.
22 R.W.D., 8.
23 F.L., 78.
24 F.L., 105-106. In a poem Hopkins recognized two strains of thought "My thought is that in any lyric passage of the tragic poets ... there are -- usually, I will not say always, it is not likely -- two strains of thought running together and like counterpointed." First there is the over thought or the obvious meaning of the text. Second, there is the under thought, "conveyed chiefly in the choice of metaphor, etc. used and often only half realized by the poet himself, not necessarily having any connection with the subject in hand but usually having a connection and suggested by some circumstance of the scene or of the story."
and secondly the style or method of expression. These two elements must be perfectly fused: it is a fault when the "feeling does not flush and fuse the language." From a consideration of Hopkins' own poems it is at once apparent that unity is a prime virtue of inscape. Considering them, Morton Zabel quotes Herbert Read and M. Edouard Dujardin to the effect that the central doctrine of the school of vers libre was that "the modulations of thought and feeling must find exact correspondence in the modulations of rhythm and cadence" and notes that Hopkins succeeds where the members of the school themselves fail. "He insisted upon the unity of his art -- its substance with its method. This was his highest claim for his achievement." And Bremond takes the poems of Hopkins as a starting point for the generalization: "'L'art savant est créateur de l'œuvre entière; il ne se borne pas à donner un vêtement convenable à une pensée déjà toute faite. La forme artistique n'est pas vêtement, même d'exacte mesure, mais il est avec la pensée la poésie même. On ne peut pas les séparer."

Begotten of this perfect unity an entirely new being comes into existence, an inscape of speech, a new being with its own individual

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25 R.E., 82.

26 Loc. cit., 156.


28 Loc. cit., 36.
existence-pattern. Here we must be careful not to become confused. As has been already demonstrated Hopkins used the word inscape in several different senses. Here these different senses are brought together and we say that fidelity to inscape brings forth a new inscape. We mean this: An existence pattern exists; the poet catches a glimpse of the pattern. Chastely, honestly, humbly he uses his style to express this glimpse of the pattern and his product is a new inscape. This new inscape is a thing alive. As F. R. Leavis says, "His words and phrases are actions as well as sounds, ideas and images." These actions are actions of speech, not of ordinary speech but of speech elaborated into music. We shall see more of the idea of inscape as speech when we consider Hopkins' notion of the manner of communicating poetry. At present it will be enough to repeat the words of J. Middleton Murry, "Musical elaboration is the chief characteristic of his work ... Inscape is still, in spite of apparent differentiation, musical."  

Inscape is a puzzling word and it will always remain puzzling. It is a name for three different things. Even when the reader knows the three meanings, when reading an individual text, he must always stop to see which of the three things is there named. It is, nevertheless, this word around which Hopkins did his most characteristic

29 Leavis, op. cit., 171.

and most important thinking. His contribution to poetic art and theory -- a very considerable contribution -- is inseparably connected with his love of inscape, which can broadly be interpreted to mean his love of individuality. The heart of his poetic theory -- his contribution -- is this: "Get that individual quality. Isolate it. Reveal it. Emphasize it. Over and after it." From that command flows the necessity for solid reality, for concentration, temper, chastity, for all the overtones and undertones represented in his style. His contribution consists in having provoked critics to admire him and poets to mimic him for three things:

1) **His realism**: He insisted that the poet should have an authentic grasp on some real entity (thing, act, emotion, truth, person, significance).

2) **His artistic integrity**: He insisted upon "individually-distinctive beauty of style". Here enters his austere chaste, humble, utter sincerity, sanctioning his own experiments, a rebuke to triflers, moral triflers or technical triflers.

3) **His bold originality**: He exploited untouched possibilities of the language.

   a) By his experiments in rhythm he pointed towards new ways to emphasis.

   b) By his own not always successful experiments he reminded poets that concentration is a means of communication in itself.
c) By his diction he bared the raw strength of our Anglo-Saxon tongue.

d) Above all he threw new insistence upon the fact that a poem is a "pattern of speech" and that sound and music are essential to its nature. His letters proclaim this. Especially he propounds this in his poems, which are so suggestive of the possibilities which he proclaims.

His realism, his integrity, his originality are all functions of inscape.
APPENDIX TO CHAPTER III

Because the word inscape is so important to an understanding of the poetic principles of Hopkins I have thought it well to add to this chapter an appendix in which I will add to my own explanation of inscape some other definitions of the word. The first "definitions" are by Hopkins himself. The others are by students of Hopkins. In the last part of this appendix I have tried to explain some other words peculiar to Hopkins.

Hopkins:

1) "Design, pattern or inscape is what I above all aim at in poetry." (R.B., 66)

2) "Inscape (the very soul of art)." (R.W.D., 135)

3) "The essential and only lasting thing left out -- what I call inscape, that is individually distinctive beauty of style." (F.L., 225)

4) "For in the world besides natures or essences or 'inscapes' and selves ..." (Note-Books, 322)

5) "Origin of Beauty", "Poetic Diction", "Parmenides". (Note-Books, 54-102)

as a noun: a) inscape is that precisely which makes this individual thing what it is (form of a thing, individuating note)

b) in another sense inscape is a glimpse of this "form".

c) in another sense inscape is a method of expressing this "form", a re-realizing of it, a re-stressing of it.

as a verb: To inscape is to make the artistic form equate the ontological form.
E. E. Phare:

"Inscape is the result of the object's relation to its creator." (Op. cit., 81)

Aldous Huxley:

Inscape is an "existence-pattern". (Quoted by Phare, Op. cit., 85)

Bremond:

"Inscape, c'est-a-dire, sa ligne, sa structure significative." (Loc. cit., p. 37)

Pick:

Inscape: 1) the outer form of things.

2) the inner form or ontological secret.

3) (usual) the essential individuality or self-hood of a thing working itself out and expressing itself in design and pattern. This he calls beauty. (op. cit., 32-39; 156-159)

Sargent:

Inscape "is the profundity into which 'instress' draws the mind". "That design, that pattern, felt by the artist enables him to penetrate the thing seen, and can be called 'instress'. We look at a landscape in order to see out into space; we look at 'inscape' in order to see from space into meaning." (Op. cit., 154).
Inscape: defined by John Manning Fraunces: The Meaning and Use of Inscape

I - Nominal definition:

Inscape is the internal aspect of a thing which the eye can grasp in a single view or from a single point. (p. 3)

II - Primary meaning:

Inscape is an essence which is particularized here and now. (p. 5), i.e. either: 1) substantial form
or 2) ultima realitas entis
(see note below) Chapter II
or 3) this thing: matter, form, individuality; these three taken together (pp. 72-73)

III - Derived meanings:

A. Inscape is the external unity and proportion of a natural being -- that which is apparent and from which we can note the internal essence. "In this sense Hopkins speaks of the inscape of flowers, trees, clouds, mountains, fields, etc." (Chapter III)

B. Inscape is the harmony of parts in artificial beings -- i.e., the "unity of cathedrals, of poems, of music, of all artificial things." (p. 7 and cp. 3)

IV - Inscape as a verb: means to get this thing into fitting language. (pp. 72-79)

Note: In the scholastic theory all things are composed of matter and form; matter is comparable to passive potency; substantial form is comparable to act. Form gives matters its essential, specific character. Whether or not it is form which gives things their individuality is a moot question amongst philosophers. Duns Scotus thinks that it does not but that an entirely separate entity, the "ultima realitas entis" gives things their individuality. It stands in relation to the composite of matter and form somewhat as act to potency. (That this last is a rather obscure idea Scotus himself admitted.)

In this matter, it seems to me, we find the exact reason for Hopkins' devotion to Scotus. Both men loved individuality. It seems to me that the first meaning of inscape is ultima realitas entis.
In a poem:

1 - Inscane: is the "principle of unity", that is, the intellectual element which controls the sensible element.

The poet has an "idea" and his medium. He must master the medium, bend it to his individual inscape or grasp of individual reality. Then

2 - Inscane: is "individually-distinctive beauty of style."

Some Significant words peculiar to Hopkins.


Sake: - "The being a thing may have outside itself, as a voice by its echo, a face by its reflection, a body by its shadow, a man by his name, fame, or memory, and also that in the thing by virtue of which especially it has this being abroad, and that is something distinctive, marked, specifically or individually speaking, as for a voice and echo clearness, for a reflected image light, brightness, for a shadow-casting body bulk; for a man genius, great achievements, amiability, and so on." (R.F., 82) (cf. Sonnet No. 21) Therefore sake is:

1) - the being a thing may have outside itself. e.g., a voice's echo a man's fame.

2) - the precise reason for that other-being, e.g., the voice's unusual clarity the man's genius.

Scape: - the external form or outline of things. (Not, as inscape, the inner-form or ontological secret of a thing) "Rebrandt is a master of scaping rather than of inscape." cf. Note-Books, 194; 176; 179; 164.
Sprung rhythm, roving over, hangers or outriders: cf. "Hopkins Prosody" (Chapter IV)

Inspiration, Parnassian, Castalian, Olympian: cf. "Inspiration" (Chapter II)

Keepings: Characteristic subject matter, background, or reference of the works of a particular school of art.

To keep: To live by means of and according to the demands of - e.g. to keep grace means to live a supernatural life.
CHAPTER IV

HOPKINS' THEORY OF CRAFTSMANSHIP

Craftsmanship

As we have just explained, by inscape Hopkins frequently means "individually-distinctive beauty of style". For the creation of a poem it is necessary not only that the poet have a clean, firm grasp of some reality but also that he have "the artist's most essential quality, masterly execution ... a kind of make gift ... the begetting one's thought on paper."\(^1\) It is far from enough that the poet have something to say and be sincere in saying it; he must know how to speak. "For work to be perfect there ought to be a sense of beauty in the highest degree."\(^2\) And the "sense of beauty" of which Hopkins speaks is no vague cliche. For him "sense of beauty" is revealed in "Tennyson's workmanship and infallibly telling freedom of stroke, which is indeed half of art."\(^3\) A beautiful style for him is one which is equal to the material at hand, in which each verse is a work of art, in which there are no "botchy places ... no half wrought or low-toned ones, no drab, no brown-holland."\(^4\)

\(^1\) R. W. D., 133.
\(^2\) R. E., 142.
\(^3\) R. E., 139.
\(^4\) R. W. D., 24.
which there is richness in phrasing and in versification, in which the sequence of phrases is perfect. It must give evidence of a fresh bouyant spirit, of independent observation, judgment, and execution; it must be integral with vigorous, strong "Greek" thought. Through it the character and human nature of the poet must shine; it must be made to glow with his noble personality. Where necessary it must communicate pathos or feeling. It must be characterized by constant music of word and phrase and illuminated by neat, valid imagery.\(^5\) In his *Collected Essays* Herbert Read finds "Hopkins is eager to use every device the language can hold to increase the force of his rhythm and the richness of his phrasing. Point, counterpoint, rests, running-over rhythms, hangers or outriders, slurs, end-rhymes, internal rhymes, assonances, and alliteration -- all used to make the verse sparkle like rich, irregular crystals in the gleaming flow of the poet's limpid thought."\(^6\)

Poetry is an art and its complete and perfect execution transcends science. But underlying even art there may be some real science. Hopkins feels that music and architecture enjoy an advantage over poetry in that their science is clearly formulated and is at hand to be studied and practiced, whereas rhetoric, or the science of poetry, has been only imperfectly formulated and expounded. His own age, Wordsworth in particular, suffers from not having at hand the common and teachable

\(^5\)R.B., 72-73; 147.

\(^6\)346.
elements in literature. Hopkins himself never formulated the science of rhetoric but he did make some worthwhile remarks about various particular points of rhetoric.

In "Verse and Poetry", previously mentioned, Hopkins implied that a poet reveals just how much of the science of rhetoric he has mastered by his Parnassian, by his characteristic dialect. He asserts, of course, that to be real poetry Parnassian must be sublimated by inspiration. Rhetoric alone is sham-poetry.

A special point of rhetoric which is very characteristic of Hopkins is that he felt that the full power and polish of rhetoric should exist in even the smallest element of a poem. His own efforts to concentrate meaning, music, and effect into every word often ran over into the vices of queerness and obscurity. But he was honestly aiming at something good which he found in Handel's music: "The immediateness of the impression must be due, I suppose, to his power being conveyed into smaller sections of his work that other men's and not needing accumulation for its effect."

An example of his insistence upon great care with each detail is his defense of the occasional use of vulgar -- obvious or necessary -- rhymes. He argues that the poet must aim only at the most telling, most effective rhyme. If that rhyme be a vulgar rhyme, it need not for

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7 R.B., 249; R.W.D., 138-142.

8 R.M.D., 137.
that reason be rejected. It holds its place as all rhymes should when the poet can say, "Show me what better I could have said if there had been a million".\(^9\)

Examples of detailed analysis of parts of the science of rhetoric may be found in two of his letters to Dixon (19 and 21) during October of 1881. In the first letter he gives a detailed description of the mechanics of the Shakespearean sonnet. In the second he compares the English sonnet with the Italian and finds the English "in comparison with the Italian short, light, tripping, and trifling". He explains exactly the weakness of the English sonnet and enumerates possible ways to remedy it -- concluding with the suggestion of his own remedy, outriding feet.\(^{10}\)

As his poems prove, Hopkins knew well how to value and use imagery. Herbert Read says "Hopkins ... had the acute and sharp sensuous awareness essential to all great poets .... passionate apprehension, passionate expression and equally that passion for form without which these other passions are spendthrift."\(^{11}\) Yet he knew too the value of restraint, of spareness; he warned Patmore that "extreme ingenuity and turns of pure fancy in art are in great danger of frigidity."\(^{12}\)

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\(^9\)R.B., 169.

\(^{10}\)R.W.D., 86 Sq.

\(^{11}\)Criterion, X, 557.

\(^{12}\)F.L., 172.
Negatively, Hopkins' most frequent criticism in matters of rhetoric was that a poem was not "perfectly achieved" or was not adequately executed. He complains against lagging verses, feebleness, padding, affectation, "echoing" or lack of originality, ambiguity, failure to make the meaning clear.

Many times, especially to Dixon, Hopkins expresses his opposition to the use of archaic language as a rhetorical device. And he believes that paradox likewise should be used with great restraint. It should be merely an introduction, used to attract attention and then dropped.

**Obscurity**

The intensity of Hopkins' efforts at perfect expression even in the smallest detail sometimes led him to the defeating of his own purpose. His correspondents frequently reminded him of this. In the introduction to Hopkins' Poems Bridges censures the author for oddity.

13 R.W.E., 156.


15 Although gentle and respectful in tone Patmore's letter to Hopkins (March 20, 1884) makes the most overwhelming protest against Hopkins' obscurity I have anywhere read. Patmore saw in special signs or notations in the text only further complexity and no practical help. (F.L., 204-205). Hopkins himself was suspicious of the value of these private diacritical marks. He attempted to restrain their use as much as possible and admitted that they were offensive and not always consistent. (R.B., 189). Much later he says "I do myself think, I may say, that it would be an immense advance in notation (so call it) in writing as the record of speech, to distinguish the subject, verb, object, and in general to express the construction to the eye; as is done already partly in punctuation by everybody, partly in capitals by the Germans, more fully in accentuation by the Hebrews. And I daresay it will come. But it would, I think, not do for me; it seems a confession of unintelligibility." (R.B., 265).
and obscurity. Herbert Read finds Hopkins' thought corroded with surface beauties. Hasty readers despair of him. Hopkins realized that sometimes at least he must have been at fault. "Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or inscape to be distinctive and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped."\(^{16}\)

He knew that the matter of just how obscure a poet may legitimately be was a delicate one, that it was a sort of balance between the demands of artistry on the one hand and the demands of actual expression on the other hand. The poet's aim is to express effectively. If too much emphasis is laid on to express, expression may be enervated to prose of tick-tock verse. If too much emphasis is placed on effectively, the expression may not express at all. That he was fully cognizant of both sides of this balance Hopkins tells us in his letters. Several times he warns Patmore against obscurity. "If I understand this at all, it seems to me a thought condensed beyond what literature will bear."\(^{17}\) Again he complains against even a line which is obscure only when it is read without forethought.\(^{18}\) He knew at the same time that he had his friends scurrying to each other for cribs to his own verses and he words his dilemma

\(^{16}\) R.E., 66.

\(^{17}\) F.L., 170; cf. 166-171.

\(^{18}\) F.L., 158.
in this way: "Obscurity I do and will try to avoid so far as is consistent with excellences higher than clearness at first reading."\(^{19}\) Hopkins placed great value on "excellences higher than clearness". At one time he resolved to express his "idea" in prose and then to elaborate it in verse upon which clearness would make little demand. "One thing I am now resolved on, it is to prefix short prose arguments to some of my pieces. These too will expose me to carping, but I do not mind. Epic and drama and ballad and many, most, things should be at once intelligible; but everything need not and cannot be. Plainly if it is possible to express a subtle and recondite thought in a subtle and recondite way and with great felicity and perfection, in the end something must be sacrificed in so trying a task ... and this may be the being at once, may perhaps even the being without explanation at all, intelligible."\(^{20}\) In his poems he strove to attain the necessary balance between art and communication. But he strove harder than is common amongst poets. A little leaning of the balance one way or the other would not do. For him the balance had to be perfect.

Hopkins' poems certainly do not make easy reading; they can not be hurried through. In a sense they are certainly obscure. But the question to be asked is this: Is his obscurity legitimate or not? The answer is this: Although in a few pieces, as in "Tom's Garland", his obscurity is not legitimate, on the whole his difficulty, rather than obscurity, is entirely legitimate.

\(^{19}\)\textit{R.B.}, 54.

\(^{20}\)\textit{R.B.}, 265-266.
The fundamental cause of Hopkins' difficultness is his great earnestness, his desire always to say something, his desire to make each word a precious gem. "C'est cette rigueur de volonté poétique qui explique le long labeur du poète et excuse la fatigue du lecteur. Les heurts poetiques viennent de cette tension." Two derived causes of difficulties are: first, his efforts to make his poetry musical; secondly, his efforts at concentration.

About the first of these derived causes it is the mind of J. Middleton Murry that sometimes Hopkins forgot the medium with which he was working, that he used words as if they were notes only for their indicated sounds. "Musical elaboration is the chief characteristic of his work, and for that reason what seem to be the strangest of his experiments are his most essential achievements. (e.g. 'The Golden Echo')... But the relative constant in the composition of poetry is the law of language which admits only a certain amount of adaptation. Musical design must be subordinate to it."22

The extreme concentration in the poetry of Hopkins is at once apparent to the most casual reader. This concentration leads to the virtues of terseness and impact, but likewise "une des causes de son obscurité est qu'il veut tout exprimer parfaitement."23 "E un' oscurità per effetto di eccessiva concentrazione e per mancanza di passaggi, nella quale egli si è intricato."24

21 Bremond, loc. cit., 34.
22 Murry, loc. cit., 425-426.
23 Bremond, loc. cit., 25.
24 Croce, loc. cit., 92.
But we must be careful to notice that this difficultness is not in itself a fault. It may easily become a fault, but in itself it is perhaps a virtue. Even those who seem to chide Hopkins grant that in general he is more than clear, for Murry says about one of the sonnets, "there is compression, but not beyond immediate comprehension, music but music of overtones; rhythm, but a rhythm which explicates meaning and makes it more intense;" And Croce says, "La sua tendenza generale e alla chiarezza espressiva." At least three critics find Hopkins' difficultness a thing wholly to be admired. They are I. A. Richards, F. R. Leavis, and Laura Riding.

"Modern verse", says Richards, "is perhaps more often too lucid than too obscure. It passes through the mind (or the mind passes over it) with too little friction and too swiftly for the development of the response. Poets who can compel slow reading have thus an initial advantage."  

Christ minds; Christ's interest, what to avow or amend There, eyes them, heart wants, care haunts, foot follows kind, Their ransom, their rescue, and first, fast, last friend. (No. 10)

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26 Dial, LXXXI, 195.
No one can catch the meaning of these lines with a careless glance; yet, without further reference, anyone with patience can in the end find the meaning. "The more the poems are studied, the clearer it becomes that their oddities are always deliberate. They may be aberration, they are not blemishes. It is easier to see this today since some of his most daring innovations have been, in part, attempted independently by later poets."27 In his earlier years Hopkins wrote in a more conventional style; and in this style, for his years, he wrote with distinction. Some of his poems were prize poems. Even in his later years his presentation pieces were in a simpler style. Most of his Marian poems were meant to be hung or published for a community and were simple yet not without poetic virtue. But writing for himself or for his three intimate friends, in his more characteristic mood, "he had", says Leavis, "positive uses for ambiguity and he presumed to expect from the reader prolonged and repeated intellectual effort." He deliberately arranged to allow time for a complex response to develop. And besides, "he aimed to get out of his words as much as possible unhampered by the rules of grammar, syntax, and common usage."28

The office of a poet is to give mankind a second-hand sense of the universe, to show his fellowmen what they should see, how they should respond, to crystalize for them their own feelings, to give

27Ibid, 196.

28Leavis, op. cit., 164; 165; 162.
them a way of saying what they have often felt but could never say. When the poet succeeds in fulfilling his office, mankind seizes upon his language and repeats it until it has become stereotyped. Then the poet must search out a new means of expression; he must use language in a fresh way. It might even become necessary for him to add to the existing language or to do it violence, in a sense, to re-make the language. Laura Riding is very confident that Hopkins was a poet who was fulfilling his office very capably. She sees in his experiments a sound effort at perfect expression. By analysis she proves the value of some of his private expressions like "Jack-self", "God knows when, God knows what", "stallion stalwart and very violet sweet", and "betweenpie". To her, all of Hopkins' efforts -- even those that failed -- were praiseworthy; they were in the right direction. "One of the first modernist poets to feel the need of a clearness and accuracy in feelings and their expression so minute, so nearly scientific, as to make of poetry a higher sort of psychology was Gerard Manley Hopkins, a Catholic poet writing in the eighties. We call him a modernist in virtue of his extraordinary strictness in the use of words and the unconventional notation he used in setting them down so that they had to be understood as he meant them to be, or understood not at all (this is the crux of the whole question of the intelligibility of modernist poetry.)"29

Prosody

It is not the purpose of this paper to explain in detail the mechanical aspects of the art of Hopkins. In the last section I tried to show that Hopkins recognized the value of knowing the mechanics of versification. Such demonstration would be enough for the purpose of this paper if it were not for the fact that Hopkins has made some contribution to the mechanics of poetry as well as to its art. He did this by his theory of Sprung rhythm.

E. Clarke accuses Hopkins of being too involved in technique, of being more a technical experimentalist than a poet. But this is an unsound accusation. In the early poem, "Floris in Italy", Hopkins implies that mechanics in verse are entirely secondary to the art. Claude Abbott feels that Sprung rhythm was no system at all. I. A. Richards says that Hopkins used complete rhythmical freedom "But disguised this freedom as a system of what he called Sprung rhythm." And this amounts to what William Gardiner says when he defines Sprung rhythm as "expressional rhythm ... a vital fusion of the internal rhythm of thought-and-emotion and the external rhythm of sounds." The internal rhythm guides and controls the external. Rules can be made for the external after the poem is finished.

Hopkins elaborates his theory of Sprung rhythm in two places, in the "Author's Preface" to the Poems and in a letter to Dixon on December 12, 1880 (R., D., 39-40). He admits three kinds of rhythm: first,

running rhythm or the common rhythm of English; secondly, Sprung rhythm; thirdly, mixed or logaoedic rhythm (dactyls with trochees or anapests with iambics). Running rhythm is, of course, measured by feet of never less than two nor more than three syllables. Each foot has one stress or accent and one or more unaccented syllables (slack syllables). A foot with the stress first is called a falling foot; one with the stress last is called a rising foot; one with a stress between the slack syllables (e.g., amphibrach) is a rocking foot. Sometimes in running rhythm variety is achieved by reversing feet or by counterpointing them. Feet are reversed when the stress is where the slack should be and vice versa. Counterpoint is the repetition of reversal in two successive feet, especially so as to include the sensitive second foot. Counterpoint really constitutes a superimposing or mounting of a new rhythm on the old one. And the effect is that when the mind notes the new or mounted rhythm, it at the same time reverts to the standard foregoing rhythm; thus the mind has before it two rhythms at once.

Sprung rhythm is likewise measured by feet, feet which regularly contain from one to four syllables. In Sprung rhythm the stress is all important. Each syllable has only one stress, which is always scanned as the first syllable. For a particular effect any number of weak or slack syllables might be used. On the contrary, one stress alone is enough to constitute a foot. Thus it is possible that two or more stressed syllables might come running. Regularly, then, in Sprung rhythm there are four possible feet: a single accented syllable;
an accentual trochee; a dactyl; a first paeon ("vvv -- a paeon is a
metrical foot of four syllables, one long and three short, named ac-
cording to the position of the long syllable first, second, third, or
fourth paeon.)

In running rhythm there may be mixed or logaoedic rhythm; but in
Sprung rhythm there can be only the one rhythm. Running rhythm can be
counterpointed; but Sprung rhythm cannot, because the underlying rhythm
is not regular enough to be held in mind counter to a mounted rhythm.
However, since Sprung rhythm is already so varied, it does not need
counterpointing. All feet in Sprung rhythm, as in running rhythm, are
assumed to be equally long. Their seeming inequality is made up for
by pause or stressing. A virtue which Sprung rhythm enjoys over running
rhythm is that it allows dochmiac or antipastic effects -- i.e., abrupt
changes from rising to falling movement. Yet no account is taken of it
in the scanning and no irregularity is caused; it scans always as rising
rhythm.

There are two special characteristics of Sprung rhythm which might
be noted: roving over and hangers or outriders. Roving over is running
the scansion from one line over into the next line. Scanning begins with
the stanza and goes unbroken to the end. A syllable missing at the end of
one line may be found first in the next line. Hopkins liked lyric verse
to be over-rove but preferred dramatic verse to be "free-ended" and each
verse to be scanned by itself. Hangers or outriders are one, two, or
three slack syllables added to a foot and not counted in the nominal
scanning. "They hand below the line or ride backward and forward from
it in another dimension than the line itself."
Diction

In the matter of diction Hopkins' ideas remained consistent throughout his lifetime. His over-all theory of the diction proper to poetry was that it should be the speech current and common in the day and the age of the poet but used with a concentration and heightened effect not found in prose or conversation. In his "Journal" he takes issue with Wordsworth's "Preface" to the Lyrical Ballads. He cannot agree that "the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written."

To his way of thinking the chief difference between poetry and prose is the use of artifice in poetry, artifice of such a nature that in itself it helps to communicate. The whole of effect of artifice is concentration. But concentration is foreign to common speech. Therefore the language of poetry cannot be exactly the same as that of well written prose. 31 "It seems to me," he says, "that the poetic language of an age should be the current language heightened, to any degree heightened and unlike itself, but not an obsolete one. This is Shakespeare's and Milton's practice and the want of it will be fatal to Tennyson's Idylls and plays, to Swinburne, and perhaps to Morris." 32


32 R.B., 89.
Sometimes Hopkins approaches an almost conversational tone, a
diction rather (for him) Wordsworthian:

This seeing the sick endears them to us, us too it endears.
My tongue had taught thee comfort, touch had quenched thy tears,
Thy tears that touched my heart, child, Felix, poor Felix Randal.
(No. 29)

But even in such lines he is different from those, say of "Lucy Gray".
In these there is abruptness; each line is broken, the first between
the repeated personal pronoun, the second after "comfort", the third
after "heart". There is an intangible air of strength or reserve in
the marshalling of words. And "Child, Felix, poor Felix Randal" is
subtle but too definitely a diminuendo not to be artifice rather than
conversation.

More characteristic are:

I admire thee, Master of the tides,
Of the Yore-flood, of the year's fall;

... Ground of being, and granite of it: past all
Grasp God, throned behind
Death with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but abides.
(Deutschland, v. 32)

... Birds build - but not I build; no; but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
Mine, O Thou lord of life, send my roots rain.
(No. 50)

From a consideration of these lines two things are apparent:
1) That Hopkins heightens the effect of current idiom.
2) That his characteristic language is monosyllabic Saxon.
The diction of Hopkins is taken from current speech but not from common speech. It is a compact, economic, cryptic speech. It is not "poetic diction" in the conventional sense, in the sense it is understood when applied to Tennyson and Swinburne, but it is the language of a poet, and language which on the whole the common man could understand, but which he could never achieve. F. R. Leavis says, "Hopkins belongs with Shakespeare, Donne, Eliot ... He departs very widely from current idiom (as Shakespeare did) but nevertheless current idiom is ... the presiding spirit in his dialect."33

When one averts to the fact, Hopkins' language is almost glaringly monosyllabic and Saxon. Hopkins had avverted to this himself and regards the fact with no little complacency. "And my style tends always more towards Dryden ... He is the most masculine of all our poets; his style and his rhythm lay the strongest stress of all our literature on the naked thew and sinew of the English language ... the praise ... one would give in Greek to Demosthenes, to be the greatest master of bare Greek."34 In discussing Hopkins' poetry in Italian for Italian readers B. Croce gives prose translations for the poems, not, he says, because of the ordinary difficulties connected with the translation of verse but because in this case reproduction of the rhyme, the rhythm, the verse, and the mixture of language (impasto della lingua) of Hopkins would

34 R.R., 267-268.
require another Hopkins — "Per esse di necessita un artista come l' Hopkins."35

Hopkins had an instinct for short, powerful words. But he was a poet with a rich background of classical study. He did not use primitive words in a primitive way; he used them with all their primitive force. Yet he forced them into smooth expression -- more than just smooth, into rhythmical, musical speech. "He employed native words, root words of old stock, rhythms of speech, and compelled them as did Hardy, by the sheer poetic force and integrity of his mind; but while with Hardy the words remain sometimes awkward, local or antique, like tough old bits of furniture, in Hopkins they are knocked together, swept along in the one rush of his passion."36

Another proof that Hopkins had an authentic grasp upon the language was the independent way in which he used it. He felt that the language had sources of power as yet untapped and so he attempted to tap them. He did two things: he invented new words and he made new combinations of words. Some of his own words we have already mentioned, for example, "betweenpie" and "Jack"; there are others, "Shivelight", "firedint", and more. His combinations run from solid compounds like "fallowboot-fellow" to "cast by conscience out", which is to be taken as one word.

35 Croce, loc. cit., 85. M. Bremond has, however, rendered some of the poems into French verse.

Examples of combinations are: "spendsavour salt", "dare-gale", "day-labouring-out", "dapple-dawn-drawn", "hearse-of-all", etc. He took other liberties like "Sheathe-and shelterless thoughts", "brim, in a flash, full", "vind-lillylocks-laced"; "thoughter" (syncopation -- through the other); "your offering, with dispatch, of!"

Hopkins was markedly conscious of the faults of his fellow Victorians. His own efforts were towards a virile and finely accurate expression of experience. He complained against the use of all words which sounded forth, perhaps even melodiously, but did not inscape. The conventional device of the inversion of word order had its place in poetic technique but was to be used with great restraint and deliberation. Old-fashioned words should find no place in a poet's vocabulary; they were of yesterday -- his experience of today. An over use of "unto and thereafter and _eths" he finds offensive. He looked upon archaic language as a blight. Even when it was well used he was reluctant to admire it. The introduction of foreign words has a frigid effect. "I nowhere remember an exception ... It is illegitimate ... destroys the seriousness of the style, makes it macaronic." The use of dialect has the advantage of heightening the effect of what is said. The reader admires the expression not only for what it says but

37 F.L., 82; cf. R.F., 87-89.

38 F.L., 148.

39 F.L., 200.
for its apparent age as well, as he might the more admire the architecture of a building just because it was old. On the other hand the use of dialect very much narrows the field of possible thought and emotion. 40

The Communication of Poetry

Early in this paper we said that although Hopkins was far from a great musician that through most of his life he showed interest in music and that at the end of his life music seemed to have superseded even poetry in his interest. His interest in music had an indirect but commanding influence on his poetic ideals. He aimed at inscape. I have already quoted Murry, Leavis, and E. Clarke to the effect that inscape is essentially musical. A further key to what Hopkins thought should go into a poem is a consideration of what he thought should be gotten out of a poem. Sound or music had to be in a poem, because to his mind it was impossible to reach the full meaning of a poem unless it was actually sounded in the reader's ear.

In his early notes he says that just as a tune does not exist except when it is played, so poetry does not even exist until it is spoken. 41 Throughout his life he had the tendency to put to music whatever verse he admired, as if he felt the verse incomplete without definite musical annotation. Some of his poems, as we have said, seem to lay more emphasis on sound than upon words as means of expression. (Woodlark, "Binsey Poplars", etc.)

40R.R., 88.

41Note-Books, 29.
Hopkins always composed "orally, away from paper -- and I put it down with repugnance". He seems hardly to have considered what his poetry would look like. When he did see it, it shocked him. "When, on somebody's returning me the 'Eurydice', I opened and read some lines, reading as one commonly reads whether prose or verse, with the eyes, so to say, only, it struck me aghast with a kind of raw nakedness and unmitigated violence I was unprepared for: but take breath and read it with the ears, as I always wish to be read, and my verse becomes all right." A year earlier he had already warned Bridges "To do the 'Eurydice' any kind of justice you must not slovenly read it with the eyes but with your ears as if the paper were declaiming it at you ... Properly read it is quite a different thing. Stress is the life of it." When he sends Bridges [Harry Ploughman he says that this too "is for recital, not for perusal (as by nature verse should be)."

About this same poem he tells Dixon too that it "cannot be properly taken in without emphatic recitation; which nevertheless is not an easy performance." About "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" he speaks at length,

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42 F.L., 231.
43 R.B., 79.
44 R.B., 51-52.
45 R.B., 263.
46 R.W.D., 153.
"Of this long sonnet above all remember what applies to all my verse, that it is, as living art should be, made for performance, and that its performance is not reading with the eye but loud leisurely, poetical (not rhetorical) recitation, with long rests, long swells on rhyme and other marked syllables, and so on. This sonnet should be almost sung: it is most carefully timed in tempo rubato."47

Written with principles like these in mind the poetry of Hopkins is something different from that of most poets -- different at least in degree. He is a writer in "sound-words", "sound-clauses", "sound-sentences". A great burden of communication is laid upon sound. From sound comes tone, atmosphere, meaning. And the sound must never be neglected; it must be attended to "until its intricate spreading patterns of response develop themselves and possess the reader."48

In his letters he does not explicate his theory; he merely begs that the music of his poems be listened to. That music he means to be the explication of his theory and at the same time a proof of its validity. In his poems it is his genius not his intelligence which argues. "When he does succeed one is conscious of a new richness of sound, an orchestration of vowels and consonants and varying feet that makes one wonder if Hopkins' genius, given a freer rein, was not of weight and originality at least equal to any in the nineteenth century. ... He has found combination of sound which apart from their meaning create the emotion he is trying to produce." He does not like

47 R.B., 246.

Mallarme and Rimbaud ignore the demands of logic and meaning. "He
tries to make a grammatical statement that is at the same time an
image of the kind that doesn't need grammar. He was aiming in the
direction that was to lead to modern writing."  

His voice is like a thing of nature; it speaks "with its silences" -- not only with its words but also with its sound. Sometimes it is like the voice of the sea:

... the tide that ramps against the shore;
With a flood or a fall, low lull-off or all roar.
(No. 11)

Again, it is the puzzling voice of a strange skylark:

... I hear the lark ascend
His rush-fresh re-winded new-skeined score
In crisps of curl off wild winch whirl, and pour
And pelt music, till none's to spill nor spend.
(No. 11)

Or, in the end, it may be a muted voice heavy with grief:

No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,
More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.
Comforter, where, where is your comforting?
(No. 41)

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APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IV

Because in the preceding chapter I have given only a broad outline of the prosody of Hopkins, I wish in this brief appendix to indicate where additional information about his prosody may be found.

I. In a lecture, "Rhythm and the Other Structural Parts of Rhetoric - Verse" (Note-Books, 221-240) under five headings he gives conventional treatment of the various mechanics of verse. His treatment is good, not characteristic. The lecture is good reference, however, to some of the terms he uses in his letters and in the "Preface".

II. In a letter to Baillie (F.L., No. 63) and in another to Bridges (No. 148) he mentions work upon a book never found, a treatise on the Dorian measure and on rhythm in general ... on physics and metaphysics.

In a letter to Bridges (No. 137) he gives a long, close, private analysis of rhythm in Pindar.

III. SPRUNG RHYTHM:

1) The origin of Sprung Rhythm (R.W.D., 12-16; R.B., No. 22)
2) The rules of Sprung Rhythm are few but must be firmly adhered to. (F.L., 157)
3) Great freedom of motion is gained under Sprung Rhythm. (Ibid.)
4) Time value of syllables is very important in Sprung Rhythm. (R.B., No. 60)
5) Attention to quantity is very important in English. ("Preface")
6) All poets would use Sprung Rhythm if they knew of it. (R.B., 90)
7) The savagely rhythmical prose of Walt Whitman has only an apparent likeness to the highly wrought lines of Sprung Rhythm. (Ibid.)
8) The Special value of Sprung Rhythm is in that it lends itself to strong expression. (R.B., No. 63)
9) Marks used in Sprung Rhythm: accents, loops, little loops, slurs, musical pauses, twirl. ("Preface")
10) History of Sprung Rhythm. ("Preface")

IV. SPECIAL NOTES:

1) The special qualities of first and last lines. (Note-Books, 71)
2) The special qualities of Alexandrine lines. (R.B., No. 127)
3) Alliteration in vowels. (F.L., 133)
4) Definition of stress. (F.L., 179)
5) Definition of accent, slack. (R.W.D., 22-23)
6) Theory of the "principle of symmetry and quadrature." (R.B., No. 70)
7) Use of Enclitics, proclitics; reaving over as emphasis on thought. (R.B., No. 62)
8) Chiming of Consonants, derived from Welsh. (R.B., No. 30)
CHAPTER V
AN ANALYSIS OF FOUR POEMS
"The Wreck of the Deutschland"

Across the threshold of Hopkins' poetry lies, as Bridges has termed it, the sprawled out dragon of "The Wreck of the Deutschland". Above the dragon's head there are breaking rolls of thunder; around him are swirling clouds of smoke and intermittent iridescences of fire. And the dragon has teeth. Under the grey to momently saffron smoke the dragon will surely wound us before we find him and master him.

For several reasons I have selected "The Wreck of the Deutschland" as an example of Hopkins' poetic theory put into action. The "Deutschland" was the first piece that Hopkins attempted to write entirely in Sprung Rhythm. It came into being after seven years of silence, seven years of waiting and planning. It came into being when the new rhythm, the new discipline was like a flood-tide which a dam could no longer hold. It tumbles out turbulently from the poet's mind. It moves with a tremendous current; within it are dangerous whirlpools, and on its surface snow-froth is dancing. The "Deutschland" still stands as the longest of Hopkins' poems. In it we find all the characteristic virtues and faults of the poet and his style.

The poem came into being when "in the winter of '75 the Deutschland was wrecked in the mouth of the Thames and five Franciscan nuns, exiles from Germany and the Falk laws, aboard of her were drowned. I was affected by the account and happening to say so to my rector he said he wished some one would write a poem on the subject. On this hint, I set
to work and, though my hand was out at first, produced one. I had long
"had haunting my ear the echo of a new rhythm which I now realized on
paper ... I do not say the idea is altogether new ... but no one has
professedly used it and made it the principle throughout."¹

The poem is divided into two parts. In the first part Hopkins
announces the theme of the poem, expounds a general truth. In the
second part he uses as an illustration of this truth the story of the
wreck of the Deutschland and his own reaction to that wreck. In the
poem there is a sequence of ideas, a logical unity; but the sequence
is clouded over by many digressions. Some of the digressions are
brilliant. And the more brilliant they are the farther they lead us
from the sequence of ideas. The poetic mood of the poem, however, is
entirely consistent. The predominant mood of the poem is one of
storm, powerful unrest, of agitated terror, ending in peace. The mood
is like that of a small Comedia of Dante. It sweeps us from hell up
into heaven. Indirectly the poem deals with one of the most puzzling
aspects of the meaning of life. It deals with suffering, grief, and
catastrophe. And it explains them as "stress" upon the majesty of God,
as things that remind us that we are small and needy while He is Great
and all powerful.

The real theme of the poem is not the actual wreck of the ship.
The real theme is a general truth which is illustrated by the wreck.
That general truth is this: God's majesty must be confessed; His

¹R.W.D., 14.
majesty is everywhere evident, but sometimes men ignore it. Then God forces them to notice His Majesty -- by exercising His Power against them.

Though he is under the world's splendor and wonder, His mystery must be instressed, stressed;
For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand.\(^2\)

---Hither then, last or first,
To Hero of Calvary, Christ's feet --
Never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it -- men go.

(v. 5)

In the first part Hopkins addresses himself directly to God, acknowledges that God made him, and then cries out that now God has frightened him with a display of awful power. (v. 1. The display itself -- i.e., the wreck, is not described until verses 12-17.) In his terror Hopkins flees to the house chapel and swoons before the divine majesty. (v. 2) A terrible question torments him: If there is hell for the sinner and this terrible disaster for the just, what hope is there at all? His only recourse is to trust himself to Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. (v. 3) Then, though conscious of his own great weakness, he feels consoled by a gospel truth -- namely, that although God's mighty power upholds the world nevertheless at times this power must be emphasized before men will acknowledge and adore it. (v. 4, 5) The need for this emphasis, he

\(^2\)The theme of the fragment, No. 73, in the poems is almost identical with that of "The Deutschland". The mood and style are different.
realizes, is not part of the plan first ordained by divine Goodness but arises from events in time as a counter-complement of original sin and the subsequent darkening of man’s intellect. (v. 6) The greatest emphasis ever laid upon the mastery of God was the passion of Christ. But that was not the only or the last emphasis. This storm is part of that same emphasis. (v. 7) In the end, of course, all men must adore the Mastery of God. At some time they will have no choice. Just as certainly as a man eating fruit must taste something, so certainly all men at some time must come to adore God. (v. 8) So, Hopkins acknowledges the storm as a sign of God’s mercy and begs him ever more to give proof of His might -- now, before it is too late! (v. 9)

With an anvil-ding
And with fire in him forge thy will
Or rather, rather then, stealing as Spring
Through him, melt him but master him still:
Whether at once, as once at a crash Paul,
Or as Austin, a lingering-out sweet skill,
Make mercy in all of us, out of us all
Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King.
(v. 10)

In the first part of the "Deutschland", at times under obscure language, there is a consistently developed sequence of thought, But in part two digressions occur, logical digressions if not poetical.

The eleventh verse, on the mortality of man, gets away from the thought immediately at hand in the poem, but it is not entirely a digression. It stands in relation to part two as the "Prelude" of James Russell Lowell stands to the Vision of Sir Launfal. It jars us into the mood of what is to follow:
Some find me a sword; some
The flange and the rail; flame
Fang, or flood goes Death on Drum

we ... forget that there must
The sour scythe cringe, and the blear share come.

The last line especially is extremely suggestive of the mood of terror
and unleashed force: consonants are gnashed against each other and
strongly stressed monosyllabic syllables are remorselessly pressed against
each other.

In the next five verses the storm itself is brilliantly described;
here first mention is made of the nun, "a lioness arose ... a prophetess
... a virginal tongue". In verse 19 we are told that she speaks; and in
verse 24 we are told what she said: "O Christ, Christ, come quickly."

(Verses 18 and 20-23 are parenthetical. In 18 the poet tells us
that at the sight of the nun his heart is touched not with grief but
with joy. The reason for his joy is not explained until verse 28.
Verses 20 to 23 tell who the nun was, one of five Franciscans, exiled
and now to be martyred. William Gardiner calls these verses "an
amazing metaphysical digression" characterized by much splendor and
suggestiveness of diction and great imaginative power.3)

Verses 25, 27, and 28 are an analysis of the nun's prayer, an
explanation of the theme of the poem. "O Christ, Christ, come quickly,"
she had prayed, but what did she mean? Was it that she desired to die
for Christ as He had for her? Was she longing for heaven? No. No.

3 Loc. cit., 145-146.
The weary, the worn ask for, hope for death. Those excited by terror would beg rather for life. The prayer means only what it says, "Come!"
The meaning is tremendous, grand. The nun calls the Master. That is all. She calls the Storm-Sender; calls her Lord. He can help her to live; He can take her from life; she does not care. She asks only that He be present. "Come quickly!" -- "Be at Thy Mastery", she means. "Thy will be done. Fiat. Do, deal, Lord it." Here is the meaning of the whole poem. God is Master. When we feel His Hand upon us, heavy or light, we should acknowledge Him. "Be adored ... Thou are lightening and love ... Father and fondler of heart thou hast wrung." (v. 9)
"Make mercy in all of us, out of us all Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King." (v. 10) "I admire thee, master of the tides." (v. 32)

Verse 26 is a bold but beautiful digression. At the mention of heaven in his analysis of the nun's prayer he suddenly gives a bold and original picture of paradise. If even May, by day and by night, can be so lovely, how lovely must heaven be? The imagery is strong and unconventional. The diction softens from "Down-dugged ground-hugged grey" to "moth-soft Milky Way". Possibly the verse is meant to accentuate its context by contrast.

In the three verses which follow the analysis of the prayer (29, 30, 31) the poet expresses great admiration for the nun, conjectures about the richness of her reward, and prays for all those who, less wise than she, do not understand the meaning of God's heavy hand.

The last four verses are a return to the explicit statement of the theme already made in part one. Verses 32 and 33 are a prayer of
adoration; verse 34 is a prayer for mercy; and the last verse is a special prayer for England.

The analysis of the prayer (vv. 25-28) varies in merit. The negative exposition is clear and easy to follow. But the positive declaration of the meaning is merely suggested and not unmistakably suggested. It is given in verse 28. This verse is very characteristic of Hopkins. At a key point in the poem he is not anxious that we get the meaning of what he says -- he is anxious that we get the full meaning, the gigantic import of the truth. He is not taking a chance that we might misunderstand. We must either understand or not understand at all. The lines of this verse are jerky, are frantic. They poke, they prod our minds; they force our minds.

But how shall I ... make me room there:
Reach me a ... Fancy, come faster --
Strike you the sight of it? look at it loom there,
Thing that she ... There then! the Master,
Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head;
Do, deal, lord it with living and dead;
Let him ride, her pride, in his triumph, dispatch and have done with his doom there.

The broken, faltering utterances of the first lines suggest the magnitude of the truth to be expressed. By his abrupt rhythms the poet forces his intensity upon the reader as an orator might upon an audience by abrupt rhetorical questioning and gesturing. Ipse is a Latin word. According to Hopkins' principles the introduction of a foreign word is always a fault. But here it is introduced to show the intensity of the struggle for expression. Name is run into name; Master, Christ, King, Head, only One, Ipse. They are all one. But
no one name is enough; all together they are not enough -- the poet reaches out far, *Ipse, Ipse*, even that is not enough. The next line does not mean that Christ was asked to save the nun's life or to take her to heaven. (Such interpretation is excluded by verse 25-27.) It means the same thing as *Ipse, Christ, King, Head!* It means that He was to cure her merely by being present to her, by accepting her homage. The next two lines are almost parenthetical. In them the poet himself seconds the nun's prayer. With three abrupt imperatives he prays for all "Do, deal, Lord it with living and dead." And then he re-applies the prayer to the nun. "Let Him, who is her pride, triumphantly ride, dispatch, have done with his mastery there." These last four lines are an example of parallelism. They repeat the same idea four times; they "over and after" a thought.

Notice how much of Hopkins there is here. The rhythm is irregular, scattered, broken. Notice the Sprung Rhythm, the short words, the spareness of

"*Do, deal, Lord it with living and dead.*"

The rhythm here is surely what I. A. Richards would call license and William Gardiner would call expressional rhythm. The obscurity of the last four lines is characteristic because it is deliberate. The central truth of the poem is poured out in a torrent of words, piled up names, a simple statement, a triple command, a mild command. If it is to touch us at all, we must feel its power, perhaps be bruised. "*Her pride*" is a characteristic rupture of normal word order. Note the complexity of the rhymes -- "room there", "loom there", "doom there"; "faster", "
"master", "cast her", "head", "dead"; (ababcbca). Notice the internal rhymes in the last line: "him ride, her pride" and "done" and "doom". Notice the alliterations and the assonances:

..... Fancv come faster;  
Strike you at the sight of; look at it loom there.

What at first appears to be a disorganized tangle of verbiage is revealed by close examination to be a work of great artifice deliberately aiming to convey and in large measure succeeding in conveying not a truth nor a feeling but an inscape, a true, moving glimpse of reality. The verse shows the power Hopkins could exert; it shows the means -- and the liberties -- he took to express himself. It shows the "Difficultness" with which he deliberately left his poems. The verse is from his first poem in the new style. Age and experience will develop his powers and purify the style.

To consider the poem as a whole we might make the following remarks:

**In general**

1 - Inscape is the key to some definite reality
2 - Inscape is the poet's glimpse of this key
3 - Inscape is the poet's method of expressing his glimpse
4 - Inscape is a new reality, that of a poem.

**In the Wreck of the Deutschland**

1 - The key here is a truth: Suffering is the key to God's display of mastery. (Part I)
2 - His glimpse of this truth was a realization of the meaning of the death of the nun. (Part II)
3 - The style of the "Wreck of the Deutschland".
4 - The poem itself.
Hopkins demanded that a poet have a serious thought in mind, that he have a serious purpose in view, and that his subject matter be of some importance to himself and to his reader. In the "Deutschland" Hopkins dealt with a problem of universal interest and import, that of human suffering. He dealt with it in a most serious and solemn way and suggests "its only tolerable solution". The intensity of his mood and the felicity of his style reveal that he was inspired. Through all his lines there comes bursting forth like a bright inner light the great chastity, humility, integrity of his character. "The first thing, admirable always, terrifying in him, is his directness. All that would have softened the poem to timid ears he gloriously refuses. If we are to have our joy, we who dare to wear the insignia of Christ, we are to have it in the majesty of its conquest, in the shattering beauty of the crucified Incarnate God. Comfort he flings aside. We are dazed, dazzled, wonderfully elated in the high heart of the tall nun. ... Reason, breathless, lagging, big with stupendous truths, is consumed in vision. Pain has become sacrifice, has become joy. Christ is the priest; Christ the victim; Christ the joy of the accepted sacrifice. Everywhere one face only."4

In the style of this poem there are things to be praised and things to be deplored. Among its faults we might list:

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1 - Obscurity. For example, in verse 2:

the hurl of thee trod
Hard down with a horror of height:
And the midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with
fire of stress.

Here there is a lack of sufficient reference, "Height" is in no way identified or defined; neither is "midriff", which could be that of a ship or of a man.

2 - The use of private words. For example, the key word "stress" in verses two, five, six, etc. (and all the pronouns which have stress for an antecedent) is a private word in the way Hopkins uses it. It is hardly legitimate to make "voel" (v.4) mean any mountain just because the Welsh mountain, Voel, was familiar to him.

3 - Mixed-imagery. For example, in verse four waters are spoken of as being "roped" together.

4 - Incomplete expression. In stanzas six, seven, and eight one must guess at half the meaning. (This is, of course, different from merely working out a meaning difficult of attainment.)

5 - Awkward Images. The second image in verse four is awkward and confusing. The image in verse eight is grotesque.

6 - Omission of words: Passim. e.g.,
"She that weather sees one thing" for "in that weather".
"The men woke thee" for "men who woke thee".

These faults are the results of the strenuous, sincere efforts Hopkins was making at perfect expression. We cannot condone them; but we can understand them. And against them we can throw the weight of great achievement:

1 - Strong, powerful language. The language of the "Deutschland" is simple but rugged.

Thou mastering me God.
Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh
And after it almost unmade, what with dread, Thy doing.
2 - Delicate language: Hopkins' characteristic ruggedness might lead us to forget that his language was often as delicate as filigree. "Stealing as Spring through him ... melt him." "A lingering-out sweet skill."

3 - Brilliant images: For example, the one of the hourglass in verse four.

4 - Mastery of Style:

a) With him the use of assonances and alliteration is organic and useful. For example, the alliteration in "cipher of suffering" (v.22) serves to identify the words, as the author means that they should be identified. And the assonance in "fall" and "all" serves to emphasize the contrast between God's "fall-gold mercies" and His "all-fire glances". (v.23)

b) The descriptions in the poem are functional; they are not sea-scapes executed for their own sakes. They contribute to the gathering horror of the wreck.

"The sea flint-flake, black-backed in the regular blow ...
... whirlwind-swivelled snow."

(v.13)
He was pitched to his death at a blow
For all his dreadnought breast and braids of thew.

(v.16)
And the inbord seas run swirling and hawling;
The rash smart sloggering brine
Blinds her.

(v.19)

c) Meter is a means of communication: The feeling of agitation is effected in stanza 18 when "as with a sob, each line stumbles and falters over the threshold of the next. Each line borrows just two syllables of the next, and the regularity of this encroachment sets up a cross-current of pure expressional rhythm without disturbing the basic meter." Contrast this with the restraint of stanza 30.5

Ah, touched in your bower of Bone
Are you! turned for an exquisite smart
Have you! Make words break from me here all alone
Do you! mother of being in me, heart.

5 Gardiner, loc. cit., 130.
5 - Freshness of perception and expression:
  "Lovely-asunder starlight."
  "Dappled-with-damson west."
  "Warm laid grave of a womb life gray."

6 - Felicities of sound:
  "Under the world's splendor and wonder."

7 - Inevitable words:
  Thou art lightening and love, I found it winter and warm;
  Father and fondler of heart thou hast wrung
  Hast thy dark descending and most art merciful then.

  With anvil ding
  And with fire, in him forge thy will.

In spite of its difficultness this poem is a great one; its
greatness derives from many things. The chief of these are the
grandeur of the theme and the "terrible pathos" of the author. It is
a great "inscape" in the sense that it is the sincere expression of an
authentic poet upon an important subject. And it is a great "inscape"
in another sense, because the style of the poem is great. Its diction
is powerful and original. Into it are crowded many beauties of sound --
of rhythm, of alliteration of assonance -- all of these together as an
actual totality. And scattered through the poem are jewels of
perception or of imagery or of expression.
"The Windhover"

After finishing "The Wreck of the Deutschland" Hopkins wrote forty five other complete poems. Of these thirty four were sonnets. Perhaps his most famous, and most discussed poem is the sonnet called "The Windhover". I will discuss this poem because it is so well known but more because it is so characteristic of Hopkins.

In a sense, this sonnet is a dangerous one to analyze. I. A. Richards, Empson, Read, Phare, Sargent, Pick, and others have each a different analysis of the meaning of the poem. I have another. To my mind each of these people try to get more out of the poem than it was ever meant to carry. The meaning I attribute to the poem is a literal, face value meaning. And I believe it goes far enough.

On June 22, 1879 Hopkins wrote to Bridges (Letter 61) that "The Windhover" was "the best thing I ever wrote". We should notice the date at which this statement was made and recall that Hopkins had nine fruitful years of poetic activity before him when he made the statement; we should never consider it as a final statement on a first choice from the whole body of his poems. Nor does the statement imply that somewhere in the poem we must find a statement of some great central idea of life or art -- an explicit statement, I mean, no matter how obliquely expressed.

The poem is dedicated to "Christ Our Lord". But this is a dedication, not a key to the meaning of the poem. A poem needed not, for Hopkins, to be about Christ to be for Christ. Any worthy poem should be dedicated to Him. His best poem most of all should be
dedicated to Him. "The only just judge, the only just literary critic is Christ, who prizes, is proud of, and admires, more than any man, more than the receiver himself can, the gifts of His own making." 6

The theme of the poem springs from a central concept in the esthetic and philosophy of Hopkins, springs from what is called his sacramental view of nature. He believed that every individual thing had an innate beauty which was to be realized in some way. This realization comes about when the individual thing exerts itself to the full extent of its individual powers -- when it is most fully itself. By realizing itself perfectly each individual thing proclaims the glory and power and majesty of God. The mountain by being a mountain proclaims God's massive power and enduring, eternal life. Fruit by ripening proclaims God's Providence. A bird lovely in flight proclaims God's thrilling Beauty. Each thing by being itself proclaims God. "Why", Hopkins asks, "did God Create?" 7 Not for sport, not for nothing ... God has a purpose ... a meaning in His work. He meant the world to give Him praise, reverence, and service; to give Him glory. It is like a garden, a field He sows: what should it bear Him: praise, reverence ... It is a bird he teaches to sing ... It is a book He has written, ... a poem of beauty: what is it about? His praise ... His glory." Hopkins says that the world is a bird, a poem of beauty. Three things: world, bird, poem of beauty -- they are the same. By metonymy the bird is the world, the part is the whole, the little poem is the great poem of beauty.

6R.Y.D., 8.
7Note-Books, 301.
Only in the sense that the falcon stands for the whole of creation or for any other creature fully realizing itself can the bird be said to be metaphorical.

In "The Windhover" Hopkins is striking glory from one thing of all the things "charged" with the glory of God, from a bird hurled against the "rebuff" of the big wind, a falcon fully realizing all the possibilities of its nature in glorious flight. Like the storm-fowl in "Henry Purcell" with a stir of wings, it reveals "the sakes" of him, the inner, marvelous secret of his being.

"La magnifica celebrazione dell' uccello nel movimento del suo volo ... si espande nelle due quartine." The first two quatrains are a magnificent statement of reality, are a perfect inscape. The most communicative element of these lines is their rhythm. They must be read aloud to be appreciated:

THE WINDOVER
To Christ Our Lord

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

---

8Croce, loc. cit., 92.
The rhythm moves in waves like the undulating movement of a bird under stress but strong in flight. Sometimes the bird takes a long, diving sweep: "In his riding of the rolling level underneath him steady air." For a brilliant moment he is poised against the wind, "and striding high there". Then, like a banking plane, still poised and spread, he reels against the sky, "how he rung upon the rain of a wimping wing in his ecstasy!" He chops the air with the effort of recovery, "then, off, off" -- again to come level in long smooth ripples of flight, "forth on swing, as a skate's heels sweeps smooth on a bow bend; the hurl and gliding rebuffed the big wind."

Enraptured, the poet speaks, "My heart in hiding stirred for a bird -- the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!"

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

No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

In the flight of the bird there is not the beauty alone of inanimate things -- of feathers or of air -- or even of static qualities of living things: courage, pride, form; here is the greater, the exquisite beauty of all of these united in living action.

"Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume here Buckle (in this flight are joined, fused)."
From speaking to us the poet turns to speaking to the bird itself -- his chevalier. "AND then" he says "when your powers are not merely potencies but when they are all in full act, when you are not a mounted bird but a bird in an ecstasy of life, then your beauty is like a fire bursting from you, dangerous to consume the eye that dares to look at you. It is no wonder that this living beauty should be so 'dangerous'". The poet is still speaking to the bird, but with the reader in mind -- Slow drudgery makes a plow shine along a furrow and even blue-bleak embers, with no life in them at all, by falling can gall themselves, rainbow themselves into beauty.

I. A. Richards, and others after him, throw undue emphasis on "my heart in hiding". His interpretation, it seems to me, is entirely impressionistic, not warranted by the text, and based upon the mistaken idea that Hopkins become Jesuit was running away from life. His interpretation would make the poem one of remorse, of defeat. But the whole tone of the poem is that of joy. He would mistakenly place emphasis on "gall" in the last line as if it bore the connotation of bitterness (as gall: bile, bitter drink). In the last line fall, gall, and gash are haloed "gold vermilion". The simpler interpretation is confirmed by Hopkins' use of a similar expression, in a similar sense, "Ah, touched in your bower of bone are you! ... heart." ("Deutschland", v.18) That the tone of the poem is one of joy is confirmed by a remark in the "Journal" (November 8, 1874). Hopkins had seen a "vast multitude of starlings making an unspeakable jangle". He watched --
and described -- them wheeling and sweeping, like black flakes falling only to hurl back into life. And he concludes. "I thought they must be full of enthusiasm and delight hearing their cries and stirring and cheering one another." The thrill of delight he felt to be in the flight of the falcon he communicates to the poem.

That he should first narrate and then address now the reader, then the bird has precedent in "The Deutschland". In Part I, verses one, nine, and ten he speaks to God. In verse two he speaks to Christ. In verses three to eight he speaks to the reader. In Part II he narrates, addresses his own heart, God the Orion of Light, St. Francis. His thought leaps from the boat to heaven, back to his own chapel, to the boat again; it flashes again and again from narration to prayer.

The capitalization of AND is sufficiently explained as an attempt to emphasize the thrilling effect of the preceding summation. Buckle (join) all these things and put them in motion (here) And -- the static inscape will become incandescent with beauty.

"Ah, my dear" is too tender to refer to the reader, but not to the bird -- considering the poet's mood of exhilaration. The rhyming points to the identity of chevalier and dear. The insertion of the phrase between "embers" and "fall" is a kind of counterpoint, with the lesser beauty spilling before our eyes he recalls the greater, "Ah, my dear" and in the climax forces us to hold both beauties in mind at once. Both are beauties, and the lesser underscores the greater.

9 Note-Books, 215.
In the poem everything is motion and life. Each line spills over into the next. The rhythm follows the wings of the bird, ignores the ends of the lines, sweeps and swirls. (The poem is scanned variously, cf. Lahey, p. 103). Words crowd upon each other. Because of alliteration we can not leave one word till two more are on our lips: "morning morning's minion" or more "Daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn". Subtle half rhymes like "minion" with "kingdom" lace the words together. Whole groups of words are logically resolved into one word: "The rolling level underneath him steady" is a single adjective. All the words are liquid flowing. \( L, m, n, r \) are liquids: see them all in the octet. Then in the long glide mark the lengthening effect of the alliterated s's and the sustaining force of the long vowels: "Sweeps smooth on a bow bend."

The octet is characteristic of Hopkins' successful poetic efforts. He has an authentic grasp on a reality, the exquisite joy of a living creature fully realizing its possibilities. His observation is full and accurate. And he exercises every faculty in communicating this glimpse of reality, this inscape. There is no time for showmanship, no thought for himself, no padding, no bejeweling; there is an austere, chaste, but intense effort at expression; the "terrible Pathos" is exercised. His rhythm is daring, powerful, "expressional". His language is strong, masculine, yet lovely in its fluidity. Every where there is art, not for the sake of art but for the sake of inscape. The imagery is bold and versatile: the bird is a minion, then the prince of dawn; he rides the air like a skiff; he pulls against it
like a horse on rein; he "bow-bends" across it like a skater's heel. He chops the wind with his wings, mocks it with his hurl and glide, with his supreme poise rebuffs it. Yet the unity of the octet is perfect; every image, every rhythmic sound of movement, every internal and end rhyme, each grace and artifice dovetails into a perfect picture -- no, more than a picture, an inscape, a picture alive with more than visual power, a picture that seizes at once the eye, the ear, the imagination, the sense of rhythm. Seeing such an inscape is as close as we can come to actually seeing the falcon.

The sestet of "The Windhover" is characteristic of Hopkins in his less successful efforts. Here again there is strong language, strong rhythm, bold imagery. But here we cannot be fully sure that we have our finger on the pulse of the rhythm; we can not be positive that we understand the imagery. The key word "buckle" is unruly. It can mean "to break" or "to join" -- with variations. It can be a statement or a command. The word "here" and the emphasis on "Alone" are not altogether unmistakable in their meaning -- nor are "chevalier" and "dear". In these six lines the concentration is too intense. Some necessary reference has been squeezed out of them. These six lines are like the surface of a volcano's crater. Under them we feel warmth and movement; out of them come the rumblings of powerful forces moving; in the cracks we see glowing fire; but all the rest is lost beneath the surface.

The explanation which I have ascribed to the poem is, I believe, correct. It gives an adequate explanation of every word and show of
emphasis in the poem. It is the direct and simple meaning of the text itself, calling upon no outside reference for its explanation. It is perfectly consonant with Hopkins' esthetic and style. The explanation is consonant with his esthetic because it illustrates the central idea of that esthetic, viz; a creature is very beautiful when it perfectly realizes itself. It is consonant with his style because Hopkins is not given to allegory, to various levels of direct meaning. "Harry Ploughman" Hopkins says, "is a direct picture of a ploughman, without afterthought." We may believe then that the octet of "The Windhover" is a similar direct picture, and that the sestet is a philosophical addendum to the effect that it is life (in act) which makes the bird so lovely.

Other meanings may be superimposed upon this one direct meaning. Hopkins himself would allow this. In every poem he thinks there is an overthought (the obvious meaning of the text) and an underthought (an echo or shadow of the overthought). This underthought is "often only half realized by the poet himself, not necessarily connected with the subject in hand but usually having a connection."10 Morton Zabel says of Hopkins' poems "Like greatest poetry ... they come to us at a very advanced stage of realization but the final phrasing ... and the completed meaning still hover -- alluring though intangible -- beyond the grasp of the reader."11 As I have already suggested, by synecdoche

10 F.L., 105-106.

11 Zabel, Poetry, XXXVII, 160.
the falcon could represent the whole world or any other creature fully realizing itself. The falcon could represent the man "who keeps grace", for in sonnet No. 34 Hopkins proclaims that man fully realizes himself when through grace he becomes Christ.

... the just man justices;
keeps grace: ...
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is --
Christ.

The falcon could be man after resurrection, with even inchoate perfection sublimated into final, full realization of human possibility.

I am all at once what Christ is, since He was what I am, and This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond Is immortal diamond.

The falcon could be Christ on the cross, fully realizing His redemptive mission. The falcon could be many things. That is why the poem is fruitful. But in the poem itself the falcon, the chevalier, the dear is only a bird rebuffing a big wind.
"Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" is a poem which marks the apex of Hopkins' development in one direction. In this poem, we have richness, almost lushness, of diction, symbolism, rhythm, and sound. This richness, in the end of Hopkins' career, was to give way to the spareness of the "terrible sonnets". But here we have language like that of Masefield's "Cargoes", only more significant, like Coleridge's "Kubla Kahn" only less mysterious, with more substance beneath the sound.

The poem opens with a brilliant description of evening dissolving into night and all the world slipping to sleep -- "disremembering, disremembering all now." The poet asks his heart to remember that its evening is approaching, "our night whelms, whelms, and will end us." He asks his heart to recall that as night falls upon it, all the variety of its living will be threaded on two spools, one black, one white -- that of right and wrong. "Beware of a world", he says to his heart, "where only right and wrong really count, and where ascetic thoughts (thoughts in groans) are racked by selfish, unguarded, vain thoughts."

The tone of the poem is solemn. The meaning of the poem is "Beware!" It is an oracle speaking. We might imagine the majestic Sibyl of the Sistine Chapel had uttered a word -- "Beware!"

Categorically, "Beware!"

"It is one of the finest things that he ever did", says F. R. Leavis. "It exhibits and magnificently justified most of the pecu-
liarities of his technique.""12 "In comparison with such a poem of Hopkins as this, any other poetry of the nineteenth century is seen to be using only a very small part of the resources of the English language. His words seem to have substance and to be made of a great variety of stuffs. Their potencies are correspondingly greater for subtle and delicate communication."13

Earnest Earthless, equal, attuneable, vaulty, voluminous ... stupendous Evening strains to be time's vast, womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night.

In the very first line of the poem we find assonance and alliteration deepening our curiosity as to what is "earnest...vaulty, etc." "In Hopkins assonance, alliteration, and inversion serve to call the maximum attention to each word." "Time's vast, womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night", is a brief, brilliant "Thanatopsis".

Her fond yellow hornlight wound to the west, her wild hollow hoarlight hung to the height Waste; her earliest stars, earl stars, stars principal, overbend us, Fire-featuring heaven.

Of these lines I. A. Richard says: "I cannot refrain from pointing to the marvelous third and fourth lines. They seem to me to anticipate the descriptions we hope our younger contemporary poets will soon write. Such synaesthesia has tempted several of them, but this, I believe, is the supreme example."14

13 Idem, 186; cf. sq.
14 I. A. Richards, loc. cit., 200-201.
In the poem there is a most wonderful progression in thought, mood, and sound. We pass from the solemn deep melodies of "Earthless, equal, attuneable" to the brittle silhouettes "beak leaved boughs draggonish". It is almost mysterious the way everything changes on our lips; liquidity freezes, light becomes dark; soft becomes harsh -- "groans grind". An air of melancholy hovers over the poem, a subtle, poignant regret that evening must go, that the "dapple", must fade, that there must be the "awful dichotomy of right and wrong".

In the last lines, terrible lines, there is grief, there is pain; but there is no surrender, no bitterness of disillusionment, no doubt. The poet warns his heart to face a fact: "Beware!" he says -- that and no more. I. A. Richards and Leavis read defeat into the poem. It does not exist there. The soul-wringing grief of sonnets 41, 44, 45, 47, and 50 is implicit in the poem. But no more! Sonnet 40 tells us that the poet would not yield to despair. No. 46 tells us that patience will bring him peace. No. 49 (to Alphonsus Rodriguez) tells us that the poet himself is conscious of real, if hidden, achievement. And No. 48 tells us that his grief will be turned to joy -- that this "Jack, joke ... is immortal diamond."

"Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" is rich in phonetic beauties. But the great charm of this symphony of sound is that it is not independent of the text: it is a part of it. It is a singing of the meaning. Hopkins was in sensibility not only a poet but a musician and a painter ... In Hopkins we have the unusual case of a great poet who can use his sensibilities as a musician and painter, not merely in
the by-practice of these arts, not merely as an enrichment or addition to his poetry, but as an integral part of his poetic genius."^{15}

Sonnet No. 50

Justus quidem tu es Domine, si disputem tecum: verumtamen justa loquar ad te: Quare via impiorum prosperatur? etc.

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?
Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend
Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes
Now, leaved how thick! laced they are again
With pretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes
Them; birds build -- but not I build; no, but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
Mine, O thou Lord of life, send my roots rain.

This is a mature poem. The author of all the power in the "Deutschland" is here, of all the magic and beauty of "The Windhover", "Binsey Poplars", "Spring", "Sibyl's Leaves", "The Leaden and the Golden Echo". But here he is different, austere, sure. He has the dignity of one who has suffered but yet trusts and loves. He has the stature of the battle-tried. His style has the finish of a master. Something wells out from deep within him, something which overwhelms style, strips it to the nerves of power. This poem is beautiful in its restraint, its disciplined power, its unaffected simplicity and directness. It speaks for itself: I am at a loss: it has great power and art and yet it is a miracle of simplicity. "le miracle poetique est ici, que l'art est a la fois supreme et spontane, que l' emotion du torment sacre y parle toute pure ... Hopkins ...

atteint la force de l'age et du genie. Son art se serait simplifique; il aurait atteint cet equilibre Miltonien auquel il tendait."16

Bremond, loc. cit., 46; 49.
Here is beautiful symbolism: "Why do sinners' ways prosper?"

Here is superb diction: "In spare hours more thrive than I." Here is brilliant description: "See, banks and brakes, now, leaved how thick." Here is motility: "Fresh wind shakes them." Here is assonance and alliteration: "Not one word that wakes." Here are all the conceits of artifice; but they are no longer artifice -- they are simple, direct expression.

The poem is spare. Nothing, no nuance of its expression is superfluous. Out of the heart a word of trust is breathed, "Thou art indeed just, O Lord."; out of the heart there is a sigh of sorrow, "look, ... but not I build;" deep within the heart a prayer is born, "Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain."
Special Aspects of the Poetry of Hopkins

The various facets of the poetry of Hopkins derive from the soundness of his theory of "inscape", from his great capabilities, and from his enormous sincerity. Certain aspects of his poetry are very individual.

1 - Hopkins loved life, motion: Two of his better known poems, "Deutschland" and "Eurydice" deal with storm-violence. But in all of his poetry there is a peculiar, proper motility or dynamism. The sky is not a stillness of blue: it is:

The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness
(Spring)

To him the stars are not gold in the night; they are "quick-gold". And clouds do not sit in the sky, or even drift lazily:

Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows flaunt forth, then
chevy on an air--
built thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers, in gay-gangs they throng;
they glitter in marches.
(No. 48)

2 - Hopkins had extraordinary powers of description: His "terrible" masculinity, chastity, humility, earnestness (call it what you will) made him a patient observer of nature and men, and an honest one -- not a trifler. His genius made him a keen, a subtle observer. His earnestness removes his descriptions from all sentimentality and makes it the "terrible crystal". His genius makes his description a grace, a song, a new beauty. As we have already noted, I. A. Richards gave high praise to lines three and four of "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves". Those lines were not an isolated success.
... What is Spring?
Growth in every thing --

Flesh and fleece, fur and feathers,
Grass and greenworld all together;
Star-eyed strawberry-breasted
Throstle above her nested

Cluster of bugle blue eggs thin
Forms and warms the life within,
And bird and blossom swell
In sod or sheath or shell.

When drop-of blood-and-foam-dapple
Bloom lights the orchard apple
And thicket and thorp are merry
With silver-surfed cherry

And azuring-over grey bell makes
Wood banks and brakes wash wet like lakes
   And magic cuckoocall
   Caps, clears, and clinches all --

This ecstasy all through mothering earth
Tells Mary her Mirth till Christ's birth.
   ("May Magnificat") No. 18

"That", says J. Middleton Murry, "is the primary element manifested
in one of its simplest, most recognizable, and, some may feel, beautiful
forms."17 Praise equally generous is given by Abbott, Kelly, Zabel,
Bremond, Stonier. Many other examples might be given. One is "Spring"

Nothing is so beautiful as spring--
   When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely lush;
   Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrust
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightenings to hear him sing;
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?
A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden. -- Have, get, before it cloy,
Before it cloud, Christ, Lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

17 Loc. cit., 425.
One of the distinguishing characteristics of the descriptive power of Hopkins is his synaesthesia, that is, his ability to apprehend things by more than one sense and to communicate the multiple impression made upon him. In the poem just quoted the sense of rhythm is stirred by the motility of the imagery, "weeds, in wheels, shoot", "blue all in a rush". For the eye we have "eggs look little low heavens". For the ear we have "the echoing timber". For the tongue we have "What is all this juice?" "before it cloy...sour". For the finger we have "the glassy peartree" "Weeds ... long and lovely and lush." With Hopkins the description is not static — it is alive, moving; one thing flows into another.

Hopkins' descriptive power — rather power to represent, is not confined to descriptions of objects of nature, static, or as he loved them, in motion; it reaches out too to the communication of psychological phenomenon. I. A. Richards asks us to consider the following lines "as a means of rendering self-consciousness";

***

Only what word
Wisest my heart breeds dark heaven's baffling ban
Bars or hell's spell thwarts. This to hoard unheard,
Heard unheeded, leaves me a lonely began.

(No. 44)

Soul, self; come, poor Jackself, I do advise
You, jaded let be; call off thoughts awhile
Elsewhere; leave comfort root room; let joy size
At God knows when to God knows what; whose smile
's not wrung, see you; unforeseen times rather -- as skies
Betweenpie mountains -- lights a lovely mile.

(No. 47)
3 - Hopkins' poetry is original. Originality is almost too obvious in the poetry of Hopkins to bear mention. A glance at any example already quoted shows that Hopkins mimics no one, "is devoid of echo and reference". Hopkins hews to the inscape. The inscape is his only reference. Language, symbolism, rhythm serve it. They are not ruled by the conventional, by a model, by a remembered phrase, by a fad; ruthlessly they are ruled by the inscape. "Hopkins' originality was radical and uncompromising."

"Hopkins ... writes only of his own experience. He is never derivative. Perhaps one must go back to the seventeenth century to find in English an equal solidity of spirit."

\[18\] Zabel, Idem, 154.

F. R. Leavis, op. cit., 167.

H. Pickman, loc. cit., 126.
APPENDIX TO CHAPTER V

Because of the difficult language which Hopkins uses to express the ideas of the "first part" its meaning is not clear in every detail. In order to indicate the meaning I found in each word of "part one" I am here appending a paraphrase of each verse of "part one".

1) God, my master, giver of breath and life and of bread and of the earth and the sea, Lord of the living and the dead, you have made me -- and then with fear almost unmade me (destroyed your doing). And now you touch me. I feel your touch, and feeling it, I find you.

2) When it lightninged and I saw your rod (of power and vengeance) I adored you (said yes to your power). You heard me truer than tongue confess your might -- i.e., by a swoon of my heart. You know the chapel and its walls and altar and the very hour of the night that my heart swooned before you, a heart beaten down by the force of your power (that the sweep and the hurl of you trod down hard with a horror of height) I was as one bowed over, trodden on, my middle astra in with the effort to keep even somewhat erect under the burden of fear, my back laced (?) lashed) with the feel of your power. ["Stress" here is evidently the stress of stanza 5 and 6, where it means the emphasis necessary to bring out the glory of God hidden in nature.]

3) With God's frowning face before me and the abyss of hell behind me -- where could I find a place of refuge. I whirled out wings during that crisis and flew to the heart of the Host. I can say that my heart then had the wings of a dove -- I can boast that it had the
wit of a carrier pigeon to fly from flame to flame (trouble to Master of trouble -- or, from truth to truth) and from grace to grace.

4) I am like sand in an hour glass, steady against the glass but in the middle undermined, steadily drifting to the fall -- I am like water in a well, steady, poised but always joined (roped) all the way down from the mountain's side (voel's flank) with a gospel truth, pressure or principle. (The meaning seems to be: I am very weak myself but I take courage because of a gospel truth: God's stress is only meant to show us his awfulness.)

5) Since I have been stressed -- i.e., since I have been made to realize God's awfulness, I kiss my hand to the stars and the starlight which now tell me of Him. I glow and glory in thunder and again kiss my hand to the sunset west. The stress is necessary, for though God's image lies under the world's splendor and wonder it must be brought to our attention -- and I adore Him (greet Him) and praise Him only when I am made to realize His might.

6) Although few realize the fact the emphasis upon His awfulness, communicated alike by stars and storms, hushing guilty, thrilling and melting hearts, comes not from His eternal nature but from the necessities of time as such. (This truth demands strong faith from the faithful and is completely missed by the faithless.)

7) This emphasis on his awfulness, this stress (it) dates from His going to Galilee, from Mary's womb, from the manger, the maiden's knee, from the passion -- that was the flood tide of this emphasis, though it was felt before and even now is strongly felt.
7-8) What no one would have known about God's awfulness [here "it" means "awfulness" and not "emphasis on awfulness"] is now made known only because the heart has been driven to bay (has been stressed).

8) Oh, we lash with the best or worst word last [? we save the most telling word -- whether best or worst, to the end: bring it home with emphasis; so this truth must be brought home.] Just as certainly as a lush-kept, plush capped plum will, when bitten fill a man (the man being in a flash brimful with it) with a sweet or sour taste so certainly all men sooner or later come to Christ's feet (never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it).

9) Be adored amongst men, Triune God; With wrecks and storms chastise Thy rebel -- man's stubborn malice. You are at once a terrible lightning and a love sweet beyond saying. Beyond ability of the tongue to tell; You are a winter, yet warm; Father and fondler of the heart which Thou hast wrung; Thou chastisesth and in so doing art most merciful.

10) In man forge Thy will with an anvil ding and with fire -- or like Spring steal within him and melt him, but master him still. Make mercy in all of us, either suddenly as with St. Paul or with lingering out sweet skill as with St. Augustine. Show us Thy mastery; be adored; be adored King.
There is a close resemblance between verse 9 of the "Deutschland" and Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven", vi, 11, 15,

29:

Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
     Save Me, same only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
     Not for thy harms,
But just that thou mightest seek it in my arms.
     All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
     Rise clasp my hand, and come!

Halts by me that footfall;
     Is my gloom afterall,
Shade of his hand, outstretched caressingly?
     Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am he whom thou seekest!
     Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.

Ah, must--
     Designer Infinite! --
Ah, must thou char the wood, ere thou canst limn with it?

Thompson's theme is that chastisement, stress, is necessary to bring out God's loveableness which underlies the world. Hopkins' theme is that stress is necessary to bring out God's adorableness.
In a letter to Bridges on August 21, 1877 (No. 37) Hopkins defends "The Wreck of the Deutschland" against various charges which Bridges had made.

1) "I may add for your greater interest and edification that what refers to myself in the poem is all strictly and literally true and did all occur; nothing is added for poetical padding."

2) "With the exception of the Bremen stanza (12) which, I think, was the first written after ten years silence before I had fixed my principles, my rhythms are rigidly good -- to the ear." He claims that he is more strict than any poet in history -- according to his own system of sprung rhythm.

3) There is no counter-pointing: it is excluded by sprung rhythm.

4) "My verse is less to be read than to be heard ... it is oratorical, that is the rhythm is so ... If it is obscure do not bother yourself with the meaning but pay attention to the best and most intelligible stanzas, as the last two of each part and the narrative of the wreck."
CHAPTER VI

THE INFLUENCE OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

The Channel of Hopkins' Influence:
The Literary-Pelagian Mind.

Something about Gerard Manley Hopkins which seems simply to be
taken for granted without analysis is the slow growth of his influence.
It is true that the fact that he never published his poems and that he
forbade his friends even to give notice to them naturally delayed the
spread of his influence. However, we might ask ourselves why Bridges
waited until 1918 (from 1888) to publish the poems and their merits
even then were so slowly to be commonly recognized. It is probable
that Bridges felt that the literary world was not prepared to receive
the poems of Hopkins. He introduced the poems gradually into various
anthologies; and when he felt that the possible readers had acquired
some interest in Hopkins and enough faith in him to survive shock, he
published most -- not all even then -- of the poem and fragments. It
was left to Charles Williams in 1930 to publish the remaining fragments.

There are two facts which explain why Hopkins was slow to be
recognized. First, he was an innovator in rhythm and in the use of
diction, in directness and in sincerity. It took readers some time to
shake themselves loose enough from old expectations to recognize the
new values in sound and execution. It took them time to realize how
earnest Hopkins was, not in using words but in inscaping -- in com-
municating reality. Furthermore Hopkins is a difficult poet. And it
took time for a notable number of patient readers to pass upon his work
and agree upon its merit. But the second explanation is at least equally
as illuminating as the first. Hopkins' poetry came to us from Oxford: It came because it was great poetry. But because it was the poetry of a Catholic priest it came clouded over with misunderstanding.

Bridges, Abbott, Mrs. Phare, I. A. Richards, J. M. Murry, Gardiner, the men who presented Hopkins to the world all had a certain mentality or frame of mind which I am going to call the Pelagian Mind. The Pelagian Mind is like the moon; it is lighted on one side but the other side is always dark -- and sometimes we forget this darkness. The Pelagian Mind, as I use the term, is passionately devoted to literature and is in factual and mechanical knowledge uncannily knowing. Its judgment upon these matters is sound. There is no higher recourse. The soul of literature,

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1The choice of a name for this mentality has been difficult. Pelagian must be understood in a very special sense. It refers primarily to the men I specifically name; and, since it is a word of my own choosing, it has the implications which I give to it. It is meant to describe a group of English men of letters who, like Mathew Arnold, find literature a religion in itself. They are Pelagian precisely in the sense that they presume human nature entirely good in itself and, especially when enhanced with an austere, earnest tradition and spirit, sufficient to find and satisfy its own aims in life. They are Anglican in the sense that they give evidence of not understanding the Catholic Church and of being repelled by it. This repulsion, of which they seem unconscious, is deep within them, coming to them as part of their tradition, subtly communicated by many things they touch, by the books they read, by their associations with each other. They do not reason about it. It simply is. The Pelagian is defective because there is Something (which actually exists) which he feels he need not examine or reason about. He feels, a-rationally, that he knows religion and the Church are baneful or foolish.
however, is life -- living men and the living world. There is a subtle interplay between even the mechanics of literature and an author's concept of the meaning of life. But above all there is an ineradicable relationship between a poem's or a poet's philosophy of life and the ultimate "meaning" he wishes to convey to his audience. Sometimes it is possible for a poet and a critic or an audience to have different philosophies of life and yet to understand each other perfectly. The critic's understanding may derive from one of two things:

1) Either that the poet speaks only of things common to the philosophies of both himself and the critic

2) Or that the critic is capable of and willing to assume for the moment the frame of mind of the poet.

Thus, for example, an atheistic critic could fully appreciate the characters of the Catholic Chaucer's "Canterberry Tales", the heartiness of the Host, the delicacy of the nun, the coarseness of the wife of Bath. He could appreciate the patience of Griselda or the dangers of gold, because even as an atheist he sees the human foibles of men and recognizes patience as a virtue and too much gold as a danger. Or again any monotheist can understand and appreciate the polytheistic literature of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Hindus, or the mythology of Greece and Rome, if he is willing to learn the facts involved and enter into the mind of the poet.

But if the critic either fails to realize or refuses to realize that the author is attempting to communicate an experience which the
critic himself never had, the critic will miss the poem -- it will get by him. Thus a poem about the joy brought by ancient memories means nothing to a ten year old boy, and the "Angel in the House" would be repulsive to the Monachaen Cathari. A critic, then, who does not understand the experience of an author or who consciously or unconsciously is repelled by the author's experience is incapable of full appreciation of the author.

The Pelagian Mind understood a great deal about Hopkins, appreciated a great deal in his poetry -- more than any one else did, but there was a fork where the two minds walked away from each other. Hopkins went his Catholic way. The others went their (Anglican) eclectic way.

The Pelagian Mind is very proud of its achievement (which, in its own field, is very great); nevertheless it is a mind limited by nescience and prejudice. These limitations go far back. They go back to the establishment of the Church of England. With the passing of years the tenets of Anglicans shifted and divided. The center of gravity for Anglican belief was still Rome. All doctrines were measured by one standard: Towards Rome? Away from Rome? The High Church, in the course of time, became a hollow shadow of Rome. The sustaining belief of the Low Church was and is that Rome is Babylon and its Church is Anti-Christ. The Broad Church or Latitudinarianists scorn dogmas in favor of "sweetness and light". The Pelagian Mind comes from the Broad Church. It has deep roots in the revolt against the church of Rome. Somewhere in its tradition that spirit of revolt hardened against all dogmas, rituals, and believers; it believed that man was sufficient unto himself. To God --
to conventions it said "Non Serviam!" In Mathew Arnold, the esthete, (as I have previously pointed out) the Pelagian Mind made its own god, became idolatrous and knelt down before words. In Bridges, it seems to have remained purely Pelagian, for, as Abbott says, "Religion meant for him not assent to a particular creed but a manner of life dependent upon the discipline of his own mind and body." 2

The Pelagian Mind does not permit itself to be questioned. It is a law unto itself. It has a tradition of which it is proud. According to its own judgment literature is the greatest thing in life and the Pelagian Mind has contributed mightily to the development of English literature. The Pelagian Mind does not ask, "If we are not right -- with our austerity, our tradition of earnest scholarship -- who could be right?" It simply entrenches itself: "We are right." The Pelagian Mind is a proud mind -- not a vain or frivolous, but proud, admitting no norm beyond itself.

As a result of this pride (and perhaps of an unconscious fear that it may be wrong) the Pelagian Mind, ostrich-like, hides its head from reality. Some reality it simply denies; it refuses to examine, to know. Hopkins says cryptically to Bridges, "You say you don't like Jesuits. Did you ever see one?" 3 To some reality its tradition forces it to react not with its intelligence but with its emotion. The Pelagian Mind in its inner heart is automatically afraid of the Catholic Church, of

2 R.B., Introduction, xlvi.

3 R.B., 40.
Jesuits -- automatically repelled by the word "priest", automatically revolted by the word "confession" or "sacrament", automatically contemptuous of a Catholic.

Therefore, while the Pelagian Mind is brilliantly prepared to evaluate Hopkins' language, his diction, his rhythms, his prosody, his purely natural feelings and emotions, and a considerable body of his thoughts, it is very much unprepared to understand the very heart of his feelings and some of his deeper thoughts:

1) From ignorance of what the Catholic Church is.
2) From ignorance of what the priesthood is.
3) From ignorance of what the Society of Jesus is.
4) From a difference in viewpoint on the final values in life.
5) From the purely emotional reaction of repulsion and fear at the sight, sound, or thought of "Roman Catholic".
6) Above all, from its inability or unwillingness to see that it does not understand or that it is biased.

I am not making charges or accusations, not entering into a controversy. I am simply making a statement. I am making an explanation. The Pelagian Mind simply does not understand Church, priest, Jesuit, grace, beatific vision. Words are only symbols -- and these words have no proper denotation for the Pelagian Mind and they connote something big, bad or foolish, but somehow indestructible.

Claude Abbott is the Pelagian Mind in every turn and facet of his thinking. The experience of Hopkins as a priest, as a Jesuit, mean no
more to him than the experience of a monk in a lamasary in secret Indo-Asia. In his introduction to the letters to Bridges, Abbott develops the thesis that Hopkins was never a religious poet but rather was a poet of nature who tried to give a religious twist to his poems. He finds Hopkins' poems sensuous, full of original observations of nature, of feeling for it, of joy in it; but he does not believe the poetic joy in reality is ever perfectly wedded to the religious exemplum or moral turn.

He regards Hopkins as genius with great powers of observation, a severe honesty, a powerful originality, great feeling for and mastery of words and rhythm -- as one capable of being perhaps the greatest poet in the English language. Then, he finds, Hopkins' conversion and entrance into the Jesuits threw him off balance. Hopkins thereafter led a troubled life, and lost some of the poise and surety characteristic of Bridges. Hopkins' conversion did not throw Hopkins off balance nearly so much as it threw Abbott off his trail.

With the Pelagian Mind there is no effort to get into the Catholic mind -- as there would be to get into the Hedonistic mind of the Persian Khayyam or the Greek mind of Homer. "To Bridges the priesthood raised an insuperable barrier:" says Abbott, "He had, and rightly, a profound distrust of the Society of Jesus." (xlv) There you have it. The priesthood is not something to be examined, its effects were not to be looked for or evaluated -- No. Gratuitously, it is a barrier, no more. He distrusted the Society of Jesus -- "and rightly". Why rightly? My point is not whether or not Mr. Abbott is correct. My point is this: why does
Abbott make this assertion? On what grounds? He gives no grounds.

He merely asserts.

He frowns upon dogmas, beliefs, "the discipline of a church," because they are narrowing. But Bridges "accepted the discipline of tradition and found freedom therein". Both are disciplines -- but gratuitously, one narrows, one does not. There is no discussion. The Pelagian Mind has spoken. Ipse dixit.

The Pelagian Mind, the self-sufficient mind deliberately confines itself to blindness. It admits no law beyond itself. It will decide what reality is to be examined and what is not. Reality will not coerce the Pelagian Mind -- nothing will. Some reality is given no audience.

To someone -- not necessarily a Catholic but one acquainted with Catholic ideas -- the nature poetry of Hopkins is not a "concession to the weaker side of him". It is on the contrary the gathering to an ooze of a deep inner conviction of the sacramental purpose of nature -- to exhibit in its own way the glory of God, to give news of God. To Abbott and to a mind informed on this subject the terrible sonnets -- most of the poems mean something different. To Abbott they mean something a little futile, a little mean, the whimperings of a man who wants to give up a pagan love of nature and worship of words but cannot bring himself wholly to do so. To Abbott they mean the regrets, the realization of a man with a mistaken ideal. To one who understands Hopkins they mean the real sufferings of a man struggling with ill health, with spiritual difficulties, with his work, with lack of singing
inspiration. The poems are electric with pain, but they are full of patience, of resignation of hope. There is wrestling with God (No. 40) but no cringing in despair. The suffering is not that of aridity, as if faith had dried up his soul: Hopkins is willing to weary-march with One he loves. "Mark Christ our King. He knows war, served this soldiering through." He does not count his life wasted -- that of Roderiquez was not! His life was not all darkness: "God's smile ... unforeseen times rather ... lights a lovely mile." He is not a strayed Pelagian, wanting to come back: self is not enough -- "I see the lost are like this, and their scourge to be as I am mine, their sweating selves." He does not look back -- he strived to "keep grace" and hopes for the day in which "This Jack is immortal diamond." Hopkins would never have turned into a pillar of salt.

Abbott -- the Pelagian Mind -- had a religion. "Poetry is, in itself, a religion." (xlvi) Hopkins had another. Because the Pelagian Mind could not or would not bring itself to see what that meant to Hopkins, in many things it simply could not understand him. It was as if he used a familiar, gleaming medium with a foreign significance.

"As it stands", says E. E. Phare, "Felix Randal" fails, though it is difficult to say why, and the rather peevish fault finding in which I have been indulging does not make clear why it should be so. It seems that the motion of accepting or rejecting a poem comes from the very quick of the will; it is rarely possible to give a wholly satisfactory account of one's reasons for doing one or the other." Yet the reasons

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for her rejections are not far to seek. The experience described is one which means nearly nothing to her. She has, if any, only the vaguest idea of what a priest would do on a sick call and next to no idea of how he would react to his task. Unconsciously, perhaps, she finds the whole situation somehow, "from the very quick of the will" repulsive, a priest, anointing, sacraments.

Half the length of her book later she says, "I sometimes suspect that we are many of us so certain that becoming a Jesuit must involve some unnatural and undesirable deformation or repression that we are prepared to see oddities in a Jesuit poet where there are none." 5

William Gardiner says, "To others (than the ardent Catholics) it ("The Wreck of the Deutschland") will perhaps rather suggest the tragedy of faith and the triumph of pure poetry." What tragedy for faith?

I kiss my hand
To the stars, lovely-asunder
Starlight, wafting Him out of it.

How could Abbott understand "Heraclitean Fire and the Resurrection" who said "It is our good fortune that his name belongs to literature and not to hagiography." (xlvi)

To Bridges devotion to Mary or the Trinity was "mannerisms". 6

To Gardiner "Trinitarianism, Marianism, martyrology, saint-worship are fervent irrationalities." 7 To I. A. Richards "traditional morality"

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5 Idem, 141.
6 Notes to Poems, 96.
7 Loc. cit., 151-152.
is -- gratuitously, of course, "a night". "Intellectually Hopkins was too stiff, too cogged and cumbered with beliefs, those bundles of invested emotional capital." The supremely assured, the name-calling Richards misses the real Hopkins completely. "The poet in him was oppressed and stifled by the priest ... All Hopkins’ poems are in this sense poems of defeat."³ Richards does not understand the pain of Hopkins because he does not understand the struggle of Hopkins. He does not understand the struggle because he misunderstands why Hopkins struggles. He identifies pain with defeat simply because to him, Richards, pain would be defeat. He accuses Hopkins of emotionalism because his own emotional bias has closed for him the door to that part of reality upon which the intellect of Hopkins was acutely working.

Poems of defeat?

Away grief’s gasping ...  
Across my foundering deck shone  
A beacon, an eternal beam ...  
In a flash, at a trupet crash  
I am all at once what Christ is.

J. Middleton Murry thinks that Hopkins suffered from "a starvation of experience which his vocation imposed upon him."⁹ What is experience? At its best experience is contact with living reality. The Pelagian Mind (which presumably has sufficient experience for literary purposes) has absolutely no experience of supernatural reality, which, since reality admits of no degree, is as real as anything can be -- but is eternal and

³Loc. cit., 203; 199.
⁹Athenaeum, loc. cit., 426.
not just temporal in its implications. In human experience Hopkins, the convert -- with the struggle that involves --; the priest -- the confessor, the teacher, the comforter; the professor -- Hopkins with his sensitive soul, his acute awareness of things and people, Hopkins who suffered -- had far more valid experience than most of the representatives of the Pelagian Mind, who are fenced in by bookishness and smugness. The Pelagian Mind may not be able to understand much of the experience of Hopkins but that does not subtract reality from it.

Considering "those bleak corridors of the religious life" into which Hopkins had walked, Hester Pickman thinks that he preferred Scotism because "it was a reaction against the rigidity of the Summa, a theology allowing more freedom for individual thought and so more scope for mysticism." This amazing sentence reveals that Miss Pickman understands neither Scotism, the Summa, mysticism, nor -- more to our point -- Hopkins. She thinks that Jesuit training "tends to desiccate the average man; and certain temperaments of the creative and artistic type are unsuited to it." Jesuit training does not desiccate; it un-sentimentalizes. And in an artist, purging of the emotions is wholesome. No one ever accused Hopkins of being unemotional; nor did anyone ever accuse him of being sentimental. His emotions, trained not "thwarted", are true.

The Pelagian Mind meant to be kind to Hopkins -- it meant, in a way, to take him back into its fold -- but it defeated itself: "An instance of grave critical insufficiency is the harm done to a poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins ... By some process of critical winking they ignored his religion.

10 Loc. cit., 120; 121.
his worship of God in nearly everything he wrote. ... But there are two facts about Hopkins -- that he was a Victorian in style, outlook and feeling, and that he was a Catholic priest who wrote poetry to the glory of God. -- These facts have been recognized by no critic whom I can trace.

... Religion hardened him morally and intellectually, provided him with a background infinitely better to his genius than Greek myth, and brought into his poetry the polyphony of style, parti-colour of pattern, and the expanding, realistic and passionate force of his great work."\(^{11}\)

It would be unjust only to complain against the Pelagian Mind in its relationship with Hopkins. Any admirer of Hopkins must be very grateful to the Pelagian Mind. Bridges sincerely loved and admired Hopkins and his poetry. When a Jesuit magazine was rejecting the poetry of Hopkins, Bridges was devotedly saving it, saving the letters of Hopkins. He encouraged Hopkins, helped him, gave him every means of respect and honor -- the Catholic, the priest, the Jesuit, whom he could not, in some ways, comprehend. Others, too, of the Pelagian Mind prospered Hopkins' fame by their attention to him, their praise of his art. But it is a fact, nevertheless, that when Hopkins walked out of Oxford and into Rome and Manresa, he crossed the bourn into an undiscovered country to which the Pelagian Mind would not go. And what dreams did come to him there the Pelagian Mind did not understand. But the unfortunate part -- on the purely critical level -- was that it did not know that it did not understand. It often made Hopkins appear a

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puzzle to others because it misunderstood him. The whole attitude of the Pelagian Mind tends to cast a cloud of obscurity around Hopkins. They praise him for technical strength, daring, originality, for fineness of spirit, sincerity, earnestness, intelligence, and then confute their praise with slurs of "weak", "emotional", "defeated". There is confusion; but it is in the Pelagian Mind more than in that of the poet. The poet went out into

the sea flint-flake, black-backed in the regular blow

but came through to

where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb
Out of the swing of the sea.

The Pelagian Mind sits on the shore he left and says, "There is no Peter's bark; there is no Noah's ark. If the waves beat against him, he is defeated. What he does out there we can know and measure from here. -- He says the deluge of falling waters makes a "Golden Echo" as well as a "Leaden Echo". They never did from here. He is wrong, poor man --

So be beginning, be beginning to despair
0 there's none; no, no, no, there's none;
Be beginning to despair, to despair
Despair, despair, despair, despair.
The Nature of Hopkins' Influence

The influence of Hopkins has been and will be spiritual and not technical. To Hopkins the "inscape" was the only important thing. And inscape is individual, unique — either an individual reality, an authentic grasp of reality, or an "individually distinctive beauty of style". Hopkins himself would not want the "iuniores" to borrow his vision, his vocabulary, or his style. He would want them to look, to see, to say for themselves. He wants no one to echo him. He wants each poet, artistically, to be himself. There is, however, a spirit, an atmosphere, an air about Hopkins. Others, after him, have caught this spirit or breathed this atmosphere. They have found it good; and now they walk in it. "He is now felt to be a contemporary, and his influence is likely to be great. It will not necessarily manifest itself in imitation of the more obvious of his technical peculiarities ... but no one can come from studying his work without an extended notion of the resources of English."

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12 This section is not a study of the actual, detailed influence which Hopkins has exerted. It is a summary comment on the nature of the influence he has and will exert. The nature of his influence — spiritual rather than technical — flows from the character of his poetry (and poetic principles) which has been the object of study in this thesis.

13 Leavis, op. cit., 192.
His influence has been exerted in three ways:

1) He has shown that the key to beauty is authentic realism -- that is, "inscape", a true glimpse of some actual reality. He has led others to accuracy in observation, to rigid honesty in appraisal and judgment of physical or psychological fact.

2) He has been boldly original. He has validated any break from convention or tradition which is sanctioned by sincerity and technical knowledge. His originality is at once a barrier and an invitation. It is a barrier because demands so much to sanction it. To be so original a poet must have the "avent toute chose" which J. Middleton Murry admires in Hopkins. He must never be original just for effect but always for the sole purpose of explicating an inscape. The originality of Hopkins is further a barrier because it is so full of art, of device, of classical training and skill. It is not the often barbarous originality of Whitman -- a scorning of tradition, of the collected learning of the past. It is rather an originality which takes full account of the past but refuses to stop with the present. Hopkins does not break with the past; he builds upon it. His originality is an invitation because it has resulted in a strong, distinctive beauty of expression.

3) His return to the spare root of the English language, his use of rhythm and sound have opened new visions for poets.
"Hopkins, as far as can be judged, has done posterity a signal service; so far from setting up a Chinese wall, he has broken down several barriers which no longer served any purpose; and the publication of his poetry in 1918 has left English poetry in a condition which seems to have many new possibilities."14

Some Judgments Upon Hopkins

To emphasize the greatness of the achievement of Gerard Hopkins Bremond points to the fact that both Bridges and Dixon had to overcome serious difficulties of religious difference in order to appreciate Hopkins: yet they did. He explains away Bridges' coldness in the "Introduction" to the notes by asserting that Bridges commented on only the faults of Hopkins because he thought the virtues of Hopkins to be of so high an order that they needed no comment. He called the "Deutschland" a dragon not only because it had a forbidding aspect but also because it guarded a treasure.

To Claude Abbott Hopkins remains to the end a poet thwarted, yet a poet whom we cannot consider "without marveling at the individual imprint he gave even to work admittedly occasional. To a poet endowed with senses so rare, understanding so deep, so fine a sense of rightness and so masterly a power over words, anything would seem possible."15

14 Phare, op. cit., 7.
"He is likely to prove, for our time and for the future, the only influential poet of the Victorian age, and he seems to me the greatest," says F. R. Leavis.\textsuperscript{16}

In his "Collected Essays in Literary Criticism" Herbert Read says, "Hopkins is among the most vital poets of our time, and his influence will reach far into the future of English poetry." And in the "Criterion" he adds "When the history of the last decade of English poetry comes to be written by a dispassionate critic, no influence will rank in importance with that of Gerard Manley Hopkins."\textsuperscript{17}

Mrs. Phare says, "Hopkins' work is never better than in the terrible sonnets and the 'Windhover'." They represent the deepest point touched by his poetry, which runs in a channel exceptionally pure and deep; though it is not, like Shakespeare's, a springing river with many tributaries. Using Arnold's touchstone method, the critic might easily find that Hopkins' best poetry is not dimmed or made seem trivial by comparison with the best of Shakespeare and Dante. He has not their variety but his best poetry is not inferior to theirs in kind. Arnold's phrase "high seriousness" describes most justly the quality of Hopkins' greatest poems. His poetry is that of a man with exceptional intelligence and exceptional sensibility, who is constantly taking into account all the facts of his experience; he uses religion not as a solution but as an approach, a way of keeping all the facts in mind.


\textsuperscript{17} Op. cit., 149.
without losing sanity. ... Hopkins in his best work comes as near as, say, Dante, to making his experience available to all: he merits the extreme of popularity which he himself, a critic as just as modest, thought his due."^{12}

We may apply Cardinal Newman's definition of a great author to Hopkins and witness how closely, how accurately the definition describes him. Using other words it repeats a definition of "inscaping". "A great author, Gentleman, is not merely one who has a copia verborum, whether in prose or in verse, and can, as it were, turn on at his will any number of splendid phrases and swelling sentences; but he is one who has something to say and knows how to say it. ... He may, if so be, elaborate his compositions, or he may pour out his improvisations, but in either case he has but one aim, which he keeps steadily before him, and is conscientious and single-minded in fulfilling. That aim is to give forth what he has within him; and from his very earnestness it comes to pass that, whatever be the splendour of his diction or the harmony of his periods, he has with him the charm of an incommunicable simplicity. Whatever be his subject, high or low, he treats it suitably for its own sake ...

"He writes passionately, because he feels keenly; forcibly, because he conceives vividly, he sees too clearly to be vague; he is too serious to be otiose; he can analyze his subject, and therefore he is rich; he embraces it as a whole and in its parts, and therefore he is consistent; he has a firm hold of it, and therefore he is luminous. When his imagination wells up, it overflows in ornament; when his heart is touched, it thrills along his verse. He has always the right word for the right idea, and never a word too much." 19

The highest tribute -- if it be understood -- to "the roll, the rise, the carol, the creation" of Hopkins' verse is that which he unconsciously paid himself when he said:

I caught this morning morning's minion, ...

in his riding... high there.

And the highest tribute to the poet, the man, the priest who was Gerard Manley Hopkins is that he always remembered to

Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, beauty, back to God, beauty's self and beauty's giver.

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19 Idea of a University, p. 291.
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