GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS'S POETIC ART

AS "CURRENT LANGUAGE HEIGHTENED"

(With reference to selected sonnets and in the
light of contemporary stylistic theory)

By

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(i)

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I declare that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTORY OUTLINE

The aim of this thesis is twofold:

- To examine Hopkins's writings on poetics and to relate these to
  modern theories of poetic stylistics; and

- to show, through an examination of two sets of Hopkins sonnets,
  the ways in which Hopkins's writings on language and poetics are
  reflected in his verse.

Chapter One gives a general background to Hopkins, the man and the poet.
Criticism of Hopkins's verse is discussed in general terms only, because
most Hopkins criticism has been aesthetically evaluative and has seldom
touched on Hopkins's use of language as a key to his verse. A section
is devoted to the work of Milroy, as Milroy has been one of the few
Hopkins critics who has consistently used a grammatical approach. As
will be seen, however, he tends to take an opposite approach to that of
the Leavis school, in that he describes Hopkins's poetic language, but
seldom relates the poet's linguistic choices to their aesthetic and
intellectual effects. This thesis attempts to unite these opposing
approaches by accounting for the poetic effects through a close examination
of the linguistic strategies the poet has used.

The larger part of Chapter One is a summary of the main aspects of
Hopkins's personal poetic theory, inter alia: his concern with the "figure of
spoken sound" and the "figure of grammar"; and his belief that poetic
language is "current language heightened".

Chapter Two is a selective summary of modern approaches to poetic
stylistics, beginning with Jackobson and Levin and ending with Trotter,
as background to the approach taken in Chapters Three, Four and Five.
A section is devoted to Riffaterre because of his poetic reading theory,
which demands reading on two levels: one against the background of the
world and ordinary grammar (the mimetic); and the other against the
background of the world of the poem and its grammar (the semiotic). This
theory concurs with Hopkins's belief that a basic feature of poetry is
comparison: the poem ("the thing") with the world outside, and the poem
("the thing") with itself.

As a poet, Hopkins had first-hand knowledge of what is entailed in the
process of poesis. In Chapters Three and Four it is shown that much of
his poetic theory is reflected in his verse. The very noticeable difference
in the tone and mood of the 'Welsh' sonnets when compared with the 'Dublin'
sonnets will be shown to be the result of specific syntactic and lexical
choices made on a firm understanding of what language is, and what poetry
is and can be. In the 'Welsh' sonnets, some of which are analysed in
Chapter Three, lexical and phonetic innovations dominate. The effect of
these innovations is the joyous musicality of the sonnets with the
concatenations of images which express ecstasy and euphoria. The aesthetic
appeal is mainly to the ear and eye. By contrast, an examination of the
'Dublin' sonnets, some of which are discussed in Chapter Four, shows that
the innovations are predominantly on the syntactic plane. This syntactic
dominance, through the use of paralleled questions, answers, imperatives
and negatives, and the exploitation of the deictic properties of pronouns,
results in a spontaneity of experience which leads the reader to empathise
with the poet in his spiritual anguish and turmoil.

Chapter Five summarises the ways in which Hopkins's views on the language of verse (particularly the heightening of current language) are reflected in his sonnets. It also considers the way in which Hopkins's linguistic choices influence the reader's linguistic decisions and guide him toward an understanding of the texts, so that there is the so-called "meeting of minds". Paramount in this process is the acceptance in good faith on the part of the reader of the poet's use of linguistic devices to transmit a meaningful linguistic message.

The conclusion is reached that a linguistic analysis (which takes into consideration Hopkins's own theories on poetics) of Hopkins's exploitation and extension of the levels of language can explain the special effects Hopkins achieved in his verse. Much of the unusualness of Hopkins's verse lies in the feeling his readers get of current shared experience. Hopkins achieved this reader-response in two ways: by using the structures of spoken language; and by concentrating them closely together. Many poets could be said to use "current language", but few achieve the impression of the ebb and flow of a real conversation about a real experience. The difference between Hopkins's verse and that of most other poets is that for him "current language" is the essence of the language of verse, while for other poets "current language" is an ingredient to be used mainly for creating a special effect against the background of conventional poetic language.

(All reference to sonnet numbering is to the 1980 edition of Gardner and Mackenzie (1967).)

CHAPTER ONE

A General Background to Hopkins

1.1 Biographical Summary

Much of Hopkins's life is revealed through his poetry. His happiness in Wales in 1877, emerges in poems like "Pied Beauty" and "The Windhover"; and his misery and frustration in Dublin (1884-1889) where he died, in what Bridges called the "Terrible Sonnets".

Bergonzi (1977) traces Hopkins's life from his teens, through the Oxford years, through a year of teaching, to Hopkins's admission to the Jesuit Order and his life as Jesuit. Some of Hopkins's religious uncertainty was evident in his undergraduate years as a High Church Anglican. His subsequent adoption of the Roman Catholic faith stemmed for a time his doubts and his introvert questioning of his motives and of his faith.

Hopkins was intensely introspective. He tormented himself, and some of his torment is reflected not only in his poems but also in his letters. His torment was his inability to reconcile his creative need to write poetry with his belief that as Jesuit he should subsume himself and his abilities in his order. At the end of his life, although reconciled to his priestly role and to his nature as a poet, he still felt that creatively he had become sterile. The sonnet numbered 74: "Thou art indeed just, Lord ..." reveals in the sestet his sorrow about, yet acceptance of, his self-imposed artistic aridity:

> ... 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.

In tone the poem is much like the sonnets of 1885, but as Bergonzi (1977:90) points out, here there is a rueful acceptance of the aridity that is not present in the earlier, more desperate, poems; perhaps because Hopkins has made a conscious decision that his first loyalty is to God and to the Jesuit order and that his needs must take second place. One senses, however, that he is not reconciled to his own decision.

In contrast to the anguish evident in the 'Dublin' poems, the sonnets from the 'Welsh' period reflect a joy in, and a glorification of, nature. It was at this stage that Hopkins strove to define the terms "inscape" and "instress"; to reach and to express the ineffability of nature and, by extension, God's love and "God's Grandeur". An examination of the sonnets of the two periods reveals differences in style and in language that are crucial to an understanding of the poems and to an understanding of the way in which Hopkins's change in 'mood' is reflected through his choice of particular grammatical forms over others, and the way in which the reader perceives this change.

From the discussion of Hopkins criticism in 1.2.1 it will be seen that very few critics have considered Hopkins's phonetic, lexical and grammatical choices as evidence for his contention that the language of verse is "current language heightened".

1.2 Hopkins Criticism

1.2.1 General Hopkins Criticism

Generally, Hopkins's critics fall into two groups. For one group Hopkins is always the ineffable poet, for the other, he is always abstruse, contrived and artificial. (Compare Lock, 1984:129 and 151.)

Both these attitudes involve value judgements that are not well enough founded on linguistic facts to be acceptable as critical opinion or as literary criticism. This thesis will not be directly concerned with the vast field of Hopkins criticism, but will examine Hopkins's use of the structures of language. Such an examination, it is hoped, will solve many of the difficulties supposedly inherent in Hopkins's poetry by showing that many of the so-called deviant structures are analogous to structures common in spoken language.

Bergonzi says of "The Wreck of the Deutschland":

> Yet the poem, taken as a whole, is still bewildering,
> conveying an effect of confused magnificence. In it
> Hopkins brings together - perhaps forces together -
> things that have no necessary connection, beyond their
> personal urgency for him. Furthermore, the whole poem
> is a formal metrical experiment of great ambition and
> complexity. ... Formally and verbally the poem is more
> idiosyncratic than anything else by Hopkins.
>   (Bergonzi, 1977 : 158 (my emphasis))

One feels intuitively that Bergonzi's criticism is facile in that a part of every poet's art is to force upon the reader connections where there are overtly none. Such enforced connections lie at the heart of metaphor and are part and parcel of the innovative nature of poetry.

Bergonzi goes on to show how Hopkins, in the interest of immediacy and vividness, employed syntax with a freedom and fluidity which, Bergonzi claims, a word-order language such as English does not allow. Yet he concedes that '[n]otwithstanding the syntactic difficulties, the poem has a clear two-part structure, composed of a "network of contrasts-in-likeness"'. Such an idea, we know from Hopkins's own notes, was central to his conception of the inherent structure of poetry. Hopkins's syntactic juggling, compounds and the juxtaposing of unusual forms, result in a compression so compact that the sense is felt rather than intellectually perceived. Hopkins preferred his verse to be read aloud, so that its initial impact would be aural. He felt that through the sensory aural experience the meaning of a poem could be made 'tangible'. Hopkins achieved his aural effects by juxtaposing alliterating lexical items which are either in apposition to a head noun, or are groups of adjectives, verbs, adverbs. In all such lines, there is a climactic build-up and intense compression. Critics claim that such juxtaposing is one of the causes of the ambiguities and difficulties of Hopkins's poetry. (The role in verse of functional ambiguity will be considered in the discussion of the selected sonnets.) Bergonzi (1977:162) discusses some of these problems in poems other than those which will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four.

A further criticism of Hopkins's poetry is that he over-elaborated (hence the term "baroque" used by Schneider and quoted in Bergonzi (1977:179))so that, although exquisite effects could be created, generally he detracted from the "... total dramatic effect; (elsewhere) Hopkins's deformation of syntax in the interest of urgency and expressiveness turns into a love of deformation, or pattern, for its own sake " (Bergonzi, 1977:163).

It will be shown that if actual grammatical function is used as the criterion for category labelling many of Hopkins's structures can easily be analogised to normal grammatical structures. A major question will be: 'What function has this word in this sentence/ phrase/line?' Thus, if a word which is generally accepted as belonging to the category of verb is found to be functioning as a noun, then it will be treated as a noun, thereby recategorising it. Such a word's 'verbness' will, however, remain an inherent semantic part of that word. These contentions will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two. Bergonzi, himself, admits that the general view of Hopkins's forms as contrivance for the sake of contrivance might be simplistic, when he states just what this thesis intends to prove:

> Even whilst making these criticisms I have the uneasy sense
> that they are wide of the mark, that Hopkins, like other
> major innovatory artists, has established codes and conven-
> tions by which he is to be read and understood ...
> (Bergonzi, 1977:163)

Too often critics, although they claim that they are considering grammar, do not consider the function of a word or of words in a string, and so do not acknowledge the poem as a text with its own grammar and as its own context, and thus that the poet has a code which they, as readers, must recognise if they wish to receive the message. Sometimes critics ignore even the orthographic image. The word "Despair" from the sonnet No 64 "Carrion Comfort" (named as such by Bridges) has long been debated as an ambiguity which leads to incoherence, because, so the critics say, "Despair" could be either a verb or a noun. Pender's criticism quoted in Bergonzi (1977:172) is that the meaning is not revealed until the end of the line. This criticism is trivial for two reasons, besides the fact that such ambiguity is evocative of the kind of confusion of emotions the poet

/6. ....

feels. Firstly, it is not at all linguistically unusual for the meaning of a string to be perceived only when the whole sentence has been read. Secondly, if one looks at not only the grammatical significance of the upper case "D" (which marks in English nearly all proper nouns), but also at the function and role of the word in the line (as direct address and in conjunction with the appositional phrase "carrion comfort"), the diffficulties are resolved. The word is used in the poem as a (+ human) noun and not as a verb. The word "thee" which occurs later in the line confirms our intuition that "Despair" is being personified. A poem is fully understood only when it has been read right through to the end, precisely because a reader casts forward and back to confirm his intuitions. Often full understanding is achieved only after several series of readings.

The objection against Hopkins's verse of "but it's hardly English" arises frequently (Bergonzi, 1977:163). The contention in this thesis is that this statement is true only because the "English" alluded to is not spoken English, but formal written English. Often phrases that seem at first to be obscure are easily processed when not only normal grammar, but the grammar of normal spoken English (and the poem's grammar) are the terms of reference. Thus Bergonzi points out that there is a tension between the mimetic level (the pattern in Hopkins's verse, which reflects his love of the world and his need to share his perceptions) and his "poetic formalism" which demanded pattern in his poetry: he saw pattern in all things and this he was determined to express.

The criticism of such early Hopkins critics as Leavis and Bridges is not discussed, because their approach of moral aesthetic evaluation has largely been superseded in literary criticism by aesthetic evaluations which have

strong linguistic bases. (Compare Structuralist Poetics, Culler (1975)
for example.) This does not imply that the work of either Leavis or
Bridges is to be denigrated: on the contrary, without the driving
determination of these two men, Hopkins would not have the reputation
he has today of being a major poet. Lock (1984), in an effort to justify
Bridge's sometimes acerbic remarks, discusses the syntax of some of
Hopkins's verse to prove a Decadent/Sacramentalist dichotomy. Lock seems
to be more concerned about Hopkins's psyché than with his verse, as he
delves into the gender of the members of the Trinity (Lock, 1984:130-135
for example).

Lock seems to see sublimated sexual perversion in Hopkins's need to be
spiritually and physically at one with Christ. To a Catholic this is not
unseemly or perverse. Some of Lock's remarks (1984:144) and those of
Davie whom he quotes (Lock, 1984:137) are emotional rather than intellectual
and reveal religious and moral bigotry which should be absent in objective
literary criticism:

> Hopkins offends by his sacramental sensibility, and the offence is
> compounded by the appropriately decadent language of its expression.
> ... Hopkins exploits words precisely for their most inappropriate
> and messy associations. Thus Hopkins does for language what an
> incarnate god does for flesh: enabling a sacramental transformation,
> while risking, and inviting, mockery and contempt.
>
> (Lock, 1984:141)
>
> ... (Hopkins's failure as a priest being hardly less than his
> failure as a poet, and without hope of posthumous success).
>
> (Lock, 1984:150)
>
> God's priest takes that⌊ the shameful messy scandal of the
> Crucifixion⌋ as licence and exemplar to embarrass us likewise,
> to remind us - humorously - of the wholesome goodness of bad
> taste, that in perversion may lie salvation.
>
> (Lock, 1984:151)

Notwithstanding such a narrow viewpoint, Hopkins remains for many a

great Christian poet, of whom Bergonzi says:

> His was a narrow, even constricted triumph; but he was
> able, in Marlowe's words, to enclose infinite riches in
> a little room.

> (Bergonzi, 1977:192)

1.2.2 Milroy and Hopkins's Language

Early on in his commentary on Hopkins's language, Milroy remarks:

> But Hopkins's language was in fact greatly influenced by
> the work of nineteenth century language scholars and this
> is the only contemporary work that could have helped him
> to achieve the freedom to break through narrow bounds of
> prescribed language use and 'continuous literary decorum'.

> (Milroy, 1977:34)

There is certainly a great deal of evidence throughout Hopkins's verse

of his interest in, and knowledge of, contemporary language study, particu-

larly entymology. Furthermore, Hopkins delighted in the use of dialect

and colloquialisms (both of which were anathema to the prescriptive

grammarians). As we shall see in Chapter Three, much of the semantic

freshness - some would say obscurity - of Hopkins's verse is a result

of his exploitation of etymologies, dialect words and colloquialisms.

It is through Hopkins's choice of structural and typographical placement

that associations of meanings (and sound) are asserted; associations

which might otherwise have remained unrealised.

Milroy goes on to discuss Hopkins's 'exploitation' of the 'basic

grammatical framework of the language'. Most readers are aware of

Hopkins's penchant for compounding and for creating derivative forms (compare Milroy, 1977:77). Compounding and derivation are in themselves two of the elementary methods in language of lexical addition. Most other additions to the lexicon come from foreign language borrowing (as opposed to the revitalisation of archaic words). Hopkins used mainly Germanic-rooted borrowings, for which Milroy gives the following reasons:

> ... native English words contract much more complex, subtle and far-reaching networks of relationships within the language than do Classical borrowings, and that is so whether the relationships are grammatical, semantic or phonaesthetic. Such words can be said to have more 'meaning' in the sense that they have more associations, and one word from the set (eg: stalwart, from stand, stall, stallion, stead, steady set) suggests the 'meaning' of one or more of the others and partakes of some of their 'meanings' by association ... as, some semanticists argue, a word commonly used in everyday speech (therefore, usually Anglo-Saxon) may pick up associations from the collocations in which it is frequently used; thus, in a sense dark is part of the 'meaning' of night and night part of the 'meaning' of dark. Again, since they are more frequently used, it is Anglo-Saxon and other early English words that we are most likely to 'know' in this way by the company they keep.
>
> (Milroy, 1977:156)

In Part Two of his book, Milroy discusses in depth Hopkins's use of aural effects, his striking word-choice and his creative and vital exploitation of English syntax. The introduction to this section is a discussion of Hopkins's dictum that the language of verse is that of "current language heightened". As will be seen in 1.3, Hopkins was concerned with the relationship between poetic language and ordinary language. Milroy comments that this concern is the same as that of the Prague School structuralists; and one might add the concern of generative linguists like Levin, Butters, Cureton and Leech, among others, and of literary theorists like Reinhart, Culler and Hendricks. Jakobson was of course the doyen of both literary and linguistic investigation for many years. In Chapter Two, Jakobson's concern with the relationship

between poetic language and ordinary language is discussed.

In Chapter Three and Four reference will be made to Milroy's commentary where it is apposite to the discussion. All things considered, Milroy's contribution to Hopkins scholarship is a valuable one, even though he strains at justifying some of Hopkins's syntactic forms: or as his reviewer, Alan Ward (1980) puts it: "... Mr Milroy makes an impressive, if sometimes over-ingenious, case for Hopkins's syntax being consistently construable as that of spoken colloquial English". In many cases, it is Milroy's explanation that is "over-ingenious", rather than his intuition about the colloquial nature of the structure he is discussing.

The value of Milroy's book lies in the way in which he has "transcend[ed] the crude and undesirable language-literature barrier ... with (a) style and sensitivity" (Ward, 1980). Milroy's examination is a linguisitic one that seldom becomes aesthetically destructive, because his approach is seldom mechanistic and taxonomic. Unfortunately he seldom relates his descriptive findings to literary effects.

Milroy's discussion of Hopkins's poetic language is a genuine contribution to Hopkins studies, because he uses Hopkins's own non-poetic writings as the basis of his discussion.

1.3 Hopkins's Poetics

1.3.1 Introduction

One should not consider the style and language of Hopkins's poetry without taking some notice of Hopkins's own views on what constitutes

the essence of poetry. Several of Hopkins's undergraduate papers are
printed in the collection Journal and Papers (House and Storey, 1959),
hereinafter referred to as Journal and Papers. In these papers he
considers poetic diction, the essences of beauty, the meaning of words,
rhythm in verse, and whether all verse is poetry and all poetry is verse.
In his Journal he writes about the meaning of the word "inscape" and of
the word "instress" not only in verse, but in painting, art and nature.
As always he wanted to get to the core of the 'being's being' so that
he might perceive its "inscape". Hopkins's determination to express
"inscape" is one of the reasons for his poetry being so concentrated in
imagery. One feels almost before one understands.

1.2.1 "Poetic Diction"

In the essay "Poetic Diction" (Journal and Papers: 84 and 85) for the
Master of Balliol (?) Hopkins refutes Wordsworth's contention that
there is little difference between the diction of prose and that of
poetry. Hopkins's point is that verse-structures in prose make prose
worse not better - less easily understandable. He concludes that the
structures of verse and of prose are not of the same kind - "no it is
plain that metre, rhythm, rhyme and all that structure which is called
verse both necessitate and engender a difference in diction and thought.
The effect of verse is one on expression and on thought, viz. concentra-
tion and all that is implied by this" (Journal and Papers: 84). It is
a special vividness and liveliness present in verse to which he alludes.
The character of poetry is revealed for Hopkins through its structure,
which "... reduces itself to the principle of parallelism" (Journal
and Papers: 84). He remarks that of the two kinds of parallelism, only

one - clearly marked opposition - is concerned with the structure of verse. These parallelisms occur "... in rhythm, the occurrence of a certain sequence of rhythm, in alliteration, in assonance and in rhyme" (Journal and Papers:84). He goes on to say:

> Now the force of this recurrence is to beget a recurrence or parallelism answering to it in the words or thought and, speaking roughly and rather for the tendency than the invariable result, the more marked parallelism in structure whether of elaboration or of emphasis begets more marked parallelism in the words and sense. And moreover parallelism in expression tends to beget or passes into parallelism in thought.
>
> (Journal and Papers: 84 and 85 (my emphasis))

He is stating quite clearly the link between structure and meaning which is the recurring principle in all discourse. He differentiates between two kinds of parallelism: the more marked kind of metaphor, simile, parable (those of likeness) and anthithesis, contrast (those of unlikeness); and the chromatic parallelism of gradation, intensity, climax, tone and expression.

Hopkins comments on the structure of verse:

> An emphasis of structure stronger than the common construction of sentences gives [,] asks for an emphasis of expression stronger than that of the common thought.
>
> (Journal and Papers: 85)

Here he is commenting on the compactness of the language of poetry and distinguishing between the language of prose and that of poetry, and the thought required for the two forms of language - poetry tasks the highest of man's mind. To show that poetry 'has something' more than prose, he discusses the use of the accent diacritic, which is used to direct the reader to give full syllable weight to the past tense morpheme [t] of the consonant cluster [C+t] which occurs across the

morpheme boundary:

$[1Uk+t]$ against $[1Uk+\partial d]$ from <u>looked</u> and <u>lookéd</u> respectively. (The insertion of the schwa also means that the final sound of the word becomes voiced). This diacritic is seldom used in prose but adds to the beauty of the poem without being mere affectation. Hopkins says:

> ... where the <u>structure forces us to appreciate</u> each syllable it is natural <u>and in the order of things</u> for us to <u>dwell on all the modifications</u> affecting the general result or <u>type which the ear preserves</u> and accordingly with such as are in themselves harmonious we are pleased, but in prose where syllables have none or little value to emphasise them is unmeaning.
>
> (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 85 (my emphasis))

Hopkins's point is that modifications (Levin's "deviations": see 2.2 below) of normal grammar are functional in and normal to verse, because they insist that the reader should recognise their value. Prose, however, makes few such demands, because it demands a different response and has a different way of achieving meaning and 'revealing' its message. Hopkins contends that parallelism (like that mentioned above) is one of the characteristics of the compressed nature of poetry, which suggests, rather than expresses explicitly its message.

Hopkins uses what he calls a Platonic dialogue "On the Origin of Beauty" to argue the point that beauty exists in terms of difference superimposed on sameness (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 87ff). In this dialogue he uses a chestnut fan to show that it is the asymmetry of seven leaves which makes the compound leaf seem more uniform and more beautiful than a six-form leaf. He examines the concepts of symmetry and assymetry as they add to or detract from beauty, and arrives at the conclusion that "[r]egularity then is consistency or agreement or likeness, either of a thing to itself or of several things to each other". (<u>Journal and</u>

Papers: 90). Regularity does not imply that things may only be symmetrical: asymmetry on one side becomes regularity for that leaf, if the other side is asymmetrical in the same way. "Then regularity is likeness or agreement or change or variety." The conclusion he arrives at is that beauty lies in a mixture of regularity and irregularity and that the beauty we find, stems "... from the comparison we make of the things with themselves, seeing their likeness and difference ..." (Journal and Papers: 90 and 91 (my emphasis)). The validity of the above ideas can be seen when they are considered in the light of Hopkins's verse. The apparent irregularity of the language of Hopkins's verse compared with everyday language often becomes non-existent when the irregularities are compared with spoken language structures. Hopkins's verse appears irregular because, unconventionally, he makes poetic use of colloquial language and because he compresses so many examples of colloquial language into the confines of each poem. Furthermore, the poems themselves will be shown to have their own regularity of language, although irregularity may be used by the poet within the poem to thwart the reader's expectations and in this way make the reader take special note of something in particular. Parallelisms themselves evince patterns of regularity and irregularity. It is by comparison within the poem that the regularity or irregularity of the forms is recognised and from which their beauty can be explained. Hopkins considers the poem itself to be the context for the examination of a poem. We make a comparison "... of the things with themselves ...".

These ideas concur with those of Riffaterre (whose theories will be discussed in Chapter Two) in that Riffaterre's first reading is a comparison with the outside world (in Hopkins's terms one oak compared with another) while the second is a comparison within the poem itself

(in Hopkins's terms an examination of an oak in terms of its own structure). Thus Hopkins says, "... it is not the excellence of any two things (or more) in themselves, but <u>those two things as viewed by the light of each other</u>, that makes beauty" (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 93 (my emphasis)). Thus it is composition that counts: one mass supported by another, and beauty lies in the relationship between the two:

> Beauty then is a relation.... And things which have relation are near enough to have something in common, but not near enough to be the same, are they not? ... And to perceive the likeness and difference of things, or their relation, we must compare them, must we not? ... Beauty is therefore a relation and the apprehension of it is comparison. The sense of beauty is in fact in comparison, is it not?
>
> (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 95)

Hopkins states unequivocally that the relation of the parts to the whole is indivisibility: where one removes parts from the whole, in a play or poem, one is left with a different play or poem because its unity has been altered: "... there is a relation between the parts of a thing to each other and again of the parts to the whole, which must be duly kept" (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 97). A text has unity because "... if from one single work of art, one whole, we take anything appreciable away, a scene from a play, a stanza from a short piece, or whatever it is, there is change, it must be better or worse without it ..." (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 97).

Thus again and again Hopkins reiterates the importance of the text as a unity and the fundamental principle that beauty is in terms of comparison: comparison of likeness; and comparison of unlikeness. When a quotation is abstracted out of a poem or verse, striking though

it may be in itself, it has lost some of its nature, because it is
out of its context. Some of its beauty and form as part of a whole
is lost because there is no room for comparison. This is just the
trap into which Levin (among others) falls in his attempt at a
grammatical description of "... he danced his did" (Levin, 1967).
Reinhart and Cureton, however, return to the text as the unifying
factor and the phrase as an integral part of it. These approaches
will be discussed in Chapter Two.

Hopkins expands his view of the unity of a text as follows:

> A sonnet should end ... with vigorous emphasis. Shakespere's
> [sic] end with an emphasis of pathos expressed in a rhyming
> couplet. I would use these as a strong instance of the relative
> character of beauty. On the one hand the sonnet would lose if
> you put two other lines instead of that couplet at the end, on
> the other the couplet would lose if quoted apart, so as to be
> without emphasis which has been gathering through the sonnet and
> then delivers itself in those two lines seen by the eye to be
> final or read by the voice with a deepening note and be final
> or read by the voice with a deepening note and slowness of
> delivery. ... we understand that the collected effect of a work
> of art is due to the effect of each part to the rest, in a play
> of each act to the rest, in a smaller poem each stanza to the
> rest, and so on, and that the addition or loss of any act or
> stanza will not be the addition or loss of the intrinsic goodness
> of that act or stanza alone, but a change on the whole also,
> either for better or for the worse necessarily. ... I suppose
> that it will be greatest where the connection is strong, where
> the unity is strongly marked, that is a unity not of spirit alone
> but a structural one ...

(Journal and Papers: 98 and 99 (my emphasis))

Hopkins then returns to the question of similarity (therefore progressive
relationship) and of contrast (which results in the divorcing of a
relationship). There is either transition between forms in the movement
towards a relationship or an immediate contrast of forms. In "like things"
there is also "unlikeness" (the leaves of the chestnut tree) and in
"unlike", "likeness", because like things have something in common,

therefore, unlike things also have something in common, "... if only we take a wide enough basis of comparison: ..." (Journal and Papers: 104 (my emphasis)). He then defines three ways of comparing things:

> ... first, things that we regard as like to find their difference, next things that we regard as unlike to find their likeness, and last, things about which we are not wholly decided to find both their likeness and unlikeness ... poetry delights in single likeness or single unlikeness, if we look into them; for it will be found that they make of each resemblance a reason for surprise in the next difference and of each difference a reason for surprise in the next resemblance; ["] and yet ["] or such words run before each new point of comparison, and resemblances and antithesis themselves are made to make up a wider antithesis.

> (Journal and Papers: 105)

Hopkins had an inherent sense of the relationships existing between words, meaning and the "figure of grammar".

Bergonzi says of Hopkins:

> He also knew, by poetic instinct, what the new lexicographers had discovered scientifically: that words do not have one or more sharply defined and differentiated meanings, even though dictionaries for the convenience of their readers, preserve the convention that they do.

> (Bergonzi, 1977: 169)

Hopkins used semantic "fluidity and flexibility" very forcefully in his verse. He exploited the ambiguities between words, and as we saw earlier, suggested that we should look for likeness in seemingly unlike things. What Hopkins disliked, were the archaisms like e'er and o'er, as he found them pretentious (Journal and Papers: 168). Bergonzi quotes a letter from Hopkins to Bridges:

> For it seems to me that the poetical language of an age should be the current language heightened, to any degree heightened and unlike itself, but not (I mean normally: passing freaks and graces are another thing) an obsolete one.
>
> (Bergonzi, 1977: 169)

Thus while Hopkins is prepared to enlarge his own word-stock (by compounding, contraction, and foreign-language borrowing, for example), he never uses archaisms or the more cliché-like poetical conventions and images. He sees verse as the form of "poesis" (over prose) and he is, himself, innovative on all levels of grammar. For Hopkins, speech was natural, and so the perfect poetic language was speech "heightened". When one remembers that Hopkins considered that his verse should be read aloud rather than silently, one can see his concern with the heightening of speech and the melodiousness and rhythm of his verse. He maintained that correct reading would eradicate any ambiguities and semantic vagueness in his verse. (This is a further reason for his use of diacritics.) However, many scholars deny that this is so, and claim that the 'unintelligible' complexities are the result of Hopkins's excessive ingenuity and innovations. This criticism of Hopkins's poetic style was levelled even by Bridges.

In a review of a recently published selected collection of Bridges's hitherto unpublished correspondence, The Selected Letters of Robert Bridges, Vol 1 (Standford (Ed) 1984), the reviewer, Spalding, quotes the following extract from a letter from Bridges to Mrs Hopkins:

> I should myself prefer the postponement of the poems till the memoir is written, or till I have got my own method of prosody recognised separately from Gerard's. They are the same, and he has greater claim than I to the origination of it, but he has used it so as to discredit it: and it would be a bad start in favour for the practice we both advocated and wished to be used.
>
> (Spalding, 1984 (my emphasis))

Spalding goes on to remark, "Bridges, with his preference for the functioning of classical metre, felt that Hopkins's verse was occasionally marred by excessive use of sprung rhythm, or by overwrought or eccentric diction" (Spalding, 1984). One wonders how much professional

jealousy was involved in Bridges's criticism, particularly as he was conversant with Hopkins's poetic theories and knew that the crux for Hopkins was that the language of verse is "current language heightened".

Besides verse, which he calls "figure of spoken sound", Hopkins speaks of "figure of grammar":

> Beyond verse ... there is a shape of speech possible in which there is a marked figure and order not in the sounds but in the grammar and this might be shifted to other words with a change of specific meaning but keeping some general agreement, as of noun over against noun, verb against verb, assertion against assertion, etc ...
>
> (Journal and Papers: 267)

This "figure of grammar" plays a major role in Hopkins's verse in the form of appositional phrases, curtailed sentences, and sets of questions, negatives and imperatives. What Hopkins is leading up to is the use of parallelism in poetry: "comparison for likeness' sake and comparison for unlikeness' sake". Hopkins sees these comparisons as the basis for metaphor, simile and antithesis, which are all diachronic in nature and in contrast to the chromatic which concern tone and climax. He finds that although figurative language is found in prose, it is different from that of the language of verse, because "... poetry has a regular structure and prose has not" (Journal and Papers: 106). Verse entails such structural properties as rhythm, rhyme, metre, alliteration, assonance, and these are cases of strictly regular parallelism which distinguish verse from prose because verse is a "continuous structural parallelism". Thus the concentrated nature of verse is achieved through the various poetic devices which are of the essence, artificial to

normal prose discourse, but not to normal spoken discourse: "The poem
is artificial, you see, but with that exquisite artifice which does not
in truth belong to artificial but to simple expression ..." (Journal
and Papers: 112).

Hopkins was to use these 'artificial' qualities of poetry in his later
verse to the point where critics found him abstruse. However, if
Hopkins's own injunction to find a "wide enough basis for comparison"
is used, many of his lexical choices are less abstruse than is at first
apparent, because the poem, as context, will offer the testing ground
for an interpretation.

Almost a hundred years after Hopkins, critics and linguists alike are
urging readers to consider the text as the largest syntactic unit and
the poem as its own context. Riffaterre insists that one should read
all poetic texts twice: once to 'get' the general meaning; and a
second time to reach the significance of the poem's own grammar which
will be examined against the background of the grammar of ordinary
language. He does not, however, draw a distinction between ordinary
prose and the generally erratic grammar of spoken discourse.

This seems to be a mistake, because just as there are parentheses,
hesitations, deletions and inversions in spoken discourse, so there are
in poetry, and poets like Hopkins appear to exploit these 'qualities'
of spoken discourse. The resolution of any problem areas in a poem
will be by recourse to the poem itself. Just as feedback is crucial
in any ordinary discourse, so the same checking back process must be
crucial to one's understanding of a poem, and the only feedback possi-
bility is the poem itself. Hopkins continually urges comparison: the

tree with other trees and with itself. The poem must be compared
with other poems, but ultimately with itself - its own structure
and its own grammar. As Hopkins shows, each poem uses its own
comparisons and its own rhythms and makes its own lexical patterns.
Each poem is in this sense unique and should be treated as such. In
Chapter Two it will be seen how much of Hopkins's theory has been reborn
in the writings of modern linguistic stylists.

Hopkins first used the word "inscape" and "instress" in "Notes on
Parmenides" (Journal and Papers: 127-130), but never defined them at
all clearly, perhaps because they express something intangible. By
referring to Thornton, Bergonzi explains the terms in the following way:

> "Inscape" was the form or design that was unique to a given entity,
> whether a poem or a flower, a binding or a man, and which dis-
> tinguished it from all other creation. A recent writer on Hopkins,
> R.K.R. Thornton, has summed it up in the following way: "If the
> picture that makes a whole and single thing out of an area of land
> is a landscape, then what makes up a single thing out of its inner
> nature would be its 'inscape'." Hopkins also uses the word as a
> verb, "to inscape", which, as Mr Thornton says, "means roughly
> 'to grasp the pattern of' or sometimes 'to show the pattern of'."
> The companion word "instress" implies "force", both the force that
> preserves inscape and enables a thing to cohere in its particular
> nature, and that which unites the observer with the object of his
> perception. ... Mr Thornton provides a concise summary:
>
> > To put in a way which does not allow for the subtleties and
> > shades of meaning which it acquires for Hopkins, there is a
> > force (instress) which makes natural things the way they are
> > (shapes their inscape) and there is a power (instress) which
> > this shape has to affect the beholder.
>
> (Bergonzi, 1977: 64-65 (my emphasis))

Hopkins wanted to capture the pattern of things (their inscape) and the
force which underlies them (their instress) in poetry, painting and
music. He wanted the reader to feel through hearing the words, more
than to understand through the semantic value of the words. This is

particularly true of the 'Welsh' sonnets which will be seen to be
remarkably euphonious. In his lecture "Poetry and Verse", he makes
this quite clear:

> Poetry is speech framed for contemplation of the mind by way of
> hearing or speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest
> even over and above its interest of meaning. Some matter and
> meaning is essential to it but only as an element necessary to
> support and employ the shape which is contemplated for its own
> sake. ... Now there is speech which wholly or partially repeats
> the same figure of grammar and this may be framed to be heard for
> its own sake and interest over and above its interest in meaning.

(Journal and Papers: 289 (my emphasis))

Hopkins expected his verse to be read aloud: it was to be an aural
experience through which the level of meaning would and could be reached.
He laid great stress on sounds and their relationships to each other.
As noted earlier, he was so concerned with the 'sound of the thing' and
that it should stress as he had intended, that he regularly used diacritics.
The other result of his convictions about inscape and instress is his
use of compounding and his listing of qualifying phrases into strings -
many of which alliterate, assonate and consonate. Such was the strength
of his conviction that sound was paramount if the pattern of a thing
were to be expressed and experienced, that to many uninitiated readers,
his poetry is at first glance contorted and overly complicated.

In an examination of the style and hence the mood and tone of some of
the sonnets of the Welsh and of the Dublin periods, it will be seen
that this criticism is only superficially true.

1.3.3 Hopkins's Comments on the Rhymes and Rhythms of Verse

Hopkins's Platonic dialogue moves on after the discussion of beauty

to debate the merits or otherwise of rhythm, metre and rhyme. Rhythm
is defined as: "... the repetition of a regular sequence of syllables
either in accent or quantity(?) ... These sequences are technically
called feet ... The repetition of them makes language rhythmical"
(Journal and Papers: 100). He defines regularity as "... the
consistence or agreement or likeness either of a thing to itself or
of several things to each other. Rhythm therefore is an instance of
regularity ..." (Journal and Papers: 100). Beauty, as earlier defined,
needed to be regularity tempered with irregularity, so what is needed
is to find where regularity comes into play in rhythm. His point is
that there is difference because words are not the same though their
accentuation may be, and this is where the irregularity within regularity
occurs. Metre is then a repetition of some regular sequence of rhythm
lengths, equal or unequal, in combination. Rhyme is a pleasurable
aural experience but also marks "... the points in a work of art (each
stanza being considered a work of art) where the principle of beauty is
to be strongly marked, the intervals at which a combination of regularity
with disagreement so very pronounced as rhyme may be well asserted, the
proportions which may be well borne by the more markedly, to the less
markedly, structural" (Journal and Papers: 102).

Hopkins discussed rhyme, rhythm and metre in detail in his lecture
"Rhythm and other Structural Parts of Rhetoric - Verse". He defines
verse as follows:

> Verse is speech having marked figure, order/ [sic] of sounds
> independent of meaning and such as can be shifted from one
> word or words to others without changing. It is figure of
> spoken sound.
>
> (Journal and Papers: 267)

While pitch is acknowledged not to be a formal element of verse, the other method of accentuation, stress ("... any point of pronunciation over and above the standard sound of a syllable or word or sentence ..." (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 267), is important in English. In English each word has "its emphatic accent which is quite essential to it and which being changed the word becomes meaningless, as <u>néver</u> to <u>nevér</u>, or changes meaning, as <u>présent</u> to <u>presént</u>" (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 270). He goes on to show that besides word-stress/pitch, there is stress (pitch) running <u>through sentences</u>, which contrasts word with word, and though all syllables are, therefore, more stressed, the greatest stress will still be on the normal accented syllable (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 270).

The length of a syllable is the time it takes to say it. Thus <u>bid</u> is shorter than <u>bead</u> and <u>bid</u> longer than <u>bit</u>. A collection of short sounds will result in a rapid rhythm, while long sounds will result in the slowing down of the rhythm. In combination with plosives, short vowels can give a staccato effect while nasals with long vowels can create a steady, quiet rhythm. The structures of poetry work together to create effects so that each structure is heightened by its relationship with other structures. This is true on the level of phonetic effects (alliteration, assonance, consonance) and rhythm and rhyme, and on the semantic and the syntactic levels.

Hopkins goes on to mark rhythm as the repetition of feet. Metre is the grouping of a specific number of feet. Thus prose has no metre but can have rhythm. A <u>Verse</u> in the "modern" sense is a "metrical unit of repetition" (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 273). Hopkins's interest in sound as <u>the</u> expression of poetry is reflected in his claim that rhythm/verse "... is the recasting of speech into sound-words, sound-classes and sound-sentences ..." (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 273).

Monotony in rhythm (often reflected in jingles and doggerel) is
prevented by:

> the change of words;
> using a caesura;
> by tonic accent (pitch);
> by emphatic accent (stress);
> smoothness or break of vowel sounds;
> phonetic devices (eg: alliteration).

<div align="right">(<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 280-283)</div>

The use of the caesura (a regular feature of Anglo-Saxon verse) results
in the breaking up of the rhythm into "sense-words of different lengths
from the sound-words" (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 280). Hopkins makes regular
use of the caesura so that the counted syllables of each half of a line
might be the same but the beats are not. The result is an irregularity
of rhythm within a larger regularity. The two rhythms run concurrently,
the beats running over the syllable rhythm. Word-accent and verse-accent
(rhythm) work together in much of Hopkins's verse and are also reminiscent
of Anglo-Saxon verse. This is what Hopkins (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 282)
calls accentual counterpoint in his lecture and develops into "sprung
rhythm" in his letter to Dixon:

> To speak shortly, it consists in scanning by accents or stressing
> alone, without any account of the number of syllables, so that a
> foot may be one strong syllable or it may be many light and one
> strong.

<div align="right">(Quoted in Bergonzi, 1977: 164-165)</div>

Hopkins summarised this explanation in the following way: "This then
is the essence of sprung rhythm: one stress makes one foot, no matter
how many or few the syllables ... I should add that the word sprung
which I use for this rhythm means something like <u>abrupt</u> and applies
by right only where one stress follows another without a syllable in
between" (quoted in Bergonzi, 1977: 165). Scott (1981: 286) discusses

in detail the metrical patterning of "The Windhover" and remarks:
"... Hopkins achieved a masterful interweaving of the two basic metrical
traditions in the history of English poetry: the Old English alliterative
(and essentially isochronous) system and the iambic (syllable-counting
and stress-alternating) system." It was to achieve this rhythm that
Hopkins overtly marked syllables using diacritics. He wished to capture
on paper an internal, mental rhythm that he felt and that he wanted his
readers and listeners to perceive.

Hopkins shows that the devices for preventing monotony are not dis-
unifying, rather they unify and form an organic whole. What will be
called phonetic devices are in Hopkins's terms the "lettering of
syllables". He defines alliteration as the repetition of initial sounds.
Consonance will be defined as the repetition of sound elsewhere in a
word, and assonance, as Hopkins does, as the repetition of the vowel of
a syllable (Journal and Papers: 283ff).

He defines a rhyme for English as follows:

> Rhyme then as defined for English will be an agreement or
> sameness of sound between strong syllables in different
> words, beginning with the stem or vowel of these syllables
> and continuing to the end of the corresponding feet, which
> must be the end of words also or must end with words, whether
> the strong syllables have final sounds or not and whether they
> are followed by other, weak syllables or not.

(Journal and Papers: 285)

Hopkins's interest in rhythm, rhyme and metre is reflected in the
musicality of his own verse. He employs many of the classical foot-forms,
which he adapts to his own sense of sprung rhythm, which is itself a
"heightening" of current language rhythms. Underlying the rhythms in
Hopkins's verse is always the basic English pentameter rhythm.

1.5 Conclusion

Much of the structural freshness of Hopkins's verse is the result of
his own interest in classical metres, philology, and lexicography.
His deep concern for music, painting and nature is reflected in the
mimetic quality of his verse. One is expected to respond emotionally
and to share with him the "inscape" and "instress" of the things
about him. He paints pictures in words; he sings words in his rhythms
and metres. For Hopkins the intangible had to be made tangible through
the senses, so that one could experience it in a real way. Hopkins's
comments on metre, rhythm, meaning, and his general criticism of the
verse of his friends are all reflected in his own verse, and being the
perceptive critic he was, he understood the difficulties of his style
and of his poetic intentions.   But as Bergonzi says:

> Hopkins's abilities as a critic were, indeed, an aspect of
> his genius as a poet. To succeed as a poet one needs not
> only creativity, inspiration, or whatever one calls it,
> but also the capacity to weigh words, to choose, to revise
> or reject. Hopkins had this capacity to a fine degree, as
> the drafts of his poems show, and it was this that made him
> so sensitive a reader of his friends' poetry.
>
> (Bergonzi, 1977: 110)

Hopkins's poetic competence is irrevocably tied up with his critical
ability and the linguistic competence upon which it is based.

CHAPTER TWO

Modern Approaches to Poetic Stylistics

2.1 Introduction

Although Hopkins lived at a time of renewed interest in language as a system (compare the work of Grimm, Kemble and Wright), he did not have the benefit of the linguistic revolution of the early Nineteen-Sixties. Yet much of Hopkins's poetic theory anticipates what has been said, and is being said in this century.

Jakobson (1960), in his discussion of parallelisms, was the first modern linguist to take cognisance of Hopkins's ideas. Contemporaneously with Jakobson, Levin (1962) introduced the term "coupling", but paid scant attention to either Hopkins's or Jakobson's views on parallelism. Levin was also intent on writing grammars for fragments of verse rather than on looking at the fragments in the light of the poem as a whole. Hopkins insisted that a poem was an indivisible whole and that each part should be seen in terms of its relationship to the rest of the poem. In 2.2 Levin's approach to stylistics is discussed critically with reference to other contemporary writers on stylistics.

In 2.3 Riffaterre's theory on reading levels is discussed in the light of Hopkins's view of the role of the reader in the reading of verse and of Hopkins's insistence on the comparison of things with themselves and things with the world. Although literary criticism has for centuries addressed itself to the entire text, linguists have not. Hendricks (1967)

appealed for the recognition of the text as the largest structural unit,
yet little notice of this appeal was taken until Reinhart's article (1976)
on the fragment "he danced he did". In a brilliant exegesis of the Cummings
poem "anyone lived in a pretty how town", Reinhart resolves all the
difficulties raised by Levin, by considering the fragment in the light
of the ordinary grammar of English and the structure NP VP NP, and then
in terms of the poem's own grammatical patterns. This process concurs
with Hopkins's view that the poem should be compared with the world outside
(other poems and other grammar) and with itself, and that the language of
verse is "current language heightened".

What follows is a selective critical outline of the 'state of the art' at
the beginning of the nineteen-eighties and a critical discussion of
Riffaterre's theory of reading levels. A correlation between this 'modern'
poetics and Hopkins's poetics follows in 2.4.

2.2 Jakobson To Trotter

Although one cannot deny the unity of language for any one speaker,
Jakobson (1960: 352) contends that one must acknowledge the existence
of sub-codes which inter-connect: "Each language encompasses several
concurrent patterns which are each characterised by a different function."
It is in the light of these functions that Jakobson feels that language
should be examined. Jakobson's functions are: the Referential (context),
the Emotive (addresser), the Conative (addressee), the Phatic (contact),
the Metalingual (code), the Poetic (message). (The physical factors of
spoken discourse to which the functions pertain are bracketed.)

As Jakobson points out, diversity stems not from the use of any one of these functions to the exclusion of others, but from the difference in hierarchical order of the functions - which function predominates. As these functions apply not only to spoken language but also, in a large measure, to written, they play a doubly important role in Hopkins's verse which is so like spoken discourse.

In Hopkins's verse, different functions dominate at different times, so that a different mood and effect is created. Because of Jakobson's ordering, the main function above appears to be the referential (context of the speech act). This, however, is not necessarily true of verse (or even of all texts) because verse does not always have an overt context. In the selection from Hopkins's verse, it will be seen that many poems start with bald negative statements and exclamations, and that the global context of the poem is not evident until the whole poem has been read. One could say that the poem creates its own context in which the reader has to accept the poet's code, which he often has to decipher first, in order to make "contact" and thereby receive the "message". Hopkins's use of pronouns is crucial to the contact between addresser and addressee and the way in which the poet makes the reader a sharer in his poem.

As Jakobson (1960: 354) points out "... the expressive/emotive function, focused on the addresser, aims at direct expression of the speaker's attitude towards what he is speaking about." One may use interjections, pitch, stress, or even length to reveal one's attitude. Hence, in a poem like Hopkins's "Not, I'll not carrion comfort ..." (Gardner and McKenzie, 1980: 99, No 64) and in several of his other sonnets, the opening lines

are often unusually dramatic, direct and attacking. Each poet uses
different structures to achieve the "direct expression" of his attitude.
Hopkins appears in the "Terrible Sonnets" to be primarily concerned with
capturing and expressing his own feelings (towards God, for instance) and
only incidentally in reaching his reader.

What Jakobson (1960: 355) calls the "conative" function (that of orientation
to the addressee) seems to be the crucial function in the addresser's
expression of his objectivity or subjectivity and the response he expects
from the addressee. He suggests that the grammatical forms of the vocative
and the imperative express most clearly this function of orientation. In
many of Hopkins's poems, the addressee is himself and also God, and only
incidentally the reader/listener. The poet is arguing with himself and
addressing his words to God. In the sonnets, questions make the God/Lord
of the poem a 'real' being who can answer the questions. Vocatives like
"Lord", "sir", "O thou my friend" and "O thou lord of life" are frequently
a direct address to God. One would agree with Jakobson that imperatives
are important expressers of the orientation of the addressee, but a weakness
in his schema is that very little consideration is given to the importance
of questions as expressers of the orientation of the addressee. Such a
consideration is necessary in Hopkins's verse because in his many introspec-
tive poems Hopkins is the addresser, addressee (together with God) and the
context. "I" and "You" are the main deictic referents in "Carrion Comfort".
Hopkins's "I" and "You" are equal protagonists. It is true that Hopkins
does exhort, appeal to the "You" (God), but he also "wrestle[s]" with him,
as with an equal (Gardner and McKenzie, 1980: 99, No 64). His tone is not
always one of awe, but changes with his mood from anger and frustration
to shock and then acquiescence "... Of now done darkness I wretch lay

wrestling with (my God!) my God" (line 14). In this particular sonnet Hopkins begins in revolt and anger, moves through the questions of doubt and despair, to the gentle acceptance of "... my God" (line 14).

Hopkins maintains contact through the use of dramatic openings. His use of questions, besides reflecting the poet's inner turmoil, also serves to keep the contact close, as all questions anticipate a possible answer even if the questions are rhetorical. Hopkins expects the reader to empathise with him to some extent, so that contact can be maintained. However, for contact to be maintained, the reader must understand the poet's code, which the reader will 'solve' in terms of the world and his own experience of it, and by reference to the world of the poem. Reference to the poem is crucial because, while a listener in an ordinary speaking situation can continually check that he is using the same code as the speaker by asking questions and by asking for clarification, this is not possible when one reads a poem. The reader must turn to the poem and to his knowledge of the world as delimited by the poem to resolve any difficulties he has. A reader checks the poet's code by continually considering the language inter-relations. The reader obviously cannot speak directly to the poet, but he can use the poetic structures of the poem to check his understanding of the lines.

The varied dominance of the functions of poetic language results in different types of poetic language. In Hopkins's verse, the addresser and addressee are often closely associated, because the poet moves from himself to a consideration of the God which is part of himself, yet outside of himself. Thus his wrestling with his own despair is, in a metaphysical sense, his wrestling with his God. Hopkins is seen to be the context of the poem, because the poem is an expression of Hopkins's self and is about his torment.

Jakobson's other major contribution to stylistics concerns two modes of arrangement used in verbal behaviour: selection and combination which are produced on the basis of equivalence. (In his description of these Jakobson acknowledges his debt to Hopkins's view of parallelism.) For Jakobson (1960: 358) combination is based on contiguity: "The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination." Equivalence is the constitutive device of sequence. Jakobson (1960: 358) goes on to quote Hopkins's definition of verse as "'Speech wholly or partially repeating the same figure of sound'". Paul Werth (1976) disputes Jakobson's claim that parallelism is the essential element of verse structure by giving examples of parallelism in prose. While no one would deny that parallelism may exist in ordinary prose, it is unlikely that one would claim that parallelism is an essential part of prose structure. Where parallelism is an essential part of a prose text, the prose takes on an emotive quality which is far closer in effect to verse than to an informative report or an historical treatise. Most forms of 'emotive' writing such as propoganda, advertisements and sensational journalism rely on repetitions of structures and the semantic affinity of lexical items. Winston Churchill's 'Dunkirk speech' is a perfect example of the exploitation in prose of parallel structures. What Werth has not seen is that parallelism will probably be found in any piece of text, but not in as concentrated and compressed a form as in verse or in 'emotive' writing. It is the degree to which parallelism occurs within the confines of verse to which Jakobson and Hopkins allude, not to its mere occurrence. In Hopkins's verse it is not unusual to find that syntactic and semantic parallelism is supported by parallelism in sound.

Part of the musicality of Hopkins's verse depends on the contiguity of the lexical items. These patterns are often echoed throughout the poem and so

equivalences are set up. Phonetic and metrical equivalences lead on
to semantic equivalences in lexical sets. Thus, one finds semantically
related words grouping together in the expression of the content of the
poem. Similarly, syntactic equivalences (either of similarity or contrast)
become evident so that in "Carrion Comfort" (Gardner and McKenzie,
1980: 99, No 64) a negative statement in the first line of the octave is
structurally contrasted with the positive question and the statement of
the sestet.

> Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee:
> ...
> Why? That my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear.

It is the change from the strongly worded defiant statement to the almost
querulous questions (suggested by the rapid change from question to answer
and back again) that prepares us for the persona's doubt about who the
enemy really is, and for the shock and acquiescence of:

> "... I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God."

Chapter Four examines in detail the way in which Hopkins uses syntactic
equivalences and contrasts throughout the selected sonnets to ensure a
progression in mood. The changes in mood are directly related to the
contrast (or similarity) of the syntactic equivalences. The semantic
equivalences then supply the content of the poem and together with the
syntactic equivalences reflect the emotive function of the poetic language.
Phonological equivalences also serve as cognitive cues to the reader in that
they may reinforce equivalences on the semantic and syntactic planes or
emphasise a particular rhythm or pattern of sounds. The poet uses these
cues to guide us in our interpretation.

It would seem impossible to separate any one of the three levels of
language from the other. Sometimes the phonological cues are the pre-
dominant force which leads the reader's attention on to a particular word;

at other times the lexical items and their contiguity predominate; and, as has been seen above, the syntactic cues have a similar result. All three work in <u>conjunction</u>, to <u>reinforce</u> each other and one might say un- equivocally that it is where such mutual reinforcement takes place within a poem, that one has poetry of great merit. There would be no point in making gratuitous statements about equivalences if they were not functional. Their functionality within a poem is what is important, because it is the functionality which assists in the interpretation of the poem <u>and can explain</u> <u>why one has intuitive feelings</u> about the poem. It is, therefore, <u>not</u> enough to list all the equivalences - "Whatever the relation between sound and meaning in different rhyme techniques, both spheres are necessarily involved" (Jakobson (1960: 368) - one must show how these are related. Following Hopkins, Jakobson uses parallelism to designate that type of phonological and syntactic structure which inevitably involves semantic equivalence. When one considers that all one says or writes is to one end, that of conveying a message, this is an obvious statement. Jakobson (1960: 370) sums up these points by saying, "In poetry not only the phonological sequence but in the same way any sequence of semantic units strives to build an equation." It is the similarity which, by being super- imposed on adjoining words, gives to poetry its "symbols, multiplex, poly- semantic essence ..." (Jakobson, 1960: 370).

Ambiguity of function plays a crucial role in Hopkins's verse. It is the poetic function which makes reference ambiguous. Jakobson (1960: 371) says, "The double-sensed message finds correspondence in a split addresser, in a split addressee,...". The phonological and the syntactic structures in their opposition and similarity themselves lead one on to the resolutions of the inherent ambiguities. The art of the creative writier lies in his ability to <u>manipulate</u> and order syntax and

phonology to achieve a pre-determined result. Much of this he does by recourse to the use of parallelism on all three planes. Jakobson (1968: 603) remarks that readers "... catch deviations without being capable of analysing them." Thus intuition comes into play. Jakobson is saying that grammatical explanations can be given to support the interpretive intuitions, because the intuition can only be received from the phonological, syntactic and semantic cues, as language is the medium of expression. Reinhart (1978: 88) concurs: "... our intuitions about [a] poem are not just a series of felicitous incidents. The apparent nonsense makes sense because of the subtle network of organising patterns which are at least tacitly grasped by the readers of the poem and which play a crucial role in determining the reader's intuition" (my emphasis).

Jakobson's whole thesis rests on an integration of all the linguistic levels. He points out that rhyme cannot be treated only from the point of view of sound, but must be linked to semantics (Jakobson, 1960: 367). Taking his cue from Hopkins, Jakobson defines parallelism as a fundamental element of poetry; equivalence in sounds relates to semantic equivalence and thus prompts one of the two correlative experiences called by Hopkins "... comparison for likeness' sake" and "comparison for unlikeness' sake" (Jakobson, 1960: 368-369).

Levin first published Linguistic Structures in Poetry in 1962. Since then he has developed and revised his ideas on linguistic functions in literature. He begins his work with comments on the syntagmatic and paradigmatic planes of language and the effect of "coupling" in poetry. Levin proposes that environment should delimit paradigm membership, and that so delimited paradigm members will result in classes of equivalent items: they can

occur in equivalent environments. These environments can be either
linguistic or extra-linguistic. The equivalence paradigm can be 'broken'
to focus attention and form a contrast, or be maintained so that each class
member reinforces the other. The breakdown of the expected paradigm can
be as important as that of natural classes. (Compare Journal and Papers: 105.)
Poets like Hopkins also create paradigms from forms that would not normally
be members of the same equivalent set. Nouns become verbs, verbs nouns,
adverbs or any other major part of speech. In such cases the poet forces
regularity of environment on disparate forms. This is one of the most
striking techniques found in Hopkins's verse.

Levin did not consider such recategorised forms at any stage, because he
saw them as deviations from a norm rather than 'poesis', the 'making', of
a new form. This is perhaps where Levin's theories are most limited. It
is the linguistic structure in conjunction with the meaning of the items
in the same context that governs the selection of the meaning of the item.
For Levin selection may apply only between different items which have some
semantic affinity. In sonnet 65, "No worst, there is none" (discussed in
Chapter Four), the word "pitch" is exploited simultaneously as a verb,
noun and adjective, to suggest among others the senses of throwing/falling,
height, black tar, and black, all of which senses are fundamental to an
understanding of the gloomy despair of the poem. Meaning should not be
seen as extra-linguistic as it cannot be separated from its linguistic
environment.

Underlying the poetic forms are found basic linguistic structures, which
have been adjusted by the poet to his own ends. The reader's response

is not only to the underlying grammar of ordinary language, but also to the grammar of the poem. If recategorisation is an element of poesis, it is the grammatical function of the word that counts not the category to which it conventionally belongs. Thus a verb used as a noun would not be deviant, but would adopt the grammatical function of the noun and could have a determiner and be the subject of a verb. The item is thus recategorised. In the interpretation of a poem one is interested in meaning and the way in which the structures reveal meaning and, therefore, substantiate the interpretation. The new (as well as the old) role of the recategorised items must then be examined.

Deviances fall into two main groups: syntactic and lexical. In many poems so-called lexical deviances are simply cases of recategorisation. Often when one ignores clashing semantic features and concentrates on the structure of the phrase or the sentence, one recognises a perfectly ordinary structure. Readers are able to interpret the 'deviances' because they are able to structure them. At every level selection of semantic equivalences takes place - certain semantic selections will be redundant because of the inter-relations and juxtapositioning of the forms and eventually of the lexical items themselves - in terms of the poem's grammar. The reader seldom expects rhyming words to be semantically and syntactically equiva-lent simultaneously. The fact that two rhyming words occur at the end of a line may be said to be positional equivalence and not linguistic equivalence. If, however, the two words occur in the same linguistic environment, they are structurally/syntactically equivalent. Similarly, the juxtaposition of alliterating words is usually positional rather than structural, as the aim is aural effect. Hopkins was adept at making rhyming pairs and alliterating strings structurally relevant as well as aurally effective, as will be seen in Chapter Three.

Generally the terms "parallelism" and "coupling" apply to the larger
linguistic structures, because it is the structures and the equivalences
within them that are compared to other similar structures, which are then
interpreted as either similar or contrastive. The whole system of poesis
is seen as a structure within a structure, in which in each case the
semantic, syntactic and phonological levels work together. The phono-
logical forms seem to hold the strings together through sound equivalences,
while the semantic level suggests varieties of meanings which are selected
in terms of the content of the poem and of the syntactic structures in
the poem.

The extra-linguistic (ie typographical) position is used by the poet to
place emphasis on a specific word. Words which occur in the same typo-
graphical position will be parallel only if they are also semantically
and/or syntactically equivalent, either because they are similar or because
they are contrastive.

Because one speaks of parallelisms, couplings and the like, one is aware
that a poet limits himself, so that his ideas are concentrated vertically
through the poem, stanzas, and horizontally along the verse lines. One
should then look closely at the similarities to normal grammar that are
found in the poem rather than at the deviances from ordinary language.
(This approach is taken in the examination of the selected sonnets.)
It is the similarities which allow the reader to grapple with the supposed
'difficulties' in a poem, because he is able to use them to analogise to
ordinary language and in this way to perceive the poet's grammar. It
seems that there is more in most poetic language which is similar to

ordinary language than there is that which is different from ordinary language. Where word categories are interchanged, there is seldom also a distortion of the subject-verb sequence of English syntax. The interpretation of 'new' categories is in terms of what the reader and the poet know of ordinary grammar. Not all the rules of language may be broken at the same time, if the poem is to be intelligible to the reader. Together with the cross-occurrences on all three linguistic levels, a norm is set up against which the poet can choose to foreground a form to thwart the reader's expectations, so that he will reconsider and readjust what he thinks. The art of poetry is dependent on being implicit rather than explicit. The poet sets out to create equivalences on all planes, simultaneously if possible.

Levin (1962: 33) makes the point that the code the poet uses is not the ordinary language code. Levin (1962: 41) claims that "... the poem generates its own code, of which the poem is the only message" (my emphasis). Hopkins would concur, but insist that the basis of the code is ordinary language, which has been "heightened" in some way. Reinhart, among the later stylists, bases her interpretation on the same conviction. Levin's couplings are a fusion of form and meaning, in that the paradigmatic plane interlocks with the syntagmatic, but it is doubtful whether one is ever really able to separate the planes to a degree where one may say they interlock. In ordinary language, syntax ensures the comprehensibility of the semantic level, while the semantic level in its turn, clarifies the syntactic level. An oddity in a line of verse becomes functional and meaningful in the light of the poem's grammar. Sometimes structure will elucidate meaning and at other times the

reverse occurs. This means that a reader is forced to look back and forwards in a poem to resolve his difficulties, just as partners in a conversation use feedback.

In his articles on deviation (1963 and 1965), Levin turns to the norms of ordinary language as the criteria against which deviations are to be judged. As he points out (Levin, 1963: 259) the precise boundary between normal and deviant is vague, because such boundaries are dependent not only on the situation, but also on the judgement of the reader. The contexts of the poem, and at a remove, of the world, set up bases upon which choices are made which are predictable to a greater or lesser degree. Levin shows that the reader's expectations are based on experience; or, in the terms of this thesis, on the literary competence and literary experience of the reader.

Also to be considered are the limits (restrictions) of language which are placed on the poet. It is in terms of these limits that the 'first reading' (Riffaterre's theory, 2.3 below) is made. This 'first reading' is the 'key' to the significance of the poem and to the grammar of the poem. The ordinary linguistic level is, as it were, at a remove from the poetic level, but nonetheless fundamental as the reference to which the reader repeatedly refers in making sense of the poem's grammar. The reader's ultimate concern is with the poem's grammar as it reveals the poem's message.

Levin (1965: 230) discusses his contention that "the deviation is not a function of the language except trivially; it is a function of the content", by reference to Lowell's "Sailing Home from Rapallo".

```
1    While the passengers were tanning
2    on the Mediterranean in deck-chairs,
3    our family cemetery in Dumbarton
4    lay under the White Mountains
5    in the sub-zero weather.
```

Levin's contention seems unsupported because it is through the semantic connections that are made that the reader senses the change from warmth to cold. There is movement in the content (subject matter) from the Mediterranean coast to the New England landscape, but the content is revealed through the lexical selections which suggest a contrast of cold/warmth: "tanning", "Mediterranean", "deck-chairs", all suggest relaxation, warmth and sunshine; "cemetery", "White", "sub-zero", all suggest cold, winteriness and, by extension, death. The tenses of the verbs themselves are in contrast - the progressive "were tanning" is opposed to the past of "lay". Even the prepositions suggest a contrast: "on" as opposed to "under". The first suggests lightness and buoyancy; the latter, heaviness and the exertion of pressure: "Mediterranean" ('sea') itself has connotations of movement and buoyancy, while "Mountains" ('land') suggest the immovable and the heavy. The pairs of noun + preposition in conjunction thus reinforce the moods of frivolity and of seriousness - the seriousness of death. The poet has chosen deliberately to set up these contrasts by placing them in exactly the same positions in their respective lines. The content alone could not have created such a strong contrast. The lexical items and the syntactic forms are fundamental to the comparison. There is a suggested contrast between the place which the people occupy - "in deck-chairs" and "in the sub-zero weather".

The adverbial phrases of place set up expectations for the climactic

"in the sub-zero weather" of the last line. The effectiveness of these lines is a direct result of the poet's structuring of the content of the poem into two parallel constrastive structures:

Line
1 | (While)

	Noun Phrases	Adverbial Phrases				Verbs
		Preps	Deter-miners	Modifiers	Nouns	
1	the passengers	[on	the		Mediterranean]	were tanning
3	our family cemetery	in			Dumbarton [sea]	lay
2		on	the	Mediterranean	Mountains	
4		under	the	White	chairs	
2		in		deck-	weather	
5		in		sub-zero		

The use of the conjunction "While" requires the reader to consider the two occurrences as parallel, simultaneous, but contrastive. The placing of "in the deck-chairs" and "in Dumbarton" at the end of their respective lines which follow on from each other, creates a relationship of position, which is reinforced by the alliteration of the "d" and which prepares the reader for the full verse line impact of "in the sub-zero weather". It should be clear then that content alone cannot create functional deviance.

In "The Analysis of Compression in Poetry" (Levin, 1971), Levin examines the compressed nature of poetry and the problem of 'defining' the poetic nature of verse. The reader recognises the 'poeticality' of verse, but the question is how this is done. Levin (1971: 38) refers to Riffaterre's

(1959: 162-166) early suggestion of an 'average reader's response' as a vehicle through which the cues, linguistic and poetic, can be examined. Subsequently, Riffaterre (1966: 215) suggested that the "cue source" is the "superreader". All reactions to a poem would form part of the superreader response and structures which affected these reactions would then be marked as poetic structures. Levin (1971) claims in this article that content is not crucial to the recognition of the poetic nature of verse. This means that any interpretation, although limited in its "field of operation" by objective responses (not the analyst's choice of field), cannot be controlled completely so that the analyst's subjective responses will come into play. To obviate the problem, Levin (1971: 39) suggests that we use our intuitions, just as we do for ordinary language. He suggests (approaching Hopkins's view, 1.2.2 above) three basic intuitions about poetry "... that poetry is more unified than ordinary language, that it is more compressed and that it is more novel". He is thus suggesting a kind of poetic competence.

Just as language competence is formulated through contact with other same-language users, what will be called 'interpretive' competence can be developed only through contact with poetry (or prose or drama). It will be recognised intuitively that certain generalisations hold for interpretation and it is in the light of these that the interpretation of poetic language is considered. Jakobson's functions are such generalisations. It is not possible for the inexperienced reader to justify his intuitive grasp that a poem is happy or sad, defiant or acquiescent, until he has had enough practice from which to recognise generalisations which will enable him to point to words or to sentence types (for example) which mark

the poem as sad or defiant. He then has to formulate rules which will become part of his poetic competence. The way he <u>applies these rules</u> to a poem and <u>the resulting interpretation</u> is part of the performance plane. Riffaterre contends that each poem has its own grammar based broadly on normal grammar, but that normal grammar is a means to the poem only through the existence of normal grammar on the mimetic level (see 2.3 below).

Although the actual final interpretive statement may be on the performance level, the process by which the interpretation is made belongs to the realm of competence. This is the competence which underlies everyone's use of language and upon which the judgement of what is and is not "well-formed" is based, and upon which one accepts that within poetic language sentences not well-formed can be meaningful. Readers expect to make unusual associations: they accept so-called 'poetic licence'. Furthermore, the poet and the reader share the same linguistic competence. Just as the poem is a performance reflection of the poet's poetic competence, so the reader's interpretive ability is a reflection of his 'poetic inter-pretive' competence. Both the poet and the analyst, through practice and experience, learn to 'handle' the creation or analysis of verse. The learning process involved is similar to that of the acquisition of ordinary language, as once again generalisations are recognised and rules formulated on the basis of experience data - the poems the poet reads and writes, and those the reader reads and analyses.

While Coppay (1977: 22) considers the validity of poetic competence questionable, Culler (1981: 41) considers that literary competence serves as "the basis of a reflexive interpretation" because "man is

homo significans, maker and reader of signs". Culler (1981: 25) states

that one must bring to a literary text "an implicit understanding of the

operations of literary discourse which tells one what to look for ...

Anyone lacking this knowledge, would be unable to read it as literature ...

because he lacks the complex 'literary competence' which enables others

to proceed. He has not internalised the 'grammar' of literature which

would permit him to convert liguistic sequences into literary structures

and meanings." Like Riffaterre, Culler (1981: 25) believes that "The

properties assigned to the sentence by a grammar of English remain unchanged,

and the different meanings which the text acquires cannot therefore be

attributed to one's knowledge of the language but must be ascribed to the

special conventions for reading poetry which lead one to look at language

in new ways, to make relevant properties of the language which were

previously unexploited, to subject the text to a different series of

interpretive operations." These ideas concur with the contention

expressed in this thesis that one must use the properties of ordinary

grammar to look into the world of the poem, so that the structures of

the poem may be compared with one another and the broad spectrum of

ordinary linguistic choices may be reduced to text-relevant choices.

Culler (1981: 37) asserts that "reading poetry is a rule-governed process

of producing meanings: the poem offers a structure which must be filled

up and, therefore, attempts to invent something, guided by a series of

formal rules derived from one's experience of reading poetry, which both

make possible inventions and impose limits on it. In this case the most

obvious feature of literary competence is the intent at totality of the

interpretive process: poems are supposed to cohere, and one must, therefore, discover a semantic level at which the two lines can be related to one another." Poetic competence is dependent on linguistic competence.

Levin says we intuitively recognise poetic forms such as compression by using our poetic competence in conjunction with our linguistic competence. He accounts for compression mainly through deletion and reduction, both rules which are part of a speaker's linguistic competence. In the Dickinson poem:

> When Etna basks and purrs
> Naples is more afraid
> Than when she shows her Garnet Tooth;
> Security is loud.

> (Levin, 1971: 40)

Levin tries to show that some words are understood to complete the 'symmetry' of phrases in the poem. He suggests that the phrase "... basks and purrs ..." demands a structure such as "... shows her Garnet Tooth; and roars", to complete its sense and its structure. He further justifies this choice by making explicit the semantic relationship of "purrs"/"roars". What he is concerned with is non-recoverable deletion as a fundamental element of compression. Levins's claim (1971: 53) is that "supplying what has been deleted does add something to our understanding of the content; in fact, the deleted portions constitute part of that content. We do not understand poems without conjuring up the deleted portions. We could, in fact, say that the response of compression is just the inchoative sense of lost or missing content."

Whether this is true or not is a moot point because the semantic relationships in the poem are so strong that links are made without the presupposition of any non-recoverable deletions. The images suggest the parallels without recourse to deleted items: the feline words - "basks", "purrs" and "shows her Garnet Tooth" suggest the contrast between a cat in repose and a cat in action, because the reader connects the words with the action of the cats of experience. The word "basks" and "purrs" suggest quiet relaxation and inaction, but being catlike also suggest the potential of instantaneous action. Again the reader draws on his knowledge of cats. The words "Garnet Tooth", because of connotations of redness and glassiness, suggest shining bloody red fangs bared in ferocity. Because he knows that in the real (referential) world Etna is a volcanic mountain, the reader draws the connections between quiet dormancy and a sudden eruption of spewing, red, molten lava.

It is precisely because the reader can draw this connection, that he can understand "Security is loud". He knows that it is the basking placid volcano that is frightening because it could erupt without warning, spreading death and terror. While it continues to rumble, the people are aware of it and exercise caution without being unduly concerned that there will be a major eruption; the volcano is letting off a little steam at a time, not gathering itself silently for a mighty burst! None of these deductions needs to rely on the supposition that elements are understood to be there. The poem works because Etna is animated as a cat. The word "loud" is in contrast to "purr", but not because 'roars' is understood to be there. The poem is concerned with latent savagery hidden

beneath an exterior of calm beauty. The so-called missing elements are not "... essential in the domain of the interpretation" as Levin (1971:53) claims. Levin's comment (1971: 54) that "... we might also investigate its lexical properties. There might be something inherently compacting about certain types of comparison..." is interesting in the light of what he has said in his article because, as noted above, the lexical properties offer the first connective cues. The typographical positioning of words, their ordering into lexical sets, and their compari-son with the real world and with the other lexical items in the poem, make implicit relationships explicit to the reader, not any deleted items. Hopkins regularly exploits deletion (as will be seen in Chapters Three and Four) but not of the non-recoverable type. His deletions are based on the transformational rules. Levin's deletions appear to be such as would occur in his theory of coupling, that is a 'missing' semantic equivalent.

The discussion suggests that an attempt to define and interpret a poem in terms of such rigid conventions as deletions becomes trivial just because it is mechanical and does not touch the web of connections which occur in poems. In "The Internal Analysis of Compression in Poetry", Frank Coppay comes to conclusions similar to those reached above:

> our results indicate:
> 1   that the principle of non-recoverable deletion is not
>   operant in the production of the intuitive response of
>   compression; and
> 2   that the linguistic correlative of the compression response
>   is semantic in nature, rather than syntactic.
>
> (Coppay, 1977: 21 (my emphasis))

He goes on to state that the bases for the criteria used to account for poetic compression "... are strictly internal to the message". Thus he is concerned with justifying the reader's intuitive response to the compression of poetry by attention to "... the text's attention-compelling properties" (Coppay, 1977: 21), rather than relying on 'latent' elements which are obviously not immediately perceived, because they are not in the text. Coppay's internal method (1977: 21), very similar to the system used above (p 42), is based on the "... analysis of elements materially present and in contiguity in the real verbal chain". Thus the poem is its own reference, and not either some 'latent' word or structure, or ordinary language. This is Hopkins's contention too. The results of Coppay's tests (1977: 23) show that "The syntactic reduction implicit in both texts seemed to have the primarily compensatory effect of focusing attention on the surface relationships existing between words" (my emphasis).

Like Riffaterre, Coppay returns to the concept of the recurrence of equivalent forms (noted by Jakobson and Levin) on the surface of the text. As Coppay (1977: 26) points out, deletions are functional in decoding only if they are perceived and if they are perceived as intentional. What is important is the cross-referencing of data because meaning stems from the semantic relationships in the whole poem and not from the grammatical or referential components (Coppay, 1977: 29). Coppay (1977: 30) reaches the conclusion that "Recognition that the semantic yield is reduced and compacted relative to the semantic input excites the response of compression."

As a speaker/hearer does in spoken discourse, the reader selects those parts of the semantic yield which will give maximum cohesion in the poem's interpretation and it is the poem which forces the reader to make the selection and draw the connections. "Word kinships generate word combinations and sequences ... Dickinson's poem is compressed not because she omitted key elements from the encoding, but because she got good mileage from the elements she used" (Coppay, 1977: 36 (my emphasis)).

In his discussion of "he danced his did", Levin (1967: 229) claims that one cannot analogise the sequence "he danced his did" as one can "a grief ago", "... since there are no utterances of this form generated anywhere in the grammar." If, however, the structure of "he danced his did" is taken as NP + V + NP, thereby accepting the overt structure and ignoring the aberrant class reflected in "did", one can analogise with other similar structures. Chomsky (1961: 234) explains such analogising in the following way: "Given a grammatically deviant utterance, we attempt to impose an interpretation on it, exploiting whatever analogies we can construct with perfectly well-formed utterances."

If one takes the grammar of the poem as the governing factor, the deviance is recognised as part of the chosen, deliberate grammar of the poem. If this is so, then the categories can be suspended and "did" treated as a noun, as it functions as such in the phrase and in the poem. The phrase then becomes meaningful and has the added advantage of being cohesive in that it suggests its ordinary language sense of 'verbness' and its poetic language sense of 'nounness'. The phrase becomes clear

when one considers the whole line "he sang his didn't he danced his did" (Cummings E E, 1954: 370), where in one line the two parts lie parallel as constructions.   Such parallel constructions are repeated elsewhere in the poem:

> someones (married their everyones)
> laughed their crying and did their dance
> ... they
> said their nevers they slept their dream.

One notices the parallelism and comparisons in the poem almost immediately. The persona "anyone" soon becomes "someone" and later "noone".   The sheer agony of loneliness and isolation is heavily underscored by "anyone" being buried by "busy folk" and "women and men (both dong and ding)/summer autumn winter spring/reaped their sowing and went their came/sun moon stars rain ". The poem ends on a further parallelism. The other noteworthy factor is the repetition of other parallel structures like "little by little and was by was". Cummings repeats such parallel structures in every stanza, but he alters their line positions or order so that in the first stanza the repetition of the seasons is in line 3, but in a different word-order and in stanza two "sun moon stars rain" is line 4, but the first line in stanza six, where the word-order is changed.   The two 'sentences' of seasons and the latter phrase are brought together in the final stanza (line 4   "sun moon stars rain" and seasons line 2). If one looks at "... he danced his did" in isolation from the rest of the line, stanza and poem, one would have difficulty in giving a meaning to the phrase. The point is that the phrase is an integral and functional part of a greater whole - one which is attempting to show the dichotomy of life in which children "down they forgot as up they grew". The 'deviances'

can be analogised firstly, because the structure is seen as NP + V + NP
(by disregarding the semantic feature and category anomalies) and,
secondly, by comparison with other equivalent (parallel) structures
in the poem so that the poem's significance is grasped.

In "The Sense of Nonsense: Cummings", Tanya Reinhart (1976) gives a
brilliant exegesis of "anyone lived in a pretty how town" from which
"he danced his did" is taken. It will be noticed that she makes no attempt
to discuss the phrase in isolation. Her point of departure is that, while
phrases appear to be nonsense in isolation, all such phrases are quickly
(as Hopkins contended) understood in the context of the whole poem. If
the poem is the fundamental context (not, of course, forgetting the
broadest context, that of life's experiences) then this is hardly surprising.
It also suggests one of the distinctive differences between ordinary
language and that of verse: while lines of ordinary language may be
grammatical, together such groups need not create a cohesive whole;
verse on the other hand might reflect ungrammaticality and yet must form
a cohesive intelligible whole. This shows that grammaticality is not the
only criterion by which meaningfulness must be judged - in verse in any
case.

Reinhart states the crux of the matter:

> The apparent nonsense makes sense because of the subtle
> network of organising patterns which are at least tacitly
> grasped by readers of the poem, and which play a crucial
> role in determining the reader's intuitions.
>
> (Reinhart, 1976: 88 (my emphasis))

She goes on to examine the syntactic equivalences which exist throughout the poem (some of which were discussed above) and comes to the conclusion that many of the sentences are of the basic type NP + V + NP. She further notes that the 'listings' "sun moon stars rain", "autumn winter spring summer" too are equivalences of form. Reinhart (1976: 91) gives a table showing: the number value of the subjects (singular and plural); the intransitive sentences; and the 'X by X' structures. She links the syntactic equivalences to semantic equivalences (in Leech's and Levin's sense of coupling). As she shows, many of these couples are contrastive: "she laughed his joy"; "they laughed their crying". The words "joy" and "crying" are being contrasted. I suggest, however, that forms such as "danced his did" and "did their dance" are not so much contrastive, as inversions which suggest an equivocal situation - "anyone's" sorrow and "their" superficiality and 'normalness'. The same applies to the pair "dreams their sleep" and "slept their dream". The contrast in tense of "dream" and "slept" and the change of category of "dream" from verb to noun and of "sleep" from noun to "verb" suggest a contrast between the mystical "dream[ing] their sleep" and the pragmatic "sleep[ing] their dream". Contrastive couples are suggested in "she laughed his joy and cried his grief". This syntactic parallel/equivalence is reinforced by the semantic contrast of "laughed"/"cried" and "joy"/"grief". This type of contrast fulfils a quite different function - that of suggesting the dichotomy of life's experiences - the duality of existence: good and bad; love and hate; joy and sorrow; concern and indifference.

The intention here is to show that the <u>grammar for a text is dependent on the text</u> and that linguistic tools are derived by analogy from ordinary

language methods of syntactic and semantic description because ordinary language is ulitmately the basis of poetic language. The reader acknowledges a poem as a poem and treats it as something different from the rest of language but draws on his knowledge of language to do this, just as the poet drew on his language knowledge to create his poem. Reinhart shows that poetic sequences <u>must not be used,</u>as are sentences in ordinary language, to discover grammatical rules. However, she does not consider the possibility of a similarity between the rules underlying poetic sequences and those underlying spoken discourse. Such a considera-tion is crucial for Hopkins's verse. Reinhart (1976:103) recognises that a prescriptive grammar comparison is limiting, when she states "Nonsense is deviant <u>only if</u> we judge it by the rules of standard language or our own boring reality; if we find the inner rules, of the nonsense itself, it makes perfect sense."

In his criticism of Reinhart, among others, Cureton (1980) concerned himself with the performance factors involved in interpretation and suggested three questions one should ask oneself in attempting to account for the analogical operation involved in the interpretation:

1   How does the reader assign a structural description to the deviant string? (ie: What is the grammar of the line and how is it determined?)
2   How does the reader semantically interpret the deviant string once that structural description has been assigned? (ie: What is the Semantic Interpretation of the line and how is it determined?)
3   What is the aesthetic effect of that semantic interpretation? (ie: What is the <u>Art</u> of the line and how does it affect the art?)

(Cureton, 1980: 246)

These questions are a fair reflection of the process of interpretation, but they do not take cognisance of the feeling that the interpretation of a poem is a gradual process based on several readings and several contexts:

- grammar itself;
- the poem's grammar;
- one's life experiences; and
- one's general knowledge.

It appears that when one is faced by a deviant form, one can say that the form is deviant because a noun is being used as a verb, an adverb is being used as an adjective and so on. What is important is the understanding and perception revealed by 'X' being used as 'Y'. Such a statement presupposes an understanding of the recategorisation of items within a string. The word "did" in "he danced his did" is recognised as a verb-form used as a noun, because its syntactic function is that of <u>object</u>, and that is one of the functions of nouns (and pronouns). It is also not surprising to find verbs in noun positions when it is realised that gerunds and infinitives (all formed from verbs) both have noun-like functions. Participles, which also are formed from verbs, function not only as part of verb phrases, but also as adjectives.

Linguistics presupposes this knowledge which is based on the reader's knowledge of the grammatical functions that the various parts of speech have. If this is so, there can be no reason to suppose that the reader does not use the same knowledge in the same way to 'solve' poetic lines so that he can say to what category an item belongs as a result of its function <u>in that sentence</u>. Recognition of a word's real category, together with what will be called its 'functional' category, results in a duality of two parts of speech, which is in itself a cohesive factor.

In his effort to account for the assignment of a structural descrip-
tion Cureton considers similar ideas, as he suggests that while some
categories appear inter-changeable, others do not. Thus, what he
(Cureton, 1980: 248) calls 'major' categories are never changed to
'minor', but the reverse does take place. ('Major' categories include
nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, while minor categories include preposi-
tions, conjunctions and articles.)

The idea of the duality of categories as a cohesive feature is partly
given in the following two conditions for the conversion of 'major'
categories to 'minor' categories:

1   the conversion is poetically effective, because the
     converted item will 'gain' the semantic feature associated
     with the 'major' category (ie: these conversions ADD
     meaning and, therefore as [sic] significant as meaning-
     structure devices); and

2   because the meaning associated with the 'major' category is
     fairly well-defined, the reader can provide the converted
     item with a fairly determinate meaning (ie: the converted
     item is not usually intolerably ambiguous)

(Cureton, 1980: 248)

These two conditions also explain the 'failure' of 'major' to 'minor'
category conversion because 'minor' categories do not have well-defined
semantic features. What Cureton does not deal with is the inter-
changeability of items from one 'major' category to another. In such
cases, there is even more semantic gain because both items will contribute
their semantic load. Thus the inter-change between 'major' category items
should be more cohesive than that from a 'minor' category to a 'major',
where the 'minor' category item brings little semantic load to the union.
The 'sense' the reader makes out of such category changes is dependent on
meaning because meaning is the aim of all discourse.

Cureton (1980: 249) notes that "Affixed forms" (plural markers, verb
agreement markers, tense and aspect markers, derivational affixes, and
case-and-agreement markers) may also undergo conversion, but that Cummings
never seems to have used these.

It would seem that a poet has to retain some normal categories if he
wishes to remain intelligible. The reader must have cues to the function
of the deviance. If there are no cues from 'normal grammar', then he
would not be able to decide on the function of the deviance, nor would he
be able to categorise it in terms of its function. He would then lose
the cohesive semantic advantages and end with incoherence. Thus for
Cummings, "Affixed forms" remain inviolate. This might of course not be
true for other poets, who could deviate in this way and retain some other
forms. "There seems to be a subtle trade-off in this situation. Having
sacrificed word-order restrictions, cummings must preserve something else
to compensate for his sacrifice or risk being unintelligible" (Cureton,
1980: 249-250). Thus, in Cummings's poetry anyway, one accepts that
he/she is subject and him/her oject and that verb agreement markers are
what they appear to be and not deviant, so that those forms which function
normally are available to the reader in his interpretation and in his
attempt at interpretation.

One cannot argue then with the view that one assigns normal word-order
pattern to a string on the initial reading. If, however, the line
appears to be structurally meaningless, the grammatical functions of the
items in the string must be examined. This is not to deny that one would

reject, for example, a noun used as preposition in Cummings's poetry, but just that Cureton's strategies (1980: 253) are the second step in the process not the first. The first is the ordering of a structural description on the basis of the grammatical functions of the items. It is then that the actual categories and their semantic values and content are examined. Thus in "... he danced his did" NP + V + NP is assigned to the string on the basis of the function of each of the items and, having labelled "did" as a noun because it is an object and because it is qualified by a possessive adjective, the reader knows that he must find its meaning in terms of its nounness.   Because he knows that "did" is a past tense verb form, he adds that meaning to it. Thus he might arrive at the interpretation of 'past deeds', for example. Then, as Reinhart shows, the reader looks for patterns which might be repeated in the rest of the poem. These might be semantic or syntactic or both. The point is that cohesion is the result of many intersections on all three language levels and that each poem must be seen as a 'language world' of its own, based on the rules of the language in which it is created. Structuring is a tool for reaching the meaning of the poem as a whole.

Semantic links always exist in a poem because, as Cureton (1980: 246) himself says, "... what is often overlooked is that virtually all artistic effects in literature are MEANING - effects ... a revealing analysis of the effects of deviant syntax must not only include a comparison, it must also include a MEANING - comparison". The reader brings the knowledge of his own life and his own and the poet's common human experiences to bear when he assigns meaning to strings. Trotter (1983: 111) puts it in

the following way: "... the scope of semantic reference (is altered), instructing us to retrieve the information required for an interpretation of the poem from our own experience as well as that of the poet ...". We take for granted that the poet _has_ something to say and is not merely 'teasing' his reader. Trotter puts it cogently:

> The reader must be given faith in the coherence and thus the essential sanity of a poetic statement which will not leave him to struggle with impenetrable mysteries, will not disturb his habitual use of language to order and make sense of experience.

<div align="right">(Trotter, 1980: 111)</div>

The reader must acknowledge the relevance of the deviations in the poem and that any interpretation must be substantiated by reference to the text on all three levels, particularly the syntactic and semantic. What the critical reader does is _explain_ how the aesthetic effects of a poem are created.

2.3 Riffaterre and SEMIOTICS OF POETRY

Reference will be mainly to Chapter One of Riffaterre's _Semiotics of Poetry_ (1978), because it is in this chapter that Riffaterre defines his terms and most clearly states his view, like that of Hopkins, that the reader has a crucial role to play in the 'epiphany' of poetry. Riffaterre (1978: 1) sees the literary phenomenon primarily as a "dialectic between text and reader".

Riffaterre states at the outset his premise that all readers, even the most unsophisticated, recognise a difference between the language of poetry

and that of ordinary use.   Yet, as he points out:

> ... while it is true that poetry often employs words
> excluded from common usage and has its own grammar not
> valid beyond the narrow compass of a given poem, it <u>may</u>
> <u>also happen that poetry uses the same words and the same</u>
> <u>phrases as everyday language</u>.

<div align="right">(Riffaterre, 1978: 1 (my emphasis))</div>

Hopkins's point was exactly this when he spoke of much of his verse being
"current language heightened" (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 158). But, whereas
one presumably wishes to be as explicit as possible in everyday communi-
cation, poetry relies on implicit suggestions - "... poetry expresses
concepts and things in indirection. To put it simply a poem say one thing
and means another" (Riffaterre, 1978: 1). If one takes for example the
words of a poem literally, and ignores the textual context, one will
perceive only nonsense. It is only in the context of the poem and because
of the complex relationships which exist between the constituents of the
poem that what is implicit will be revealed.

Hopkins's often-repeated injunction to compare things with other similar
things and then with themselves - a two-fold comparison - is reaffirmed
by Riffaterre's contention that, in the dialectic between text and reader,
there is reference to the world that the reader knows as reality and to
the world of the poem which will create a <u>unique poetic reality</u> and <u>become</u>
<u>significant</u> in terms of itself. Both Hopkins and later writers, such as
Trotter, state unequivocally that the reader is guided by the poet through
the grammar of the poem and that all things have something in common "... if
only we have a wide enough basis of comparison" (<u>Journal and Papers</u>: 104).

<div align="right">/62. ....</div>

"We are permitted a certain innovation, but only within the terms described by the poet, who tells us how to think even as he invites us to think again" (Trotter, 1980: 111). Both these writers seem to take it as read that an astute reader has literary competence of some kind on which to base his judgements and through which he perceives the poet's guidance. Riffaterre (1978: 5) states explicitly that the reader's judgement will be grounded on his linguistic competence which "will enable him to perceive the ungrammaticalities; but he is not free to bypass them, for it is precisely this perception over which the text's control is absolute." Riffaterre is far more dogmatic than either Trotter or Hopkins when it comes to the control the poet has over the reader's interpretation of a poem.

Riffaterre (1978: 2) also contends that in one's consideration of the dialectic between text and reader one needs to decide firstly what is "perceived" in relation to the poem as a "special finite context". For Riffaterre (1978: 2) the question then arises whether the reader is then always obliged to see "what he sees, or if he retains a certain freedom ...".

Riffaterre goes on to define three ways in which poetry expresses itself implicity: by displacing, distorting, and creating. He calls this implicit expression "semantic indirection" and this discussion is similar to Hopkins's comments on the language of verse and, particularly, on the "figure of grammar" (Journal and Papers: 267).

> Indirection is produced by displacing, distorting or
> creating meaning. Displacing, when the sign shifts from
> one meaning to another, when "one word stands for" another,
> as happens with metaphor and metonomy. Distorting, when
> there is ambiguity, contradiction , or nonsense. Creating,

> when textual space serves as a principle of organization
> for making signs out of linguistic items that may not
> be meaningful otherwise (for instance, symmetry, rhyme,
> or semantic equivalences between positional homologues
> in a stanza).
>
> (Riffaterre 1978: 2)

Each of these three forms of semantic indirection threatens "the literary representation of reality, or mimesis". Riffaterre defines a basic characteristic of mimesis as its production of a "continually changing sequence" because representation is based on the referentiality of language. Thus the mimetic level (the first level, that of referential reality) lays bare all possible reference for a sign, in all their "variation and multiplicity". However, one realises that fundamental to the text is its unity. This unity is not realised until the semiotic level (the second level, that of reference in terms of the poem) is reached, because it is at this stage that the reader selects from the variations perceived on the mimetic level those references that pertain to the rest of the poem and which will ensure the poem's unity and thus its significance. Riffaterre (1972: 2) shows that this unity (both formal and semantic) "includes all the indices of indirection".

The reader perceives the meaning and associations between disparate items because the rest of the poem forces him to select some references over others. Thus Hopkins's "unlikeness" is a type of semantic indirection and his concatenation of coinages, his deletions and his recategorisations, are others. A reader who finds Hopkins 'difficult and inaccessible' has been unable to overlap his referential world sufficiently with that of Hopkins, and unable, therefore, to perceive the function of the semantic indirection, so that he is able to recognise Hopkins's choices and see

the connections Hopkins sees. Riffaterre (1978: 3) contends that "[f]rom
the standpoint of significance the text is one semantic unit. Any sign
within that text will, therefore, be relevant to its poetic quality, which
expresses or reflects a continuing modification of the mimesis."

The reader must, therefore, recognise that each item in the text is
functional and relevant to the unity of the poem. He must acknowledge
that any 'oddness' is intentional. Ungrammaticalities on the mimetic
level (by comparison to ordinary grammar) must be resolved in terms of
the semiotic level. In "he danced his did" (discussed above) one notices
several similar structures (all NP + V + NP) of which the object of NP's
are all deviant on the mimetic level, because they violate normal selection
restrictions for objects.

NP	V	NP
he	sang	his didn't
they	sowed	their isn't
she	laughed	his joy
they	said	their nevers

When one sees such a paradigm (Hopkins's "parallels") one recognises the
inherent unity, and thus the significance, of the poem. Riffaterre
contends that the mimetic level ungrammaticalities are integrated into the
semiotic level system:

> As the reader perceives what they have in common, as he
> becomes aware that this common trait forms them into a
> paradigm, and that this paradigm alters the meaning of
> the poem, the new function of the ungrammaticalities
> changes their nature, and now they signify as components
> of a different network of relationships.

(Riffaterre, 1978: 4)

We are reminded of Hopkins's contention that beauty exists in terms of differences superimposed on sameness and that "... there is a relation between the parts of a thing to each other and again of the parts to the whole, which must be duly kept" (Journal and Papers: 97). Hopkins maintained that it was the reader's 'duty' to look deeply enough into things so that he found their meaning. He, like Riffaterre, recognised that the very peculiarities a reader perceives are themselves cues to their own resolution, because they are part of a larger entity, the poem, against other structures of which they can be compared (Journal and Papers: 195).

According to Riffaterre (1978: 5), the comparison of the poem with itself is the stage of retrospective reading - "... the reader remembers what he has just read and modifies his understanding in the light of what he is now decoding". The reader recognises that the previously perceived ungrammaticalities form a paradigm or set of parallels which are all variations of one structure "... and this sustained relation to one structure constitutes the significance" (Riffaterre, 1978: 5).

Trotter (1980), Reinhart (1978) and Jakobson (1968) all concur with Riffaterre's belief (1978: 6) that the ungrammaticalities (with ordinary grammar as the background) "... will thrust themselves forward as stumbling blocks, to be understood on the second level...". Reinhart (1978: 103) goes so far as to say that one needs to "find the inner rules of the nonsense itself, [then] it makes perfect sense." In other words, by virtue of the reader's recognition of the stumbling block, he is led by the poet to find its significance and its function in terms of the grammar of the poem. By doing this, the reader reaches the significance of the

entire poem. Riffaterre (1979: 11) contends that "A consequence of the system's latent existence is that every signifying feature of the poem must be relatable to that system."

While Culler criticises Riffaterre (1978: 1) for departing from his avowed intention of examining "the dialectic between text and reader" by giving close critical appreciations of so-called problem poems, he believes that:

> Riffaterre has indeed done much to show the crucial role of intertextuality and descriptive systems; most interpretation does perhaps rely more on the identification of codes and discursive associations than on a scanning of the actual features of objects referred to (it is cultural codes alone that tell us that if a woman is compared with a swan, she is not being given a deformed neck or feathers). But, though all interpretations rely on these intertextual, cultural codes, there is a difference between interpretive moves that use these codes to reestablish [sic] a reference at a second level ... and interpretive moves that treat the figure as primarily a reference or allusion to the code itself ... It is only the second interpretive move that truly exemplifies Riffaterrean semiosis, and what is involved here is a further convention, generally applied at a later stage and by a more restricted group of readers, that an important meaning of figures is what they tell us about figurative language.
>
> (Culler, 1981: 95-96)

This more restricted group will be that group of readers which has developed a literary (interpretive) competence on the basis of their experience with literature. Such a restricted group has a competence which the ordinary reader does not have. Thus it is this restricted group of readers who would be persuaded by the poet's code to move to the semiotic level. Culler is thus suggesting that the mimetic reading comprises two levels: that of the recognition of 'ungrammaticalities', and that of second-order referential recognition. Riffaterre's semiotic

level is Culler's second interpretive move (1981: 96), which explains
what the "figures ... tell us about figurative language". This is the
move which explains the functions of the structures in the poem and
the way in which such structures unify the poem.

Not every reader is able to 'see' that a poem overtly about nature might
be, on a deeper level, a discussion of the transience of life. Such a
reader would not then pass from the mimetic to the semiotic level, no
matter how well the poet 'guides' him towards the "meaning of the poem".
Only as his experience of poetry develops his interpretive (literary)
competence will such a reader be inclined to an attempt at a deeper level
of interpretation.

Riffaterre is a semioticist and he makes no reference to the role of
syntactic structure in interpretation. However, to separate the semantic
and syntactic levels in a discussion of the "dialectic between text and
reader" is to exclude a fundamental part of language. While one might
agree that most poetic effects are meaning effects, entrée to that meaning,
particularly obscure meaning, is through syntax.

Riffaterre's discussion of descriptive systems and 'poetic' conventions is
enlightening, and concurs with the position taken in this thesis that a
reader reads a poem with reference to social, linguistic, theological,
mythical and literary conventions (among others) of which he is aware.
Such a list of conventions is endless, but is incorporated into the reader's
experience of life. As he becomes more and more aware of such
conventions they become more and more useful to him: he is developing a
literary competence.

Hopkins, like Riffaterre, was mainly concerned with the unity of the text. Comparisons are to be made with life's experiences so that we recognise the conventions; comparison of the text with ordinary grammar is accepted to be on the basis of linguistic competence; semantic associations are made in terms of the semantic field of the poem and syntactic occurrences are evaluated in terms of the grammatical function of the grammatical structures. One also needs to note that through the contiguity of items, those connotations and associations which are irrelevant to the unity of the poem will be non-functional and thus will be ignored or discarded by the reader.

2.4 Conclusion

Hopkins's poetic writing concentrated on:

- the difference between the language of prose and the language of verse;
- the view of the language of verse as being "current language heightened";
- parallelism as a basic measure of verse:
- the importance of the unity of the text; and
- comparison as the basis of verse.

Most writers on poetics and most critics of verse concede a fundamental difference between the language of prose and the language of verse. Few writers agree, however, on what the actual difference is. Hopkins's view was that, while the language of verse is "current language heightened", this could not be true of prose, in which the 'foibles' of spoken current language would be out of place. Jakobson (like Hopkins)

notes a difference in the language of verse which he sees as a stricter
structure presented through various types of parallelism which would be
'strange' and stilted in prose. His claim is that these parallel structures,
while they do occur in prose, are not the dominant feature of prose.
Reinhart would concur with both Hopkins's and Jakobson's views and
indeed with Hopkins's claim that comparison, both within a text and
with the use of language and its conventions outside of the text, is
crucial to an understanding of that text. This view is dependent on the
unity of text. These points are all reflected in Riffaterre's theory
and in Culler's adaptation of it.

Levin, among others, was more concerned (in his earlier writings) about
how the language of verse deviated from normal grammar, rather than
the ways in which these two types of language are structurally similar.
Nor does he consider the similarity of the various forms of written
language (prose and verse) to various forms of spoken language, many of
which relfect the very 'deviations' he tries to explain and for which he
tries to formulate rules. He tries to build a rigidity into the grammar
of verse which is at odds with the conception of verse as 'poesis' and
with the recognition of text as a unified independent whole. Yet he
does say that perhaps each poem has its own kind of grammar. This is,
of course, the view of Hopkins, Jakobson, Reinhart, Trotter, Culler and
Riffaterre among many others. He also makes little attempt to explain
the function of the so-called 'deviances', so that little of his work is
more than a grammatical description of (what appear to him) 'oddities'.
He is more concerned with a grammar of competence than with a grammar of
performance.

Hopkins's major concern was with comparison (including forms of metaphor) and he considered that the reader had actively to compare all the facets of verse: conventions with conventions; structures with structures; words with words, images with images. A 'total' experience of the reading of verse can be had only if the reader brings to the verse his language competence; his knowledge of the world, of register, of conventions (poetic and social); and the willingness to use the cues given him by the poet.

CHAPTER THREE

Lexical and Phonetic Dominance in Some 'Welsh' Sonnets

3.1 Introduction

Hopkins had a deep love of things Welsh, and this love, and his joy
in his love, is clearly expressed in the following selection of sonnets,
all written in 1877:

No 31	God's Grandeur
No 32	The Starlight Night
No 33	Spring
No 34	The Windhover: To Christ our Lord
No 37	Pied Beauty

(All references are to Gardner and MacKenzie, 1980 edition.)

Hopkins was ahead of his time in his recognition of the similarity
between the language of verse and that of "current language". For
Hopkins the language of verse was "heightened" current language. He
exploited all the levels of spoken language while most of his contem-
poraries were bound by the prevailing conventions governing poetic
writing. Like Dylan Thomas, Cummings and Eliot after him, Hopkins broke
the bounds of what was, and was not, supposedly allowable in verse. This
is not to say he was undisciplined in his approach: on the contrary, he
adhered strictly, for example, to the conventions governing the sonnet
form. His discipline reveals itself in the balances of phonetic
patterns, semantic pairs and sentence structures evident throughout
these sonnets.

In the 'Welsh' sonnets, the use of sound patterns is striking. These sonnets are reminiscent of those Psalms which are 'hymns of praise'. Several of the images in these sonnets are images from the Psalms. Like the Psalms, the sonnets have a musical quality which is achieved through alliteration, assonance and "vowelling-off" - through the "lettering of syllables". These devices (together with several others) all belong to the "figure of spoken sound" which predominates in these sonnets. A first superficial reading of these sonnets results in an awareness of the musicality and gist of the poems. When one moves on to what Culler calls the second-order referential level, one recognises the codes which the poet is using: the semantic associations of the words that have been cued to the reader through phonetic devices or through positional innovations. Only a deeper examination of the patterns which are inter-woven in the poem will allow the reader (through Culler's second interpretive level - Riffaterre's semiotic level) to reach the full significance and import of the poems. Many of Hopkins's earlier sonnets are considered to be more euphonious than thought-provoking, but an examination of the sonnets shows that, while each of the sonnets discussed below appeals immediately to the aural sense, there is a great deal of intellectual appeal to be found underlying the melodiousness.

Each sonnet describes in the octave an aspect of creation. In the sestet, the aspect is considered an emanation of Christ. Thus, in "The Starlight Night" the glories of the lights of the night are extended to Christ, the light of light. In "Spring" the beauties of the rebirth of nature in Spring are extended to Christ as the symbol of eternal Christian rebirth. In the "Windhover" the power, majesty and awesome nature of

the falcon are extended to Christ in his awesome beauty and power of life over death. The curtal sonnet "Pied Beauty" sets up the paradox of the creation of changing things by the unchanging Creator.

The magnificence of these sonnets is not, therefore, only the result of phonetic exploitation, but also the result of carefully selected and structured images. It is thus crucial also to consider the way in which Hopkins has exploited and heightened the semantic and, to a lesser degree, the syntactic levels of spoken language in the creation of the language of these sonnets. The "figure of spoken sound" must be considered together with the "figure of grammar".

Each of the sonnets is discussed separately, as the intention is not to compare them but to describe the structures which underlie their effectiveness and to show what effect the various structures have. Some sonnets show more phonetic exploitation than others and there seems to be a shift from the mainly lexical and syntactic dominance found in "God's Grandeur" to phonetic dominance in poems like "Spring" and "The Windhover". However, closer examination reveals the interweaving of the phonetic and semantic levels, so that it is extremely difficult to separate the levels and show which level is responsible for which effect. The use of compounding, deletions, enforced word-ambiguity, parallels of sound, meaning and form all add to the cohesive, highly compressed nature of the sonnets. Hopkins can be said to have (as Coppay (1977: 36) puts it) "got good mileage out of the words [he] has used". Perhaps even more important to Hopkins's verse than word-choice, is the way in which Hopkins has chosen to structure his strings so that there is a compression of ideas and imagery.

3.2 Sound, Lexis and Multiple Ambiguity: the 'World of Words'

3.2.1 No. 31: "God's Grandeur"

31

God's Grandeur

THE world is charged with the grandeur of God.
  It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
  It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
  And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
  And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
  There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
  Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
  World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings

The poem begins with a simple sentence which is a positive declarative statement of the world's being "charged", 'loaded', hence powered, by the grandeur and greatness of God. The lexical item "charged" is immediately enhanced and expanded upon by the complex sentence which follows the first sentence. Certain items in this sentence form a lexical set of brightness and power and suggest electrical charge:

Line 2:	flame	shining	foil	(brightness)
Line 3:	gathers	greatness		
Line 4:	crushed			(power)

Both the phrases "flame <u>out</u>" and "<u>shook</u> foil" suggest an intermittent, but vibrant light, which penetrates darkness. The images are intensified by the introduction of the "ooze", the steady flow, "of oil". Olive oil,

on being pressed, "oozes" from the solid fruit and becomes a shining
golden flow. (Compare Hopkins's own explanation on page 264 of the
Notes, Gardner and MacKenzie, 1980.) Even in our blackness the spark
of God lies, a potential brightness, ready to shine through. God, if
he wills it, can and does overwhelm the darkness with which we have
covered his creation.

The description of the power, majesty and light of God's grandeur of the
first three-and-a-half lines is interrupted by the petulant (perhaps
bemused) question: "Why do men then now not reck his rod?" (line 4).
The question coming immediately after the triumphant declaration brings
home to the sensitive reader that the poem is probably not purely one of
description and praise. The words "reck his rod" suggest that inherent
in the life-giving power of God is the dominion of God. Hopkins is
saying that if all we are, and all our world is, result from God's grandeur
then we should obey him. The reader, if he is astute, knows and recognises
the biblical connotations of "reck" (from to reckon) as acknowledge, and
those of "rod" as sceptre, staff, rood. Yet, as the next quatrain shows,
man, because of his free will, has a choice and his choice has been,
unconsciously through apathy perhaps, to besmirch God's grandeur.

All the lexical items which Hopkins uses in the second quatrain suggest
the contamination and spoiling of the earth by man. The items all reinforce
one another because they are placed in such close proximity.

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Line 6:  seared    bleared   smeared
Line 7:  wears     smudge    smell    soil
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Each of these words suggests the blurring and spoiling of what was made
in light and brightness. The assonance of -ear- and the use of the past

tense accentuates the feeling of despoliation. The ambiguous function of "soil" is striking. The ambiguity arises from the word's position at the end of line 7 and from the enjambment - even the soil we have soiled, for it is bare and barren (line 8). The word "smell" is also used ambiguously. Reference is both to the faculty of smell and to "stench" (which, the poet implies, man has given to the world). The use of the word "wears" is also ambiguous because it suggests both 'clothed' (and thus like "shod" a 'protection' against nature) and to 'wear away'. The existence of three functionally ambiguous words in one line, together with the concatenation of the lexical items builds up to the climax of the octave and the image of 'lost man'. By choosing to exploit the multiple senses of the words, Hopkins is able to compress into three lines the widest possible range of ideas and to give the words the strongest possible emphasis. The semantic vagueness of the words chosen is not the only instrument of compression in these lines. Hopkins's way of structuring these words into meaningful series is another crucial instrument of compression.

The near-repetitions of words and structures in line 6 ("all is seared with trade; bleared with toil") are reminiscent of the speech of most speakers when they are attempting to express their feelings or ideas accurately. Near-repetitions of structures and words are evidence of the speaker's 'thinking out aloud' - trying to find the most apposite word to express his meaning. (Near-repetitions may also, like repetitions, be used for emphasis.)

Consider line 6:
when the structure of this line is examined it becomes evident that while the line would be unusual in written discourse, it is normal as spoken

discourse. It is also evident that the line is derived from its fuller (underlying) form by the normal transformational rules of English. (As these rules form part of the competence of both the poet and the reader, the poet's meaning should be accessible to the reader.) Line 6 is structured as two semantically parallel half lines:

"(And) all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil"

The second half-line is a reduced compound sentence. (The deleted phrases are bracketed.)

"... [all is] bleared [with toil and all is] smeared with toil."

Hopkins has not broken or distorted the grammar of English because the transformational rules which reduce such sentences to strings of sentence fragments are all part of the normal grammar of English. These rules also account for prose and formal speech. The difference between colloquialism and Hopkins's language, and formal speech and prose lies not in the rules of language, but in the way these rules are used. Colloquial language, like Hopkins's language, reveals greater reduction and a closer concentration of reductions than formal speech or prose. Because writing anticipates a spatial and temporal lapse between reader and writer, far less syntactic reduction is possible than between speaker and hearer in a conversation in which there is the possibility of immediate feed-back. In formal speech (public addresses, lectures for example) although speaker and hearer are actually 'together' spatially and temporally this actuality of the discourse situation is artifically suspended so that there is no immediate feed-back. Hopkins transfers the numerous devices of spoken discourse (ellipses, fragments, interruptions for example) to his verse and heightens them by concentrating them within the confined space and duration of the poem. The structure of line 6 allows Hopkins's feeling of disgust towards man

and his destructiveness to be expressed with a sense of immediacy and
urgency.

The images of despoliation in the second quatrain are in sharp contrast
to the lexical sets of the first quatrain which suggest piercing,
penetrating light, and by extension imply well-defined crystal images.
The light and the definition of God's work described in the first quatrain
is contrasted with the gloomy, opaque work of man in the second. The
remorselessness of man is revealed through the repetition of the words
"have trod". The word "trod" both phonetically and semantically suggests
heavy-footedness, lack of purpose and futility. Used in conjunction with
"Generations", "trod" forces a feeling of the inevitability of man's blind
destructiveness on the reader, who perceives generations stretching back
into time. There is a sharp contrast between "bare" (the earth) and "shod"
(the foot) which further highlights the shift from nature to culture. The
poet reminds us through the use of the word "now" that it was not always so:
once the soil was fertile and the foot could feel through its nakedness
God's grandeur.

Having sharply contrasted the work of God and man, Hopkins brings hope to
mankind. The opening words of the sestet are sure and encouraging, "And
for all this, nature is never spent". The darkness of the second quatrain
is alleviated through the suggestion that even though all this destruction
exists and man is lost - "for all this", man can never use up ("spend")
nature nor can nature ever be finally exhausted ("spent"). The words "all"
and "never" lie parallel to one another so that "this", man's work, is
parallel to "nature", God's work, with the implication that not all the
generations of man can ever succeed through mankind's blind will in
destroying nature and God's grandeur.

The answer to the assurance of line 9 comes through the declarative statement of line 10 which uses ambiguously both the locative and the existential "there". Thus the 'place' - "deep down things" gives assurance and an answer to the cry of man "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" (Psalm 42: 5), and to the existence of God because he "lives". The word "lives" is itself ambiguous, because, in Christian terms, Christ offers eternal life. Thus, in conjunction with "dearest freshness", "lives" suggests that Christ is the revitalising factor and not only for man, but also for nature which can thus never be "spent". The word "dearest" unites later with the words of the last line which suggest protection, nurture and love: "broods ... warm breast ... bright wings". We are protected and folded in the love of God and of the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom Christ sent after him as the "Comforter" (John 14: 16). Hopkins enforces these ideas by the use of the words "Holy Ghost" so that we are left in no doubt about where our hope lies and why God's grandeur is indestructible and ever-vital.

Because the preposition [in] of "deep down [in] things" (line 10) has been deleted the sense of adverbial place modification of "things" has been removed. The "things" are now synonymous with "deep down" - the things exist only in their being, and in all things/beings, there is the Holy Ghost, the "dearest freshness", the Comforter. (Compare John 14: 17 - "because he shall abide with you, and shall be in you" (my emphasis).)

Line 9, as noted, is a line of assurance, structured so that the declaration of the first half of the line is supported and explained by the second half. Lines 11 and 12 follow a similar pattern, but instead of one line broken into two, there are two parallel lines:

> And though the last lights off the black West went
> Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs-

The reader perceives the parallel between the "and for all this ..." of
line 9 and the "and though ..." of line 11, so that he anticipates the
promise of line 12 - morning and light. The hope of the morning is
enhanced by the use of the present tense of 'spring' (and by the
suggestion of a vital leap) and retrospectively by the past tense of
'go' ("went") and by the use of "off". Here, there is no suggestion
of active power but of a dying away. The dark has gone, the light is
ever present. The word "springs" will be ambiguous to the astute reader,
because of its association with the season of Spring, the awakening of
the earth after the dark night of winter. The reader's understanding
of the connotations of the word spring will arise from his knowledge of
poetry and literature and of the world.

Thus the reader brings to the poem his knowledge of the world, his
experience of the symbols and signs of the world and his ability (and
his desire) to reach out to the mind of the poet whose work he is
reading.

3.2.2 <u>No 32</u>: "The Starlight Night"

<div align="center">

3 2

The Starlight Night

</div>

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
  O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!
  The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!
Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elves'-eyes!
The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!
  Wind-beat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!
  Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare!—
Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.

Buy then! bid then!—What?—Prayer, patience, alms, vows.
Look, look: a May-mess, like on orchard boughs!
  Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow sallows!
These are indeed the barn; withindoors house
The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the spouse
  Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows.

This sonnet, unlike the other four, revolves round the use of the

imperative. Hopkins <u>demands</u> that we "Look!". (Compare Milroy, 1977: 196.)

The words "Look at" are understood at the beginning of each of lines 3

to 7 and at the caesuras of lines 3, 4 and line 6, and the word

"look" recurs of course in the sestet. The deletion of the words in

the octave (and the repetition of "look" in the second and third lines

of the sestet) adds to the sense of excitement and exhiliration evident

in the poem, because only those words that direct one's attention to that

which is to be seen, occur in the poem. The reader recognises the 'deviance'

of the deletions as similar to those of spoken discourse and is easily able

to perceive their meaning and their tone. Whereas the tone is persuasively

descriptive in "God's Grandeur", the tone of "The Starlight Night" is

excitedly imperative. In the octave there is a build-up of the nature

imagery which culminates in the exclamation "Ah well!", just as one might

in a moment of exalted feeling in spoken discourse interject in the same way. One easily perceives Hopkins's enthralment and exhiliration in the beauty around him as an expression of God. Hopkins virtually demands we share his experience so that we too may have the joy of Christ.

As in several of the other 'Welsh' sonnets, light images of brilliance and whiteness predominate. In the octave:

Line 1:	stars		
Line 2:	fire-folk		
Line 3:	bright		
Line 4:	diamond	-eyes	
Line 5:	gold	quickgold	
Line 6:	whitebeam	abeles	flare
Line 7:	flake-		

In the first three lines, there is progression from the stars personified in their individual beauty ("the fire-folk sitting"),to a recognition of the patterning and grouping of the clusters of stars, which look like the lights of villages ("boroughs") and mighty cities ("circle-citadels") on the dark earth. By personifying the stars and linking them to the worlds and abodes of men, Hopkins makes the stars and their canopy (the heavens) far less remote. They become part of our human world, one which we can appreciate. The word "folk" has a simple homely connotation which is expanded upon by the use of the word "elves". The simple folk (especially the Celtic people) believe in the 'little folk' and the word 'folk' itself means 'simple ordinary people of the countryside'. The magical quality of the octave is sustained by the contrasting of the "diamonds" (for which the 'little people' delve) and the "elves'-eyes",with the "dim woods". The elves' eyes are as bright as the bright stars in the dark skies. The pattern of light on dark is reinforced in line 5 in which "gold" - "quickgold" (analogous to quick-silver) lies on the lawns; perhaps the sparkle of dew

in the night light. Not only the gleam of gold is suggested by "quickgold"
but also, because of the amiguity of "quick", precious life (as
opposed to death) and liveliness, brilliance and sharpness. In the
sestet we are made to see Christ as the light in the dark of mortality.

In the first quatrain the sky is brought 'down to earth' through the shift
from "fire-folk" to "elves"; something we associate with the earth. The
second quatrain deals specifically with those things that are bright on
the earth:

> Line 5: gold   quickgold
> Line 6: whitebeam   abeles (poplars)
> Line 7: flake-doves

As always, Hopkins exploits all the connotations of the words he has so
carefully chosen. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary (1950) notes that the word
"white" pertains to 'shades of yellow' as well as to a brilliant whiteness.
The colour "yellow" is introduced in the sestet and the way is thus implicitly
prepared in the octave for its introduction in the sestet. Thus silver,
white, and yellow (of gold), each reinforce the general feeling of brightness
and light. The trees, the white-beams and the poplar ("abele"), are both
silvery white. Poplar trees have leaves with white undersides, which,
because of the way in which the leaf blade joins the leaf stalk, 'dance'
and 'sparkle' in the wind. (White-beams are small trees which have large
leaves which have silky, hairy, bearded undersides.) Hopkins, because of
his interest in nature, had certainly noticed the gleam of the white-bearded
white-beam and the sparkle ("flare" - a dazzling unsteady light), of the
dancing 'airy' poplar leaves. Just as "quick" (though rarely) suggests
'sharp piercing light or air' (OED), so "white" suggests a brightness and
a purity. In conjunction, these connotations culminate in the "Christ",
the 'Prince of light and life', the 'Immaculate', of the sestet.

The word "flake" in "flake-doves" not only retains the suggestion of whiteness and brightness (reminiscent of the recurring biblical image of the white dove) but also carries the following meanings: 'a fleecy streak, a flock (as of snow)', 'a portion of ignited matter thrown off by the burning of incandescent body', 'a flash (ME); and 'a (wattled) hurdle, sometimes used as a temporary gate' (ME) (OED).

The first meaning is emphasised not only by the [f] of the word "floating" alliterating with the [f] of "flake" but also because their typographical proximity and the conventional association of (snow-) flakes 'floating'. The surge of the doves in fear, the ruffling of their feathers, reminds the reader of eddies and flurries of snowflakes in a sudden gust of wind. Being white, the doves like the snow, 'flash' with light. Again the image of light is present - ever-present to culminate in Christ, the light in a dark world.

Hopkins's interest in etymology, and in husbandry and its accoutrements surely led to his knowing that a "flake" was a hurdle sometimes used as a gate. Gardner and MacKenzie (1980) recognise the association of "paling" (line 12) with 'hurdle' (Notes: 264), but have not seen the connection with 'flake' which introduces in the octave the idea of a barrier and a fence. The starry heavens separate us from Christ's heaven just as we are separated in mortal life from immortal life by death which is the hurdle we must cross to reach eternity. The images of the farm and of farming which extend from the beginning of line 7 to the end of the poem ensure a progression in the content of the poem from the earthly (physical) to the heavenly (spiritual). Christ is the way to the security of "withindoors" (heaven, which in the Christian tradition is the abode of Christ) in the same way that the stars are the 'gateway' to the physical heaven.

The phrase "withindoors house" also suggests the Catholic practice of storing wafers consecrated at a mass (used for communion administered to the sick) in the ambry of a chapel. As the consecrated wafers are the body of Christ, the storing of them is synonymous with the storing and protection of treasure, the "shocks", the harvest of Christ for the Christian.

Associated with "farmyard" is the word "purchase", meaning not only to buy but also 'a quest', 'an endeavour', 'a striving for', 'shifting for one-self' (ME) and, figuratively, 'acquiring at the cost of the immaterial, like suffering, sacrifice, or effort'. Thus Hopkins suggests not only the normal physical labour of the farm, but also the mental and spiritual labour required in achievement of any kind. Hopkins answers his question in the sestet "What to purchase ?", with the words "prayers, patience, alms and vows" (line 9) - the spiritual costs of the purchase of the 'light of Christ'. Just as the material light of the stars is paralleled by the immaterial light of Christ, so the "purchase" (and "prize") of the fruitful farm (earthly life) is paralleled by the "purchase" of the fruitful eternal heavenly life - Christ and eternal life as the 'greater prize' in comparison with the material body and earthly death. The word "prize" is like "purchase", associated with 'something worth striving for'; 'something won by or inspiring effort'. Here again 'effort' is the operative word. As Hopkins reveals in the first line of the sestet, buying and bidding in the sense of 'acquiring by material effort' is of no use. Only buying (purchasing in the 'striven for' sense) and bidding (entreating as in 'Bidding prayers') will gain for the supplicant, Heaven.

The interjection "Ah well!" (line 8) breaks into the string of images and makes the reader pause and consider and then perceive that what seems at

first glance and on a first reading to be merely a description of the
starlight night is a sustained metaphor for Christ, the light for
Christians. In Christian terms, Christ is a purchaser; the purchaser of
man's redemption through crucifixion. The gift of eternal life and light
is given through death. Life itself is seen as a barrier which keeps us
from death in Christ and thus from life with Christ.

The farmyard imagery is sustained through the use of the following words,
which are all associated in meaning and are in close structural proximity
to each other in the lines of verse:

Line 10:	May-mess	"May-mess" describes the blossoms of the fruit trees in spring. May is the month of Mary ("his mother"). 'mess' means jumbled medley; unbroken expanses of colour, light and dark. (These are the contrasts which we noticed in the octave.)
	orchard	of fruit trees
Line 11:	meal(ed)	a grain which has been crushed to a fine powder; thus, by extension a 'fine dusting of powder', like pollen - thus picked up in the word "yellow". From OE moel, a measure, (archaic), a repast, mark, sign, measure, fixed time (with derived form use -ed becomes verb, hence 'marked with').
Line 12:	barn	as a store-house, (from the root bere, a barley store); as the verb 'to garner'; in the now obsolete sense of 'to bear a child' in particular pertaining to the relationship of the mother to her creation and thus to the relationship holding between God and his creation and his Church (from bairn to bear - perhaps a deliberate reminder using the similar sound occurrence).
	house	as a noun and as the verb "to house".
Line 13:	shocks	a definite number of sheaves; (perhaps symbolic of the gathering by man of what he has sown, both good and evil. Those who have sown well and practised "prayers, patience, alms, vows", will have in themselves a good harvest.) to excite, to stimulate with an electrical charge.
	paling	fencing, a protection for something that is precious.

The whiteness and brightness (of the white-beam and poplar) described
in the octave is reintroduced in the sestet in the description of the
white blossom of the hawthorn. The image of purity is thus carried
through from the "flake-doves" in the octave to "May-mess" in the sestet.
The phrase "March-blooms" is presumably a dialectical reference to smallage
(wild celery/water parsley), which bears umbels of soft yellow flower heads
which are compared in the poem to the yellow catkins of the willow ("sallows").
Thus the colours in the poem are white (including silver) and yellow; and
yellow is itself recognised as a gradation of white. Hopkins implies that
man needs to garner and to "house" this purity within himself for this
purity is the harvest of "Prayer, patience, alms, vows".

It was noted earlier that Hopkins sets up a parallel between the physical
and the spiritual in the poem. The concluding sentence of the poem captures
succinctly this parallel. The "piece-bright paling", literally the star-
light sky, shuts Christ and the 'Company of heaven' ("hallows") from view.
The phrase "piece-bright" vividly evokes the night sky 'sprinkled' with
light, because one sense of the word "piece" is 'a distinct portion of
which a thing is composed'(OED). This definition applies literally to the
night sky, because all that is distinct in the night sky is the light of
the individual stars. By linking the word "spouse" with the word "Christ",
Hopkins extends the usual meaning of the word "spouse" to include the
Christian conception of Christ as the spouse - the bridegroom of the Church,
who is the bride. This extension of the meaning of "spouse" is thus linked
with the meaning of "barn" - 'to bear a child'. (Compare the dictionary
definitions of barn p 86.) Much of the effectiveness of the poem is
due to its semantic cohesion. The effectiveness of the poem is further
enhanced by Hopkins's use of compounding.(Compare Milroy, 1977 : 178
forward.) Compounding adds to the compactness of the images and the

compression of the ideas in the poem because each noun (or verb or adjective) is multi-faceted. Each member of the compound adds its meaning to the other member and both to the whole. Generally the compounded parts alliterate or echo consonantally and/or vocalically (which term will be discussed as vowelling-off in 3.2.2) with one another: "circle-citadels", "Wind-beat", Mealed-with-yellow", "piece-bright", "quickgold". Few of these sounds alliterate or consonate in terms of the usual definitions of the terms. However, the echoes exist either because sounds of the same natural class occur in the same compound, or consonants in the same words agree in voicing or place or manner of articulation. For example: the plosives [d] and [t] in "Wind-beat" and the [p] [b] [t] in "piece-bright": the [p] and [t] agree in voicing, but not in place of articulation and the [p] and [b] agree in place of articulation, but not in voicing. The sound [s], (c), in piece agrees in place of articulation with the [t] , but not in the manner of articulation as [s] is a fricative (and a sibilant) and not a plosive. Just as one notices an interweaving of the senses of the words, one notices also the cohesion created by the phonetic similarity of the words themselves. All such compounding and phonetic echoing 'forces' "likeness" where one would normally not expect it. Milroy explains the 'enforcing of likeness' between words in the following way:

> The interpretation of Hopkins's coinings or special uses of
> words depends, therefore, on relationships contracted by the
> words in two different dimensions of language: on the one
> hand, the underlying systems to which the words are made to
> belong, and on the other, the order in which Hopkins actually
> employs them - their contexts in the poems.
>
> (Milroy, 1977: 161 (my emphasis))

Lines 9 and 10 are a couplet. This position is an unusual one in which to find a couplet: Hopkins's usual sonnet form is Petrarchan which has a medial couplet in both quatrains of the octave. Most of Hopkins's

sestets have alternating rhyme. In this sonnet the position of the couplet means that the last four lines of the poem form a quatrain and one would expect there to be unity of idea or theme. However, the rhyme is complicated through the visual rhyme of "sall<u>ows</u>" and "v<u>ows</u>". The structure of the sestet is made even more ambiguous because of the syntax which would suggest two tercets. Line 9 is made up of two imperatives: "Buy then! bid then!", the WH question word "What?"; and the reply (which has the NP + V deleted): "Prayer, patience, alms, vows". Lines 10 and 11 introduced by the imperative "Look!" are both comparative declarative sentences. Lines 12, 13 and 14 overlap syntactically so that there is structural ambiguity and complexity which itself suggests the inseparability of nature, God and man.

The penultimate sentence of the sonnet deals specifically with the nature of the harvest ("barn") which is the reward of "Prayer, patience, alms, vows". The compound "withindoors" suggests a secure place, reminiscent of the "many mansions" of the Bible. Hopkins interweaves at least three senses of the word "shocks": to bundle harvested grain; to excite; and to receive an electrical shock or charge (the sense in which 'charge' is used in 'God's Grandeur'). Hopkins's choice of the multiple-sensed word "shocks" allows him to draw together in one word the nature and Christian themes. Nature and Christ are both seen as gifts from God which should be appreciated because they are treasured. On the one hand "Prayer, patience, alms, vows" must be stored and on the other the gifts of nature because they are an expression of God's love. The Christian theme is further linked to the nature theme through the visual rhyme of "vows" and "sallows", which in turn links with the Christian theme inherent in "hallows".

The word "boughs" (line 10) rhymes aurally with the verb form of "house" (line 12) and visually with the word "spouse" (line 23) which rhymes aurally with the noun form of "house". The word class ambiguity of "house" is reinforced not only through the enjambment but also through the rhyme in a subtle weave of strophes. Because the rhyme is created on both the aural and visual planes, there is unity of both meaning and shape.

As in "God's Grandeur", one notes in "The Starlight Night" the way in which Hopkins exploits every possible association of the senses of the words he has chosen. He ensures that the serious reader will consider such associations by the way in which he groups and juxtaposes the lexical items. Hopkins cues the reader to search for associations between words in terms of the reader's knowledge of: the poetic conventions of other verse; Hopkins's other verse; the world; and scholarship. In other words, the reader is expected to move to Riffaterre's semiotic level. This sonnet is a particularly intricately woven tapestry of nature imagery and religious belief. Only superficially is the octave about the night and the sestet about nature and husbandry. The 'leads' given in the octave are developed in the sestet so that when one reaches the last sentence the imagery has led one to the triumphant excitement and thrill ("shocks") at the realisation that heaven is the haven after the burdensome labour of life and that it is in heaven ("withindoors") one must 'store up one's treasures' ("shocks") and not here on earth.

3.2.3 <u>No 33: "Spring"</u>

33

Spring

NOTHING is so beautiful as Spring—
　When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;
　Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightnings 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.

In this sonnet, as in the previous two, Hopkins uses nature imagery as an expression of the qualities of Christ. Hopkins once again pleads with man to "purchase" Christ's light so that death may be defeated. He again uses the word "May", which had great meaning for him because of its associations with Christianity. May is traditionally the month of the Virgin Mary, the innocent, the maid, the pure: untainted by the fall of man. May is also traditionally the beginning of Spring (in the northern hemisphere) and Spring symbolises rebirth after the 'death' of Winter, just as Christ symbolises rebirth and victory over Death which, in the Christian ethos, entered the world at The Fall. Thus the Spring sap which is rising is equated with Christ who, as part of the Triune godhead, is the life force of all things.

The alliteration is striking: one's immediate response is to the sound
of the poem. On closer examination the shared phonetic associations of
the alliterating and assonating words: "long", "lovely", "lush", "juice",
"joy", "rinse", "wring", "cloy", "cloud" are perceived. In this poem,
Hopkins uses what is known as "vowelling-off" (Milroy, 1977: 136), in
which there is a change in the vowels down a scale. Such vowelling-off
adds to the pulsing rhythm and musicality of the sonnet: "shoot long and
lovely and lush"; [U] (oo), [b] (o), [ʌ] (u). The vowel [U] is High Back;
[ɒ] Low Back, and [ʌ] Low Central. The line "earth's sweet being in the
beginning", is an example of parallelism in sound:

earth's	sweet being in	the	beginning / In
[ɜ]	[ɩy] [ɩy][ɪ] [ɪ]	[ə]	[ɩy][ɪ][ɪ] [ɪ]
Central	Front Vowels	Central	Front Vowels
Mid	High High High High	Mid	High High High High
(+ Length)			

(The metre of the line seems to suggest that the first vowel of "beginning"
is [ɩy], rather than [ə]. It could even be argued that the vowel of "the"
is [ɩy], not [ə].)

The sound pattern shows the following parallel structure: on the basis of
the horizontal tongue plane there are two parallel sequences of (High) Front
vowels each beginning with the Central (Mid) vowel [ə], (the first sound [ɜ]
is [ə] + length) which is by definition the most 'non-distinct' of all the
vowels and, therefore, the least obtrusive. On the vertical plane (tongue
height), the phrase is broken into two vocalically identical halves with
Mid-High-High-High-High vowels. Because of the articulatory similarity of
the vowels, there is a close perceptual unity which is easily perceived by
the reader, and which binds the words together. The line runs on to the
phrase "In Eden garden". The vowels in this phrase initially copy those

of the preceding line, but end by 'vowelling-off':

<div>

In	E -	den	gar -	den
[ɪ]	[iʏ]	[əʊ]	[ɑ]	[ə]
Front		Central	Back	Central
High	High	Mid	Low	Mid

</div>

The effect of the vowelling-off is a tapering off towards the neutral vowel, which highlights the dramatic effect of the imperatives "Have, get" of line 11. Furthermore, because the imperatives are phonetically quite different from the words in the previous lines, these two words are fore-grounded against the striking alliteration of the first ten lines. The appeal to the senses of the alliterating lines is changed suddenly through the imperatives to an appeal to the intellect.

Throughout the octave the images appeal to all the senses simultaneously. Through the imagery, Hopkins has been able to express the excitement he feels at the exuberant nature of Spring which he sees all around him. The alliteration and consonance effected through the interlacing of similar sounds in closely positioned words creates an aural impression of excitement. (Compare Milroy, 1977: 144 for a general discussion.) The velar nasal [ŋ] of "lightning" and of "sing", is picked up in the velar plosive [g] of "glassy", the sibilant [s] of which is picked up in the [z] of the "leaves" and "blooms" and the [ʃ] of "brush" in line 6. The [b] of "brush" is in turn picked up in "blue" and its almost immediate repetition and the [l] of "blue", in "all" and the other liquid, [r] , of "rush" (line 7). Both lines 6 and 7 are dominated by the interweaving of plosives, fricatives and liquids in close proximity.

The glassy pear tree leaves and blooms, they brush

Plosives:		g		p	t	l		d b		b	
Fricatives:	ð		s				v z		z ð		ʃ
Liquids:		l			r			l		r	

The <u>descend</u>ing <u>bl</u>ue; <u>that</u> blue <u>is</u> a<u>ll</u> in a <u>rush</u>

Plosives: *d*   *d*   *b*   *t*
Fricatives: ð   s   ð   z   ʃ
Liquids   *l*   *l*   *l*   r

The interweaving of sounds in lines and over line boundaries draws the
words together so that there is a repeated build-up of both sound and image.
The liquids of line 7 run over into line 8: [r] in "<u>r</u>ichness" and "<u>r</u>acing"
and [l] in "<u>l</u>ambs" and "f<u>l</u>ung". This line also has a fricative in each of
the major category words: [č] (affricative) and [s] in "ri<u>ch</u>ne<u>ss</u>", [s]
in "ra<u>c</u>ing" and "Lamb<u>s</u>" and [f] in "<u>f</u>lair" and "<u>f</u>ling". Throughout the
sestet the major category words of the sestet are also highlighted and
linked through sound-similarity. Lines 2 and 3 are dominated by fricatives
and liquids in the same way in which these sounds dominate in line 8. The
first half of line 2 is dominated by the glide [w], which is reminiscent
of the "<u>w</u>impling <u>w</u>ing" of "The Windhover". The repetition of the vowel [iy]
in both "w<u>ee</u>ds" and "wh<u>ee</u>ls" and the [z] of "weed<u>s</u>" and [s] of "wheel<u>s</u>"
results very nearly in perfect rhyme. The second half of line 2 has the
same inherent unity which has been achieved through the phonetic similarity
of the lexical items: [ʃ] and [l] are both palatal sounds and [U] and [o]
are both back vowels. The reader perceives the aural similarity of the
two pairs of sounds, and through the aural similarity, the unity of the
image. In a sense the string of the liquid [l] ("<u>l</u>ong and <u>l</u>ove<u>l</u>y and
<u>l</u>ush") is enclosed by the fricative [ʃ] of "<u>sh</u>oot" and "lu<u>sh</u>". (One is
again reminded of speakers' efforts to articulate their enthusiasm in the
most descriptive way possible and that alliteration and assonance are not
the perogatives of the poet only, or for that matter, of the advertising
jingle writer!) The most predominant sound class used in the octave is
the liquid, which seldom occurs in the sestet. The overall aesthetic
impression of the octave is an auditory one of great musicality and
'liquidity'.

Obstruent sounds (those with the greatest stricture of the vocal tract)
predominate in the sestet. The sense of exuberance, which prevailed
throughout the octave, has been replaced by a sense of urgency and anxiety.
The sense of anxiety seems to be the result of the extensive use of
obstruents (and as shall be seen later, of the poet's lexical choices):

plosive	[b]	in being, beginning, before and boy
plosive	[t]	in strain, sweet, get, it, Christ, Innocent, and most
plosive	[d]	in Eden, garden, cloud, lord, mind, Mayday, Maid's, child and and
plosive	[g]	in beginning, garden, get, and girl
plosive	[k]	in cloy, cloud and Christ
fricative	[θ]	earth's
fricative	[ʒ]	in this, thy and worthy
fricative	[s]	in strain, sweet, sour, sinning, innocent and most
affricative	[č]	in child, and choice
affricative	[j]	in juice and joy

Because fricatives and plosives are the most closed of sounds (those with
the greatest stricture of the vocal tract) they are the least resonant of
sounds. Affricatives because they are plosive + fricative sound combina-
tions (closure of the vocal tract + delayed release of the air through a
half-closed tract, which results in friction) are also non-sonorant sounds.
The effect of such a large number of non-resonant sounds in such close
proximity results in a harshness of sound which is in striking contrast
to the liquid sound of the octave. This harshness of sound supports the
more serious content of the sestet, which appeals directly to the reader's
intellect rather than to his senses of sight and hearing.

In any disussion of Hopkins's verse, one should be aware that his interest
was in the phonemic classes to which sounds belong rather than in their
orthographic representation. Milroy (1977: 135) comments that "Hopkins is
unusual among English poets for his very explicit understanding of the

96.

of the principles of the phonetics of English speech". Milroy (1977:
135) refers to a remark Hopkins makes in his lecture notes about semi-
alliteration: "there might be a 'very soft' alliteration between 'a
consonant and its belonging aspirate'". This remark does not accord,
however, with Hopkins's own use of alliteration in the sonnets under
discussion. Milroy (1977: 141) comments that Hopkins's main objection
to semi-alliteration seemed to be to the use of full end-rhyme of the
stain/same type as full end rhyme, but that he appears to have no
ojection to such partial rhyme, assonance or alliteration within lines.
This comment seems to be closer to the truth of what Hopkins actually
does in this particular sonnet and one would of necessity disagree with
Milroy's remark (1977: 143) that Hopkins "did not allow himself complete
freedom to alliterate on other related pairs". The dominant heightening
techniques in this sonnet are alliteration, consonance and assonance.
Hopkins regularly uses these techniques to create pairings like "weeds
and wheels" and "rinse and wring", which themselves then form the parallel
halves of a line. (Compare Milroy's comments (1977: 143/144) on such pairs.)

If one were to discuss this sonnet without any reference to phonetic
effects, one would not do justice to the intricacies of the relationship
between sound and meaning in the poem. The lexical and phonetic levels
are so interwoven that the 'sound-effects' mark poetically important words
as creating the atmosphere of joy and exuberance in the octave and the
atmosphere of quiet urgency in the final lines of the sestet. The word
"lightnings" is an interesting example both phonetically and lexically.
Because 'lightning', normally a singular form, has been pluralised, the
reader is cued to account for this apparently aberrant form. One associates
the word with sharpness of light (a visual experience) and with 'touching
with an electrical charge' (a kinetic experience). The qualities of the

visual and kinetic experiences are transferred to the auditory experience
of hearing a sound so sharp and clear and 'bright' that it 'strikes like
lightning on the ear'. This experience is enhanced by the high sounds
contained in the word "lightnings" which are reinforced by the high
sounds found in the words surrounding "lightnings" in line 5: "it",
"strikes", "like" and "sing". The implication is that "the strain"
(ambiguously in one sense 'a faint melody') of God's message of love
will strike the innocent mind.

Other lexical items from the octave are associated semantically with
lexical items in the sestet. These associations all add to the semantic
cohesion of the poem as they allow the poet to draw parallels between
Christ, Mary, and Eden - all symbols of innocence and purity. The octave
is a description of those things which are "strains" (types, kind) of the
original innocence of Eden before the Fall, at which innocence was lost
to man, through his eating of the fruit of the "Tree of the Knowledge of
Good and Evil". Christ told his disciples that to achieve eternal life
they would have to become innocent "as little children". Hopkins implies
that the young lambs and the young unborn thrushes are examples in nature
of such holy innocence. The young thrushes and the lambs naturally have
the innocence man must rediscover before he may regain paradise. Because
they are young, the boy and girl and the child of the sestet are also
innocent - they have not yet lost their innocence to the lures of the world.
The image of the innocent lamb recurs in the sestet as Christ, the "Lamb
of God". In the Judeo-Christian tradition the lamb is the sacrificial
animal because it is pure and innocent. Because Christ epitomises these
qualities of the lamb He is the "Lamb of God". He is the ultimate sacrifice
for Christians because they believe that God sacrificed Christ, his Son,
for the salvation of mankind and that Christ offered himself up as the
sacrifice.   /98. ....

The word 'innocence' is not only associated with lambs and with Christ,
but also with Mary, the maid, the Virgin, the bearer of Christ who, because
of his mother's innocence and purity (under the dogma of the Immaculate
Conception), is also pure and innocent. The association of the word
"Innocent" with the word "mind" leads one back to the idea of man's
innocence of mind before the Fall. Hopkins implies that for man to be pure
enough to warrant the gift of immortality, he must be innocent in both body
and mind.

The phrase "Innocent mind" is not only semantically parallel to "Mayday
in girl and boy", but also phonetically so. The i and m alliterate
'inversely' with the m and i of the phrases "Mayday in girls and boy"
(line 13). The word "Mayday" implies the innocence of youth and its
'newness', hence it is unblemished because it is 'unlearned'. The loss
of the 'innocence of mind' prevents a response to the newness, vitality
and beauty around the perceiver, because such a mind is world-weary,
"cloud[ed]" and "cloy[ed]". The implication is that it is experience
which clouds the "it", the "strain of earth's sweet being in the beginning" -
"Christ, lord". This line echoes back to Christ as the 'Word', Mary the
bearer of the Word and the biblical line 'In the beginning was the Word
and the Word was God and the Word was with God" (John 1: 6). Thus Christ
was present at the creation, a "strain" of which is now seen in the glories
of Spring, and is the bearer of the message of redemption, the only way
in which man is able to regain paradise (Eden). But, in order to do this,
men must become again "as little children" - innocent and pure. The poem
culminates in the most fearful of all possibilities for the Catholic: that
experience of the world will lose him not only Christ, but Christ's choice,
that of eternal life. Hopkins implies that man needs to fight the

99.

"cloud[ing]" and "cloy[ing]" and "sour[ing]" effects of this world to
retain his childlike innocence and purity without which he cannot enter
the kingdom of heaven.

The words of the sestet stand in contrast to the words of the octave.
Whereas the words of the octave are all words which carry connotations
of joy and which express an irrepressible ebullience, the words of the
sestet express sadness. A sense of despoliation is emphasised in the sestet
by the proximity of the words "cloy", "cloud", "sour" and "sinning".

However, it is not only the use of phonetic devices and of special lexical
choices which makes the poem such a strikingly unified whole. There are
syntactic devices such as deletion and the choice of specific sentence types
and sentential organisation by which the poet shapes his poem to achieve the
greatest aesthetic and intellectual impact. By beginning the sonnet with
the negative "Nothing", Hopkins makes an emphatic statement which makes
the statement a very positive one because the word 'nothing' excludes totally
all other possibilities. The unique beauty of Spring is a declaration of
fact (to Hopkins) and he intends his reader to accept this. The octave,
which is a description of Spring, is a justification of Hopkins's point
of view. However, as he has done in each of the other two sonnets which
have been discussed in the sestet he uses the imagery of the octave as
metaphors for Christ and the Christian ethos. Spring, revealed through the
rising sap, is one of the manifestations ("strain") of God in His creation
of the earth. Christ, as His son, and the Holy Ghost, as part of the
Trinity and thus part of the 'Godhead', are thus also part of this creative
force: the "dearest freshness deep down things" ("God's Grandeur").

This sonnet uses a syntactic process which Hopkins exploited more fully in some of the 'Dublin' sonnets in which he parallels statement against question and question against imperative, for example. In "Spring", the octave and the sestet are clearly marked. The octave begins with a statement and the sestet with a question: "Nothing is as beautiful as Spring" and "What is all this juice and all this joy?". The question of the sestet is the link between the content of the octave and sestet through the word "this" which has a strong deictic property of immediate reference. While the octave consists of one sentence with many modifications, the sestet consists of three sentences: the question (line 9) and the answer to the question (line 9 and 10) - "A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning/ In Eden garden" - and the imperative of "Have, get, before it cloy ..." (line 11). The imperative sentence is concluded with reasons for the command and the admonition to make Christ one's choice because He is 'worth winning'.

Another striking syntactic ploy in this sonnet is Hopkins's use of deletion. In the octave the deletion of 'like' and the apparent deletion of 'the -'s song' in line 3 results in the crucial descriptive words being concentrated in one line, so that a sense of exuberance is created. The deletion of the possessive "'s' and 'song' exploits "thrush" as a verb and allows the build-up to the alliterative "rinse and wring". Contained in the word "thrush" is the word "rush" which is repeated in the word "brush" and occurs itself at the end of line 7. The word "rush" epitomises both the exuberance of Spring and Hopkins's enthusiasm. The enjambment of line 4 and the foregrounding of "The ear", by its line initial position and its visual separation from its dominating verb, build up to the auditory excitement of the visual and kinetic experience of "it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;" (line 5).

Lines 11 to 14 show other interesting deletions:

> ... 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.

In line 11, the unreferenced (at this stage of the sonnet) "it" has been

deleted after the verbs "Have" and "get" (and before "sour"). This deletion

means that the two verbs are in close proximity so that a note of urgency

is created in the line. This deletion is immediately followed by the

adverbial time phrases, "before it cloy, / Before it cloud". These two

parallel phrases are identical in structure and, through the alliteration,

very nearly identical in sound. The result is very nearly one of repetition,

the effect of which is emphasis. The emphasis adds to the sense of urgency

already intimated by the deletions. Such emphasis through deletion is

regularly used in spoken discourse when a speaker is trying to urge someone

to action. In the sonnet Hopkins simulates 'real world' urgency by using

exactly those structures which would be used by a speaker in a 'real' effort

to persuade. It is precisely because the reader recognises the syntactic

patterns of repetition and deletion that he senses the urgency of the words

of the sestet. It is only at this stage that a possible reference appears

for "it" and that ambiguously. If, however, one equates the "juice" and

"joy" of line 9, with "cloy", "cloud" and "sour" through the association

of sweetness, cloying, juice and souring, then "it" refers to the "strain"

(the pure, the essence) and the "sweet being". The second "it" (line 12)

seems to fill the role of both patient and agent: the patient (perhaps

the "strain") which becomes clouded and soured through contamination; and

the agent (possibly the world) which causes the clouding and the souring of

the strain. The theme of innocence and purity which pervades the sonnet is

extended from the paradisal nature of the octave to the sestet through the

ambiguous use of "it" as agent and patient. The ambiguity is achieved through the line positions of the following NP's, each of which are objects of the verbs used with "it":

Christ, lord, Innocent mind, Mayday, thy choice.

The structure "Christ, Lord" is ambiguous in that it could be either a vocative structure paralleled by "O maid's child" (line 14), or the first of a string of 'affected' NP's (patients which are affected) clouded and soured by the world. The vocative structure suggests a plea or invocation similar to the adulation of "O maid's child" and adds to the sense of urgency Hopkins feels about winning Christ, 'the prize'. The plea expresses clearly the help Hopkins feels man needs to overcome the world before it clouds even Christ, because experience of the world allows man only to "see through a glass darkly".

This sonnet shows a remarkable interweaving among the levels of sound, lexis, and syntax. It has more evidence of phonetic cohesion than either of the previous two poems. What is interesting, however, is the way in which the use of alliteration is tempered in the sestet so that the semantic value of the alliterating words predominates. In the octave there is a concatenation of liquid sounds, which expresses the inscape of Spring more through sound than through the actual semantic value of the words themselves. The exuberant spirit of the poem may be said to be caught in the octave, but the import of this spirit is revealed through the less melodious and more pensive words of the sestet.

3.2.4 No 36: "The Windhover: To Christ our Lord"

36
The Windhover:
To Christ our Lord

I CAUGHT this morning morning's minion, king-
   dom 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 on swing,
   As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and
      gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

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

   No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
   Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

The most striking feature of this poem is the way in which the sound patterns and the lexical choices suggest the flight of the falcon. Hopkins has grouped his lexical choices in such a way that the pace of the lines imitates the action of a soaring falcon. Hopkins has achieved this effect by interweaving the lexical, syntactic and phonetic levels of language. Each level is exploited imitatively to capture the inscape of the falcon in its "Brute beauty", and to extend this "Brute beauty" in the sestet to Christ - Christ before whom all things must "Buckle!" for only Christ (as God) is perfect and omnipotent. In this sonnet, as in the previous sonnets, an aspect of the physical world becomes an emanation of the metaphysical world. In "The Windhover" the falcon becomes an emanation of Christ. But, Hopkins states, Christ is more beautiful, more powerful, more courageous than anthing in nature, even the mighty falcon, because all things are embodied in Christ and Christ must, therefore, be greater than His embodiments.

The nature (inscape) of the falcon in its majestic flight is recreated
through the concatenation of alliterating and assonating lexical items in
the octave. The near repetition in line one of "morning" and "morning's" is
at once intellectually and aurally satisfying. The use of the genitive for
the second "morning" shifts the emphasis from a modifying adverbial statement
to the recognition of a concrete, rather than an abstract object which
possesses a loving servant. The falcon is a servant to the day in that the
falcon is drawn out by the dawn to herald the day's arrival by its flight.
This idea is immediately repeated in the phrase "king-/dom of daylight's
dauphin". The falcon is the heir to the kingdom of the day. The words
"minion", "kingdom" and "dauphin", and "chevalier", "valour", "gold",
"vermilion" and "Buckle" - compare OED entry buckler - of the sestet, all
suggest courtly life, its majesty, pomp and ceremony and its quests. By
semantic association, this majesty and all it entails is extended to the
falcon and its salutation of the morning and its "mastery" of the wind.
These semantic associations are reinforced by the sound patterning of the
lines in several ways.

In the first line, syllables with the High Front Unrounded vowel [I],
alternate with syllables containing the Mid Back Rounded vowel [ɔ]
("caught" and "morning") and the neutral vowel [ə] in "minion". Line 2
shows the same alternation: "dauphin" ([ɔ] [ə]) and, "falcon" ([ɔ] [ə]).
The alternation results in a sense of rising and falling. This sense
pervades the whole of the octave as there is a continual shift from a high
vowel to a lower one. It is in this way that the soaring, gliding, stooping,
diving, flight of the falcon is captured aurally. The sounds reinforce the
words chosen to describe the falcon's flight: "riding", "striding/High",
"swing", "hurl", "gliding", for example. Not only high vowels are used to
achieve the effect of the falcon's flight, however. The words "morning",

"minion" and "kind" all contain nasal sounds ([m] [n] [ŋ]) which, being resonant, add fluidity to the high/low variation of the vowels and a sustained lyric quality to the lines. The impression of smooth, fluid rising and falling is maintained throughout the octave. Each line in the octave ends on a syllable with a High Front vowel [I] and the nasal [ŋ] : king-, riding, striding, wing, swing, gliding, hiding, and thing. Each succeeding line, except lines 4 and 5, begins with a non-high, unrounded vowel, generally [ə] the neutral vowel which, by its articulatory nature, is minimally perceptible. (Each of the enclosed rhyme pairs includes the diphthong [ay] , itself closely related phonetically to the [I] of riding, striding, gliding, and hiding).

[I]	king-/dom	([ə]	neutral)
	riding/ of	([ə]	neutral)
	swing/ As	([ə]	neutral)
	gliding/ Rebuffed	([ə]	neutral)
	hiding/ stirred	([3]	neutral [+ length])

Throughout the octave, there is a flow from a high vowel to a lower vowel from the end of one line to the beginning of the next. The only two lines, in which there is no such rising/falling flow, are lines 4 and 5, the very lines which describe the falcon high, climbing and hovering at the zenith of his flight, before he stoops. He is "striding/High" on the "rein of wimpling wing/ In his ecstasy". The moment of his curving descent is caught in the lower vowel sounds of "then off, off forth on swing" which follow the [I] of "ecstasy". The vowel sounds of the connecting, unstressed words are, in almost every case, the neutral [ə] . This means that the high [I] sounds and the lowered sounds are contrasted, adding immeasurably to the rise and fall of the lines and to the image of the falcon's flight.

Just as the lower rounded vowels throughout the octave are a foil for the High Unrounded [I] , so the use of various plosives (the sounds [p] [b] [t]

[d] [k] [g]) are a foil for the nasals that have been used. The velar plosive [k] of "caught" and "King" foregrounds the resonant nasals and the high vowels and suggests the sudden breathtaking sight of the bird, readily expressed by the word "caught", which suggests 'chance' and 'fleeting'. By encapsulating the resonant sounds between identical plosives, Hopkins has made the line more dramatic. This sense of the dramatic is carried into the next line because Hopkins has deliberately broken the word 'kingdom' so that line 2 begins with the alveolar voiced plosive [d]. The initial sound of six of the eleven words of line 2 is [d] and it is used intervocalically in "riding", the final word of the line. The plosives give a staccato effect which contrasts and highlights the liquid flowing lines which follow. The staccato effect suggests the breathtaking wonderment of the watcher at the sight of the bird. The flowing quality of lines 3 to 6 stems from the use of liquids ([l] and [r] as in "rolling level"), fricatives ([s] as in "steady" and "ecstasy", [f] as in "off" and "Rebuffed", [h] as in "High" and "hurl") and glides ([w] as in "swing" and "wing"). These lines culminate in the [b] of the words "bow-bend", which is picked up in the word "Rebuffed" and the word "big". The [b] sounds echo the buffeting one associates with wind. The build-up to "Rebuffed the big wind" is through the enjambments and the alliterative pairs.

The enjambments (only line 5 is not run-on) and the use of alliterative pairs such as "steady" and "striding", "rung" and "rein", "wimpling wing" and "bow-bend" suggest the powerful soaring flight which builds up to the "Rebuff[ing] of the big wind" by the small (by comparison) majestic bird, by unifying the images in swift-flowing lines. The fluidity of the flight is checked only in line 5 in which the falcon checks his flight, stoops, and then sweeps away in a clean, cleaving turn ("swing" and "bow-bend")

in the face of the wind. The word "Rebuffed" is used ambiguously to
express the arrogance of the falcon in its disregard of the power and
force of the wind and to imply the buffeting of the wind by the bird,
rather than the wind's buffeting of it.

The strength and power of the falcon were introduced earlier in the octave
by the suggestion of the "riding" the "air" which, it is implied, is a
solid moving mass controlled by the falcon. The "riding" image is extended
through the word "rein" which,(besides being like "riding", a falconry
term) suggests the muscles/lines which allow the falcon to control his
pinions and maintain his flight. The word "winpling" suggests the white-
tipped (like a nun's wimple in the black veil) pinions of the falcon's
wings which are aerodynamically perfect and which effect large changes in
flight through tiny movements. The falcon masters the wind, he "stride[s]"
the wind, through the strength of the seemingly small, seemingly fragile
pinions and "Rebuff[s] the big wind". The word "wimple" in its multiple
ambiguity includes the sense 'beautifully pleated, curved rippling' and
in falconry 'to rise in spirals' (Notes, Gardner and MacKenzie 1980: 267).
Each of these three senses adds to the image of the soaring majestic bird.

The sentence which describes the flight and which begins at line 1 and
ends only in line 7 is in direct contrast to the quiet of "my heart in
hiding/Stirred for a bird" (line 7 and 8). In contrast to "hurl","Rebuffed"
and "big wind", all words with connotations of violence, there follow
"heart", "hiding" and "Stirred", none of which expresses any violence
or dramatic action. The description of the bird's flight is highly
dramatic when compared to the stirring of the poet's heart at the sight
of the bird. His wonder and awe climax in the last line of the octave in

the exclamation "the achieve of, the mastery of the thing", in which the initial deletion of the NP "the thing" accentuates the feeling that the mastery and achievement are nearly indescribable and inexpressible. The poet's response to the bird is 'physical', his heart stirs. But from his acknowledgement of the mastery of the bird, he moves in the sestet to the undeniable, omnipotent master of the falcon, the creator of its mastery, God incarnate, Christ.

The sestet opens with the phonetically harsh sounding word "Brute". The semantic connotations of the words are all ones of harshness and irrationality. There is again a change in tone: this time the quiet of the last line and a half of the octave is broken by the harsh sound and the connotations of the word "Brute". The word is used in the poem as in 'brute-force' - animal, physical force, with its implied connotations of unthinking power and strength. There is a suggestion that the nouns "valour" and "act" are also modified by the adjective "Brute". This suggests the naked physical beauty, courage and actions of the bird in its majesty. But for all its glory, its pride and its physical beauty, the falcon must bow down ("Buckle") before the might, glory and majesty of Christ.

(Gardner and MacKenzie (1967: 268) give the following note for "Buckle":

> This presumably imperative (but possible indicative) vb [sic] is the main crux of the poem. Which of three possible meanings did the poet intend? Each one has been regarded by some commentators as exclusively or primarily apposite: (1) the arch 'prepare for action', 'come to grips', 'engage the enemy'; (2) 'clasp, enclose, fasten together' as under one discipline; (3) the more common meanings, 'bend, crumple up, collapse' under the weight or strain. Meaning (2) is clearly in $\ell\ell$ 1-8 - the bird's controlled flight; (1) makes the militant kestrel-hawk the symbol of the Christian knight valiantly warring against evil, and is supported by the chivalric imagery - 'dauphin', 'riding', 'rein'; (3) suggests the abnegation of 'mortal beauty' (cf no 62) and the readiness to suffer and be immolated. In its complex 'discipline - flight - fall' meanings and connotations, "Buckle" links the joyful panache and mastery of the octave to the poignant yet triumphant resignation of 'fall, gall themselves, &c' of ℓ 14.

(Compare also Milroy, 1977: 235, entry "Buck".)

The alliterating pairs "Brute beauty" (which pair also assonates) and "pride plume", and the assonating pair "valour" and "act" ensure the line's phonetic unity which is bolstered lexically by the paralleling of "beauty", "valour", "act" with "air", "pride", "plume" (the latter set being an example of vowelling-off) so that there is a build up to the exclamatory command "Buckle!" of the line 10. The word "here" suggests that 'here before the glory of Christ', all things, even majestic courageous falcons, must "Buckle!", 'collapse', bow down. The emphasis of "AND" through the uppercase lettering implies that not only are all things, no matter how wonderful, small in comparison to Christ, but also that the "fire", the spirit of Christ (and thus the Pentecostal Fire of the Holy Ghost which comes ("breaks") from Christ), is both more beautiful in its gift and more dangerous in its power than the might and beauty of the bird as it stoops ("Buckle[s]"?) in its attack on its prey. It, too, might "gash (gold) vermilion" when it gashes its prey, but unlike Christ, it does not being rent, bring forth as "then", the water and blood, the symbols of baptism and sacrifice which are in turn the "outward and visible signs" of the "inward and spiritual grace" of salvation (A Book of Common Prayer (1954): Catechism). The beauty of Christ, like the falcon's, is a "terrible beauty" (Yeats: "Easter 1916"). Christ's awesome grandeur is revealed in His power of life over death in His own resurrection and His 'raising' of Lazarus and the son of the widow of Nain. Christ's stilling of the storm (His "Rebuff[ing] of the big wind") and his healing of the sick and of the demon-possessed are further revelations of His great power. His beauty declares itself in the "valour" of His self-sacrifice in the "act" of His crucifixion. The paradox of Christ's "terrible beauty" is succinctly captured in Luke 7, 16 "... and there came a fear on all: and they glorified God ..." (All Biblical references are to the Authorised Version) and Hopkins's own "O thou terrible" of "Carrion Comfort".

The two images of the last tercet parallel the beauty that is hidden in
the seemingly 'bleak'. The death of Christ culminates in the Resurrection.
The dark earth cut into furrows (sillion) gleams where it has been compacted
by the plough-share. The apparently cold, dark embers break into warm
living fire when they fall and break open. A flame (gold) bursts from a
glowing (vermilion) coal when it is exposed to the air, or fragmented,
"gash[ed]", open. This connotation of the image lies parallel to both the
gashing of Christ's side and to the tongues of fire at Pentecost. The word
"gall" is reminiscent of the 'bitter cup' which Christ was given (his pre-
ordained death) and the sour vinegar and bitter hyssop with which His thirst
was 'quenched'. The violence of the crucifixion and of Christ's suffering
and the salvation it secured for man lie hidden in the images of the coal
and the fire.

Each of the images is unified by the sound patterns which dominate:

shéer   plód   makes   plough   down sillion / shine   (line 12)
[ʃ]   [p][l][d]   [s]   [p][l]   [d]   [s]   [ʃ]

There are two parallel phonetic consonant patterns in the line; these
occur between the fricatives [ʃ]. The cohesion of the lines is achieved
through the phonetic patterns and through the semantic associations between
the alliterating lexical items. The word "shéer" is nearly homophonous
with 'share' associated with ploughing and cutting and with 'sheer' as in
'sheer waste' meaning 'only', 'total', 'complete'. The word "shéer" has
an association with "shine" in that "shéer" means 'smooth' which implies
'reflection of light'. The word "plód" is reminiscent of the slow
patient walk of a ploughman and implies 'patience' and 'perseverance'.
The implication of the line is that perseverance at a seemingly boring
task creates its own beauty.

The following line reflects the same cohesion between phonetic forms and semantic associations:

Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion
[f]   [g]   [ð] [s][v][z]   [g][ʃ] [g] [v]

The line begins and ends with a fricative + plosive combination: [f] and [g], and [g] and [v] (the latter being the voiced counterpart of [f]). The crucial words in the line, "Fall", "gall", "gash", "gold" and "vermilion", are foregrounded through alliteration. The pair "fall" and "gall" assonate as do "and" and "gash". The "and" is fully stressed, so that there is a climactic pause before "gold-vermilion". The effect of the pause is that there is the suggestion of the exploding of light. The verbs "Fall, "gall" and "gash", used in conjunction with the reflexive pronoun "themselves" (deleted after "gash") as NP object, suggest volition on the part of the inanimate embers. They are imbued with animate ability. The line contrasts, therefore, with the making of the brilliance of the sillion by the ploughshare. Thus dramatic action and quiet somnambulistic activity are paralleled contrastively in the sestet.

When the alliterative sounds of the final tercet are marked, one notices the predominance of plosives and fricatives. The unity of sound, reflected in the paralleling of plosives and fricatives, and the unity of the parallel images, result in a taut, desriptively compressed tercet, which expands forcefully the phrase "No wonder of it:" (line 12). The sonnet ends as it began with the sudden perception of potentially violent beauty: the word "caught" of line 1 is echoed by "gash" which, like "caught", suggests a fleeting, sudden occurrence. It is implied that 'catching' a glimpse of the awesome beauty of Christ is as fateful an experience as seeing the falcon. Through the climax of sound and colourful dramatic imagery, the power, might, and skill of the falcon described in the octave is transferred in the sestet to Christ.

In this sonnet sound patterns are exploited to suggest the flight of the falcon. The majesty and power of the bird are captured through the use of words such as "striding", "rein", "Rebuffed". By transfer through a shift from the use of the third person pronoun, "he", to the second person pronoun, "thee", these images apply to Christ, but omnipotently - even the falcon must show obeisance to Christ. The whole sonnet then becomes a description of the awesome majesty, beauty and omnipotence of Christ. This view is supported by the subtitle to the poem: "To Christ our Lord" and by the vocative phrase "O my chevalier" (line 11) and interjection "Ah my dear" (line 13). The sonnet is an expression of love: an 'ode' in praise of Christ, whose power and majesty are expressed through the feisty falcon rather than through the gentle dove as is more usual.

3.2.5 <u>No 37:</u> "Pied Beauty"

37

Pied Beauty

GLORY be to God for dappled things—
  For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
    For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
  Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
    And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

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.

This curtailed (truncated) sonnet is itself an example, in Hopkins's terms, of "Pied Beauty" which is "counter, original, spare, strange". Both the octave and sestet have been reduced; the octave from eight lines to six and the sestet from six lines to four and a coda. At first glance the 'octave' comprises two tercets. On closer examination one notices that there are in fact three interlocking and overlapping 'quatrains' (but which do not have enclosed couplets):

```
lines      1 - 4    ,   2 - 6    ,   3 - 6
  1      things┐  2  cow   ┐   3  swim ┐
  2      cow    │  3  swim  │   4  wings│
  3      swim   │  4  wings │   5  plough│
  4      wings┘  5  plough┘   6  trim ┘
```

Hopkins carried the rhyming sounds of line 2 (<u>ow</u>) and line 3 (<u>im</u>) over into the sestet. (The volta occurs after line 6 rather than after line 8, which is more usual.)

```
      5 - 8              6 - 9
  5  plough ┐      6   trim   ┐
  6  trim   │      7   strange │
  7  strange│      8   how     │
  8  how  ┘       9   dim     │
                 11   him   ┘
```

The new sound -<u>ange</u> occurs in line 7 and line 10:

```
  7   strange ┐
  8   how     │
  9   dim     │
 10   change ┘
```

The final couplet repetition of the -<u>im</u> sound in "Praise him" results in emphasis which expresses the conclusive nature of the argument of the poem: because God (line 1) has created these changing things, "Praise him". The enclosing of the overlapping sounds <u>ow</u> and <u>im</u>, lines 2 and 3 respectively, by the new sound -<u>ange</u> also adds to the impression that the sestet builds up to the conclusion of "Praise him".

The rhyme scheme of the sonnet reveals a most unusual, but very logical, adaptation of the conventional rhyme scheme and logical structure of the Petrarchan sonnet.

The most striking feature of this sonnet is the semantic link between the alliterating lexical items. By binding the phonetic and semantic levels together so closely, Hopkins is able to achieve a compression of shape and sense and an aural expression of excitement he would not otherwise have achieved in little more than ten lines. Compacted by the concatenation of images of the earth and sky through the deletion of "Glory be to God" in lines 2 and 3 and "Glory be to God for" in lines 4 to 6, the early part of the poem deals with a specific catalogue of "dappled" things introduced in the title of the poem by the word "Pied".

Plosives and fricatives predominate in the first six lines and add a staccato effect which emphasises the ebullience of the poem and which suggests the poet's excitement at his recognition of how much in the world is dappled. The structures are similar to those of ordinary spoken language used when the speaker is excited. An impression is given of a sudden perception here, there and everywhere. By "heightening" this ordinary spoken response to a stimulus, by linking the lexical items semantically and through "lettering", Hopkins has captured the excitement of discovery in as compressed a way as possible.

By comparing the skies to a brindled cow (in line 2) a striking image is created - not of the sky being brown and white but of the fleecy clouds against the blue sky being like the splashes of white which lie on a

background of brown or black hide. Widely disparate things are compared so that they are drawn together in the way in which Hopkins believed was crucial in verse - a similarity is forced. The alliterating [k] of "couple - colour" and "cow" reinforces the image of the splash-coat cow and the lack of the anticipated [k] -initial item to pair with "cow" emphasises the word "brinded" which is itself foregrounded by Hopkins's use of the archaic (ME) form "brinded" (rather than the seventeenth century form "brindled") to maintain the rhythm of the line. Thus "brinded" is doubly emphasised: by the archaic spelling and by its not alliterating with "cow" as the reader would anticipate from "couple-colour". (By using the archaic form, Hopkins suggests the word's derivations from 'brand, burning' - having brown streaks (OED).)

In each of the succeeding lines, the anticipated alliteratives or consonants are replaced either by the insertion of a different sound type or by a different 'place of articulation' type:

> For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim
> [s] /[z] fricative interrupted by [t] plosive
> And 'áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim
> [t] voiceless alveolar plosive interrupted by [g] voiced
> velar plosive

In each case, the key word of the line is highlighted by the lack of phonetic similarity between the key word and the other major category words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs) in the line. Thus in line 1,

the highlighted word is "dappled" while in line 2 it is "brinded".
Both these words link phonetically (and of course semantically)
with the word "Pied" of the poem's title: [p] [b] and [d] are all
plosives; the [p] and [b] being the voiceless and voiced (respectively)
bilabial pair, and [d] being the voiced alveolar. In line 3 the focus
falls on "trout", in line 4, on "chestnut". In line 5, the alliterating
[f] of line 4 becomes the marked sound between the plosive [p] s. The
word "fold" and "fallow" are placed between the alliterating [p] s of
"plotted", "pieced" and "ploughed". The unity of the line is achieved
through the alliteration but there is a sense of progression achieved
through the vowelling-off of "fold", "fallow" and "plough".

The "Landscape" is "plotted and pieced" into folds (pastures), fallow
camps and ploughed fields. Each of these 'pieces' looks different in
texture and colour from each of the others. The viewer sees the landscape
as a 'patchwork'. A pasture (fold) is fruitful, while fallow land is
barren. The "fold" would probably be a vibrant green, while the "fallow"
would be weed-strewn and, probably, brown. In line 6, "gear" is
highlighted (because the alliterative expectation of a word-initial [t]
is thwarted) so that "tackle" and "trim" are extensions of the connota-
tions of the word "gear". The meaning of the word "gear" encompasses
the tools and accoutrements of trade in all their variety of form and
use: apparel, armour, riding equipment, tools, harnesses ("trim"),
apparatus ("tackle") and 'stuff' (summarised entry from OED). The
range of the senses of the noun "gear" is so many and so varied that
the word itself is exploitable by Hopkins as being "Pied".

The syntactic structure of the 'octave' is also worthy of note: the first line of the 'octave' is a directive imperative which includes the prepositional phrase "for dappled things". The rest of the octave gives specific examples of dappled things, the dash having the function of a colon. Each succeeding line is paralleled to the next and marked by a semi-colon. The effect is one of cataloguing and supports the expression of the excitement achieved through the alliteration and the concatenation of lexical items within each line. The catalogue of specific "Pied" things ends with a full stop in line 6. A change of reference is thus anticipated through the punctuation.

Line 7 introduces more general references to piedness through the phrase "all things". The first line of the poem dominates the rest of the structures in the poem, other than line 9 and "Praise him", which, like line 1, is a directive imperative. The implication is that now that the beauties have been revealed, man must "Praise him". The effect of the imperatives is thus exhortative. The general references to pied things in these lines are to things which are pied because they are different from the norm: the unusual, the new, the rare and the odd. The reader's/ world's recognition of their 'piedness' is a recognition both of the norm and the way in which they differ from the norm. Their difference foregrounds them against all that is usual and makes them special. The words "all things" are paralleled by "whatever thing", which, like "all things", is followed by a list. This list, however, is one which is modified by adverbial phrases (of which the last two pairs show deletion of the preposition "with") explaining the "fickle, freckled" image. The deletions lead to an increase in pace and the effect is one of excitement at the varied nature of most things. The foregrounding of "fickle, freckled", through alliteration and consonance, results in

the words being associated semantically and their being emphasised
structurally as 'super-ordinates' of a kind, which in turn justifies
the parenthesis of "(who knows how?)". Line 9 thus expands "fickle,
freckled" and answers the question of line 8. Such a parenthetical
question functions both as an incentive to the reader to answer (with
the poet) the question, and ambiguously as a 'helpless' expression
of the wonder of all pied creation.

Line 9 consists of three antithetical pairs of adjectives. The
adjectives express the duality evident in most things: they are used
very nearly as oxymorons. Each pair is unified through alliteration
and pairs one and two alliterate with each other. The fricative sound [s]
of these two pairs occurs in the voiced fricative [z] of "ada<u>zz</u>le", so
all three pairs are unified into a melodious whole. The unity of sense
and sound is emphasised and strengthened by the vowelling-off evident in
the movement from a high vowel to a lower vowel in each of the two pairs
and the rising cadence of a low to a high vowel in the final pair:

    (With) sw<u>i</u>ft, sl<u>ow</u>; sw<u>ee</u>t, s<u>ou</u>r; <u>a</u>da<u>zz</u>l<u>e</u>, d<u>i</u>m;
        [ɪ]   [o]   [iy] [aw] [ə][æ][ə] [ɪ]

The rising/falling cadence and the listing of the adjectives, like the
deletions mentioned above, add to the increase in pace. The effect of
the increased pace is that line 10 is strongly contrasted with the
previous lines because the first three words are strongly stressed (and
also unified through alliterations and vowelling-off) and the line is a
complete sentence, the main verb of which is "fathers-forth". The
structural change from the use of the copulative "be" (some of which are
deleted) and adjectives to an explicit verb like "fathers-forth" results
in the sentence being a declaration which is emphatic. This line is also

the culminatory line of the whole sonnet, in that it is a dramatic statement of the paradox of the varied Creation, the Creator of which himself is changeless: he "who changeth not" - God/Christ. It is this realisation that leads to the forceful conclusion of the imperative exhortation "Praise Him".

3.3 Conclusion

Each of the sonnets discussed above shows exploitation of the lexical and phonetic levels. It is on these levels that the overall effect of euphony as an expression of the poet's awe and enthralment in nature is expressed. The syntactic level has been exploited mainly through the use of deletion to achieve compactness and unity in the sonnets. Syntactic devices such as the juxtaposing of various sentence types, the deictic use of pronouns, and the contrasting of tenses, are seldom used in these sonnets. These devices, however, play a crucial role in the effects achieved in the sonnets selected from the 'Dublin' period.

The selected 'Welsh' sonnets reveal a progression in the degree of complexity of Hopkins's exploitation of language. His expression of joy in the octave of "Spring" is mainly the result of lexical and phonetic patterning. In "Pied Beauty" on the other hand, the deletions support and emphasise the phonetic and lexical patterns. The sonnets discussed all exemplify to a greater or lesser degree Hopkins's belief that the language of verse is "current language heightened". His cataloguing of images in "The Starlight Night" and "Pied Beauty" imitates the excited

speech patterns of any enthusiastic speaker. Hopkins's compounds and concatenations of words are reminiscent of the methods most speakers employ to express their emotions succinctly. Hopkins's heightening of current language lies in the density with which the structures of current language occur and in his imposition of phonetic similarity on these structures so that there is unity of structure, meaning and sound.

CHAPTER FOUR

Syntactic Dominance in Some 'Dublin' Sonnets

4.1 Introduction

A comparison of sonnets 64, 65, 67 and 69, all written in Dublin in 1885,
with those of the Welsh period discussed in Chapter Three, shows a
contrast in overall aesthetic effect. While the 'Welsh' sonnets seem
to appeal primarily to the reader's senses, the 'Dublin' sonnets seem
to have a primarily intellectual appeal. Yet, as was seen in Chapter
Three, the 'Welsh' sonnets are not just poems of joy and elation effected
solely through mellifluous phrases. In this chapter, the 'Dublin' sonnets
will be shown to be only superficially coldly intellectual, because
their intellectual appeal is couched in highly structured emotive
language.

In the 'Dublin' sonnets, Hopkins exploits the syntactic and semantic
levels more than the phonetic. There are deletions to an extent
reminiscent of "The Windhover" and of "Pied Beauty", but whereas the
images are related mainly through sound links in both these sonnets,
in the 'Dublin' sonnets the images are placed in parallel structures
so that the arguments are presented cogently and yet with intense emotion.
The images are still those of nature and man's place in nature, but are
closer to the "Brute beauty" of the language of the sestet of "The
Windhover" than to the euphoric language of "Spring". The following

poems are discussed in the light of syntactic organisation:

No 64   "Carrion Comfort"

No 65   "No worst, there is none ..."

No 67   "I WAKE and feel the fell of dark ..."

No 69   "My own heart let me more have pity on ..."

4.2   Syntactic Organisation and Ambiguity

4.2.1   No 64   "Carrion Comfort"

64

(Carrion Comfort)

NOT, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;
Not untwist—slack they may be—these last strands of man
In me ór, most weary, cry *I can no more*. I can;
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.

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 bruisèd bones? and fan,
O in turns of tempest, me heaped there; me frantic to avoid
  thee and flee?

Why? That my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear.
Nay in all that toil, that coil, since (seems) I kissed the rod,
Hand rather, my heart lo! lapped strength, stole joy, would
  laugh, chéer.
Cheer whom though? The hero whose heaven-handling flung
  me, fóot tród
Me? or me that fought him? O which one? is it each one?
  That night, that year
Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!)
  my God.

In her discussion of "Carrion Comfort", Ann Hentz makes the following

lucid point:

> An examination of "Carrion Comfort" will show a specific instance
> of Hopkins' [sic] use of language. Within the rigid form of the
> Italian sonnet, Hopkins plays with his language and rhythms so
> that the "packed" word, repetition, syntactical short cuts,
> abrupt pauses, and juxtaposed stressed monosyllables give the
> poem vitality and intense nervous energy.
>
> (Hentz, 1971: 343)

She does not state explicity, however, that these features are all

elements of spoken discourse and that it is the impression of spoken

discourse which gives the poem its impact as of a soul in torment arguing

with itself.

The reader is 'thrown' into the defiant mood of the poem by the word

"Not", where one would expect "No", the direct address form. The word

"Not", as an adverb of negation, modifies in anticipation the verb-forms

"feast", "untwist" and "cry". The poet is not perceived to be answering

a question (either put to him by another or, as is the case later in the

sonnet, by himself), but to be rejecting the <u>actions</u> of 'feasting',

'untwisting' and 'crying'. The NP "carrion comfort" is in apposition

to "Despair", so that the phrase is a derogatory expression about

the nature of despair - a comfort that is like carrion, like dead flesh.

The contrast created through the word "comfort" is that of the faithful

feasting on the living body and blood of Christ in the mass, and the

faithless feeding on the dead flesh of Despair.

Evident in the first line of the octave is a brutality of image which

is extended in the second quatrain of the octave by images of torture

and violence. The predator and scavenger of the first quatrain
are referred to by "lionlimb" and "dark devouring eyes" in the second
quatrain. The normal connotations of "comfort" are thus negated through
the juxtaposing and alliterative pairing of "carrion" with "comfort" so
that "comfort" itself becomes a despised thing. Hentz (1971: 344)
reads "comfort" as Christ. However, in New Testament terms, the Holy
Ghost is the Comforter, not the "comfort". The feast of the body and
blood of Christ brings comfort to men who are told to "feed on Him in
your hearts by faith with thanksgiving". The concept of the mass as a
sacrificial feast of comfort is perverted by the association of "comfort"
and "feast" with "carrion". The perversion of "Despair" as a comfort is
thus made horrific and justifies Hopkins's refusal to succumb to the
false comfort of despair. It is the position and use of the adverb of
negation which emphatically expresses the poet's rejection of despair.

The suggestion of gluttony in the feasting reinforces the image of
wallowing in despair - being consumed by it, even as one 'enjoys'
consuming it. Within the Catholic ethos, despair is of the greatest
danger to the soul, because it denies the promise of Christ and thus,
by implication, it denies faith. By recategorising "Despair" as a
(+ concrete) noun, the poet has personified a metaphysical entity
into a physical being, one whom Hopkins can address ("thee") and
one on whom Hopkins can choose or not to "feast" parasitically. The
use of "not" is carried through from line 1 to lines 2 and 3 in which
two other possible modes of action are presented: to "untwist" and to
"cry". The dominant pronoun in the first quatrain is the first person
pronoun "I". This almost exclusive use of "I" emphasises the subjectivity

of the persona's conflict. He is not the patient, he is the agent. As
agent he can choose to fall into despair or choose not to. Implicit
in each 'sentence' is the subject "I" and the auxiliary will ("I'll"),
and "not".

```
Line 1     Despair, [I'll] not  feast on thee
Line 2     [I'll] not untwist
Line 3     [I'll not] cry
```

The poem is constructed essentially of parallel verb structures. In
many cases 'direct action' verbs are contrasted with verbs which imply
inconclusive action:

```
Line 1     feast
Line 2     untwist
Line 3     cry
Line 4     (can)          Line 4  hope...wish...chose
```

The effect of this paralleling is that each of the 'negative action'
verbs is replaced by a 'positive indefinite' verb. The pivotal verb in
the quatrain is "can" which is implicit in "I'll not" (I will not) and
marks the rejection of 'feasing', 'untwisting' and 'crying' while
asserting 'hoping', 'wishing' and 'choosing'.

Because there is a shift in the first three lines from the use of the
modal "will" to the modal "can", there is a shift from the future tense of
the finite verb (the projected actions open to the persona) to the simple
present tense of "I can". These two words coming immediately after "I
can no more" (Antony in Antony and Cleopatra, compare Hentz, 1971: 344)
are a direct and immediate denial of all the earlier options. The poet's
determination to 'hold on' and break through the torment is reflected
through the negation of action, the positive declarative statement of "I

can", and the change (through the change in modals) of the finite
verb tense from future to present. This determination is further
emphasised by the irony of the "slack" "last strands of man" being
able to ("can") do something positive about his state of mind.

Line 4 immediately introduces the indefinite actions of doing "something",
hoping and wishing. The insertion of "day come" results in ambiguity
as it applies both retrospectively to doing "something", 'hoping' and
'wishing' and progressively to Hopkins's choice of life or death. The
insertion implies that in the blackness of his torment, Hopkins recognises
that the light will come. This recognition is both a hope and a wish.
Just as "I'll not" is implicit in lines 1 and 3, so "I can" is implicit
in line 4 before each of the verbs:

```
[I] Can something
[I can] hope
[I can] wish
[I can] not choose not to be
```

The structures are thus paralleled to achieve a maximum contrast with
the effect that defiance and determination are juxtaposed in the quatrain.
The two sets of verbs are linked by the reintroduction in line 4 of
the adverb "not" modifying the 'action' verb "choose" (which implies
volition on the part of the chooser) and modifying the verb of
existence "to be". The effect of the negative is to show that man's
choice is not relevant to existence: if he is Catholic he has no choice
in the matter because suicide is a mortal sin. By using the negatives
after the string of positives, the statement on life is foregrounded as
the reason for Hopkins's eventual subservience to God - the creator of
life. Man's free will does not extend to the gift of life. Hopkins's

recognition of this, a basic tenet of Catholicism, leads to the querulous
questions of the second quatrain which is constructed upon image after
violent image to culminate in the desperation of the words "frantic" and
"flee".

The strength of the statement "[I can] not choose not to be" lies in the
use of the double negatives and it thus contrasts sharply with the
negative connective "but" which is tempered by the gentle "ah".
(Compare Hentz, 1971: 344, for a slightly different interpretation.)
The word "but" shows Hopkins's frustration at reaching the right moral
and ethical decision, but still finding himself tortured by "O thou
terrible". The contrast between the gentle plea of "ah" and the awesome
acknowledgement of "terrible" reinforces the parallels of defiance and
determination which occur throughout the poem. The statements of the
first quatrain lead on to the questions of the second quatrain in which
Hopkins lists the ways in which he is suffering. Each of the four images
which follows the vocative appeal of "O thou terrible" expresses the
aggression which Hopkins feels God displays toward him.

        Line 5   Why wouldst thou ... me [rudely] rock ...
                   [Why wouldst thou] lay a lionlimb against me?
                   [Why wouldst thou] scan/With darksome devouring eyes
                   my bruisèd bones?
                   [Why wouldst thou] fan/O in turns of tempest, me?

        (The archaic form of the modal "wouldst" suggests a present (current)
        desire, which contrasts sharply with the use of the same modal but
        with a past tense inflection in line 11, "would laugh, [would] chéer".)

The first three lines of the first quatrain suggest three possible
negative actions (feast, untwist, cry); line 4 states three positive

actions (hope, wish, choose). The second quatrain lists four
'punishments' which God has meted out to him. Emphasis is placed on
the catalogue of these punishments by the deletion of "why wouldst thou"
in lines 6 and 8, so that there is a build up in tempo and in intensity
throughout the octave. The dazed confusion Hopkins feels is reflected
in the choice of the verb "rock" which exploits its association with the
'rocking of the cradle' but which association is negated by "rude"
(uncouth, violent manner - compare Notes, Gardner and MacKenzie, 1980: 287).
The intensity of Hopkins's confusion is thus magnified because the
comfort of care contained in the word "rock" is negated by the sense of
pain implied by "rude". (Compare the early draft version of 'Yet why,
thou terrible, wouldst thou rock rude on me/Thy wring-earth tread ...'
(Notes, Gardner and MacKenzie, 1980: 287).) In the octave, Hopkins begs to
understand why, having subjugated himself to God, God should turn on
him and should want to "devour" him.

The phrase "Thy wring-world right foot rock" is a powerful image which
achieves its effect through alliteration which is both aural and visual.
The visual alliterative pair "wring-world" reinforces through each
member the vision of world-weariness which for Hopkins 'wrings' out
of him his being - he, who even in his suffering, offers himself as a
sacrifice and as an instrument of God's will. The imagery of majesty
is extended by the reference to "lion", proverbially majestic, brave and
cruel. As "ah" contrasts with "terrible", so "lay" (as Daniel lay with
the lions) contrasts on one semantic level with "lionlimb". However, on
another level "lay" suggests 'lay waste' and 'destroy', to be predatory

as is the lion. The semantic associations culminate in the "scan[ning]
/With dark devouring eyes my bruisèd bones". Hopkins feels he is
watched as keenly by God as the carrion bird or the lion watches for
its prospective prey to falter and become weak. If Hopkins falters, he
will be devoured by God. Hopkins is buffeted by the winds of his
indecision and confusion from defiance to acquiescence and back again.
He is held in the "turns of tempest" (the "fury" and "whirlwind" of
"No worst, there is none. ..." (No 65: 100). He has no sooner reached
a decision than he is tortured again so that the "slack" "last strands
of man" are "heaped there".

The power and the pathos of these lines are achieved through the choice
of the verb "heaped" which, being a passive form, suggests an agent who
has 'dumped' something, something which is formless and inanimate. The
association of "heaped" with "me" adds the pathos to the line: the
recognition by the speaker of his role as patient - helpless in the hands
of God. The use of the appositional "me" and the contrasting modifying
clauses with the verb "fan" -

    me [who is] heaped
    me [who is] frantic to avoid the ...

reinforce the mood of frustration evident in this quatrain. Because he
has been broken by God, he cannot escape God; because he is a 'heap' he
cannot flee. The locative adverb,"there",reflects the attempted
objectivity of Hopkins's vision of God's treatment of him. He sees
himself as a broken thing. He has been divided against himself. He is
no longer able to choose to act. The word "heaped" suggests that he is

like carrion, helpless - ready to be devoured. Hopkins is frantic
because he is unable to escape the "scan" of God. He cannot "flee"
because he is God's creature and because he has committed himself to
God's rule.

As in the previous lines, the use of deletion adds to the pace and
frenetic urgency of the line. The excitement of the catalogue is
reminiscent of,and structurally equivalent to,that of spoken discourse in
which the speaker is trying to convince or argue the validity of the
justice of the point. The effect of this similarity on the reader is
one of immediacy, which suggests an actual conversation in which the
reader is participating.

The sestet, like the octave, reveals the exploitation of deletions and
various sentence types. While the octave is dominated by the positive
and negative statements in the first quatrain and by the questions in the
second quatrain, the sestet relies almost entirely on the use of
questions to express Hopkins's confusion and anxiety. The first line of
the sestet begins with interrogative "Why?" which refers back to the
preceding quatrain in which Hopkins has catalogued his torments. In the
sestet Hopkins seeks to justify his suffering at the hands of God. The
immediate answer to "Why?" is the beautiful image of the winnowing of
the grain to shed the useless husk so that the kernel, the essence, is
revealed. Has he been threshed so that only the pure in him should
remain? His response is the archaic "Nay" which, like "Not" of line 1
of the sonnet, is striking because it is lexically unusual. The word
"Nay" is as emphatic as "no" and denies emphatically any winnowing
process with God as the thresher, for in all his effort at living, his

heart found hope. In all the mental labour ("toil") (which is
indivisible from mortal being ("coil")) he has expended from his first
acceptance of the authority of God, there has never been a time when he
has not found emotional succour. The use of the pronoun "my" with "heart"
reinforces a growing conviction which culminates in the last line,
that he, Hopkins, might ultimately be responsible for his own state
of mind, whether of joy or anguish.

The last line of the first tercet uses a similar deletion process to the
one used in earlier lines to add immediacy and urgency to the expression,
in this case, of Hopkins's earlier experiences of total religious
commitment:

        my heart (lo!) lapped strength
        [my heart] stole joy
        [my heart] would laugh
        [my heart] [would] cheér

The impression of spontaneity is again created through the cataloguing of
the verbs. Again four actions (here by the heart) are given. The
whole structure is thus parallel to line 4 and to lines 5 to 7. Line 4
lists positive actions which are parallel to the torments of lines 5 to 7
which, in turn, are parallel to the joys of Hopkins's earlier commitment
(line 11). The use of these parallels adds cohesion and tension to the
poem so that there is a climactic build up to the last tercet in which
Hopkins moves from bewilderment and confusion to a recognition of the
'hound of heaven'.

An element of gentleness is found in "lapped" and "stole" (line 11).
The word "lapped", particularly, suggests a calmness and an assurance

because of its connotations of <u>gentle</u> lapping water, water touching,
receding, without any brute force,and because of its association with the
way animals drink. Domestic animals, in contrast to the scavengers
implied earlier in "carrion" and "devour", rely on man to succour them.
Because they are <u>given</u> succour, because they are fed, they drink quietly,
contentedly, not gluttonously, secure in their reliance on the steadfast-
ness of man's love for them. Just so, God supplied strength for Hopkins:
strength from which he could draw when he needed it. He did not need to
feed gluttonously as with carrion, or as at a feast, because the strength
was always there. The word "stole" suggests 'stealth' and, by association,
'quiet'. The association of "stole" with "joy" sets up a contrast between
the quiet of "stole" and the usual exuberance of "joy". The effect of
this joy adds to the impression of an all-pervading, deep, everlasting
joy. The ambiguity of "stole" as a past tense form of 'steal' suggests
Hopkins's current doubt that he had a right to such joy. In one word,
he is able to reaffirm the confusion he feels. This confusion is made
evident in the next line (line 12) when he questions who it is he is
'cheering' - himself or God. The effect of the modal "would" is to
suggest that his <u>heart</u> chose to "laugh" and to "chéer" - to be in
Christ's word "of good cheer". One senses that he feels that his
heart was wrong to express a joy so uninhibited, for this exhibition
of joyousness, this ecstasy, was irrational because he, himself, does
no know for whom the cheering was. Like Satan, in Milton's <u>Paradise Lost</u>,
Hopkins feels that he has been flung out of heaven. However, <u>he</u> has
been trodden on and left in a heap because of his presumption in
grappling with God and questioning his authority. The recurring use

throughout the sonnet of "me" emphasises not only Hopkins's intro-
spection, but also his role, through free will, in his torment. The
enjambment of line 12 to the "Me?" of line 13 not only isolates the
violence of the ponderous heavy-footed "fóot-tród" on the "Me?". It
also intrudes Hopkins's dawning realisation of his own role through the
ambiguity of the question mark either applying to the whole sentence "the
hero whose fóot tród/Me?" or to the "Me?" as an isolated form similar to
the "Who me?" of spoken discourse. Thus Hopkins moves from his sub-
jective response of what the hero (the agent) did to him (the patient),
to an objective response of what he (as agent) did to the hero (the
patient). Lines 11 and 12 thus show a parallel in structure and in
action:

> the hero whose heaven-handling flung me, [the hero whose] fóot
> tród/Me?
>
> or me that fought him?

The implication of the word "fought" is that God (the hero) has become
the recipient of aggression. Who then is to be cheered on?

The use of the second person pronoun, particularly noticeable in the
second quatrain in which direct address is used, is absent from the
sestet in which Hopkins muses on the reasons for his torment. In the
sestet God is not at a remove from Hopkins, and so the mood of abject
subjectivity becomes one of pensive objectivity. The questions asked of
God in the second quatrain are replaced in the sestet by questions asked
of himself in an attempt to find a rational explanation for his suffering.
He is unable to answer the question rationally because he attempts to

apportion blame to one of the two antagonists, either himself (the
opponent) or God (the hero). His questions lead him to the possibility
that perhaps both antagonists are to be cheered - "is it each one?".
Hopkins answers this question in the final line of the sonnet in which
parenthetical exclamation "(my God!)" expresses the shocking realisation
that he has had the presumption and arrogance, like Satan, to war with
God.

Yet the poem does not end on the note of his subjugation. The words
"That night, that year/Of now done darkness" bring the elements of
peace and tranquility into the poem because though, like Jacob, he
wrestled in the 'dark night of his soul', although it seemed a year,
the darkness is done, it is over. This impression is achieved through
the use of the past tense form "done", past continuous form "lay wrestling"
and through the time-past adverbial phrases "that night" and "that year".
(Both nouns are modified by the demonstrative adjective "that", which has
the deictic property of indicating a specific but now distanced occurrence.)
Hopkins, the "wretch", is no longer wretched, because he is no longer
"wrestling" with that from which he 'laps his strength', God.

The sonnet is an overall expression of a past experience, but is couched
in terms of urgency and apparently current experience. The first quatrain
suggests this apparently current experience, because the future and the
present tense are used and because of the modification of the verbs by
the adverbs of negation. The use of the subjunctive in the second
quatrain, together with the direct address of the second person pronoun
"thee" reinforces the impression of a continuous suffering by the "me"

and highlights where Hopkins feels the blame for his suffering
lies. The verbs in the first line of the first tercet are also
subjunctive: "might fly", "might lie", and suggest, therefore, only
a possibility. The following sentence introduced by the dogmatic "Nay"
has three past indicative tense verbs "kissed", "lapped" and "stole".
These verbs add a finite quality to the description of the actions.
The use of the modal "would" in "would laugh" and "[would] chéer"
rather than detracting from this sense of finiteness, supports it,
the word "would" implying 'wanted', itself a past tense form. In the
final tercet each of the verbs except "is" is past tense. This use of
tense, together with the use of the third person pronoun 'he' and the
reference to "hero" and "God", sustains the impression of the sonnet as
a description of a past event, the conflict of which has been resolved.

Hopkins shows a mastery of poesis in this sonnet through his ability to
express a past suffering in terms so immediate that the reader relives
and empathises with the poet's past suffering.

136.

4.2.2 No 65 "No worst, there is none. ..."

65

No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,
More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.
Comforter, where, where is your comforting?
Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?
My cries heave, herds-long; huddle in a main, a chief-
woe, world-sorrow; on an age-old anvil wince and sing—
Then lull, then leave off. Fury had shrieked 'No ling-
ering! Let me be fell: force I must be brief'.
O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small
Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! creep,
Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all
Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.

This sonnet, like the preceding one, begins with a negative which is
repeated implicitly in "none" (not one). The introductory negative in
this sonnet is "No" which is used to modify adjectivally (in degree)
"worst", which itself is in a sense a negative adverb. The use of the
superlative form of the degrees of comparison of bad (bad, worse, worst)
introduces immediately the intensity of the despair which pervades the
sonnet. The use of the existential "there" adds to the impact of
Hopkins's unequivocal conviction that despair is the worst of all life's
experiences. The sense of the line is incomplete in that one expects
'something' to be indicated that 'nothing is worse than'. By not having
a comparative reference and through the use of the superlative "worst",
it is implied that 'this', being "Pitched past pitch of grief" (the
depths of despair), is the worst of all suffering. By isolating the

/137. ....

negative sentence further emphasis is placed on it. The sentence is
reminiscent of similar colloquial expressions of frustration and
anxiety. The delay in articulating what is "worst" adds to the dramatic
effect of the first sentence. The fronting of the clause "Pitched past
pitch of grief" and the deletion of the possibly indefinite NP subject
('one') of the verb "pitched" and a time subordinator (perhaps 'as' or
'when') ensures that the reader can supply the non-existent comparative
referent to 'there is nothing worse than ...'. Because there is no
comparative referent and because there is no definite indication of the
choice of NP referent (any of: I, you, one), a measure of objectivity
is introduced.

The lexical choices of the half-line "Pitched past pitch of grief"
intensify the expression of the depth of the despair. This is achieved
not only through the repetition of "pitch" as in "Pitched", but also
through the proximity of the repetition and through the semantic
associations of the word "pitch". The verb "Pitched" suggests 'hurled',
'thrown' helplessly from a height, and in association with "pitch of
grief" suggests the darkness of despair because 'pitch' (as a noun) is
also black tar and 'pitch' (as an adjective) is, therefore, associated
with 'pitch black'. The noun 'pitch' may also be used in the sense of
'height' (as in music), thus the "pitch of grief" is ironically the
depths of grief (despair). The replacement of the adjective 'depth'
conventionally associated with 'grief' and 'despair', by the conventional
musical sense of "pitch" accentuates and reveals the extent of Hopkins's
fall into despair. This implicit contradiction is itself accentuated by
"past" which implies that even the extreme of "grief" has passed. The

adverb "past" also implies earlier suffering, which is referred to in line 2 as "forepangs". The half-line is unified through the semantic associations of the words, the alliteration of the bilabial plosive [p], the repetition of the word "pitch" and the alternation of high and lower vowels - "Pitched past pitch of grief".

The word "forepangs" suggests that the earlier suffering was less than that of the present and that it was sharply fleeting - 'merely' a 'pang' rather than a 'pain'. The word 'pang' has the following senses as a noun: a brief keen spasm of pain which appears to shoot through the body or any part of it; a shooting pain; a sharp mental pain; a sudden transitory fit of keen feeling or emotion (OED, my emphasis). The function of the word "wring" is ambiguous because Hopkins has exploited the difference in meaning of the homophonic pair wring and ring [rIŋ]. The word wring means 'to force out' and the word ring 'a high piercing note'. The word "pang" is thus associated with "wring" on two levels: on the level of 'sharpness' and on the level on which previous remembered experience of suffering schools us to fear a recurrence of the suffering. It is this fear which intensifies the new suffering, which will "wring" even more out of him, and more "wildly" than before. The juxtaposition of the visually alliterative pair "wilder wring" unites the two words in an expression of the panic Hopkins feels at again facing his despair and suggests that the suffering grows worse each time. The relationship between his earlier bouts of suffering and the new is emphasised through the striking phonetic similarity of "More pangs" and "forepangs" which differ only in their word-initial consonant. The relationship is further heightened by the deletion of the referential comparative in line 2: "More pangs will, schooled at forepangs," [wring more wildly than

forepangs]. This deletion of the comparative and the reduction of
the usually adverbial comparative to an adjectival comparative, "wilder
wring", results in the juxtaposition of the visually alliterative pair
"wilder wring" and emphasises the intensity of "More pangs".

The first two lines of the poem express through the use of the negatives
and the comparatives, Hopkins's certainty that despair is the severest
form of human suffering. The sentences in the first two lines are both
declarative: the first a negative and the second a positive. Together
they express Hopkins's adamant conviction, which appears to be an
objective point of view because no personal pronouns are used and
because there is no comparative referent. Parallel to these two lines
are lines 3 and 4 which are both questions. The pleas in these two
lines become, in retrospect, a statement of Hopkins's own despair. The
sharp contrast in tone between lines 1 and 2 and lines 3 and 4 is
achieved through the vocative appeals of "Comforter" and "Mary" being
paralleled structurally to the dogmatic declarative statement of "No worst,
there is none." Whereas the negative statement of line 1 shows petulance
and anger, lines 3 and 4 are a plea from out of the depths of despair.
There is a similarity here to Christ's cries of despair in the Garden of
Gethsemane and on the cross: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this
cup pass from me" (Matthew 26: 39) and "My God, my God, why hast thou
forsaken me!" (Matthew 27: 46). Recognition of this similarity is
reinforced later in the poem by "who ne'er hung there" (line 11).

Hopkins pleads for the help of the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the
Comforter, and of Mary, Mother of God, Mother of us all. He knows that

in his despair he has lost his contact with God and thus with the Holy
Ghost and with Mary, the intercessor between Man and Christ, as Christ
is the intercessor between God and Man. The use of direct address to Mary
and to the Holy Ghost and of the second person possessive pronoun "yours"
emphasises the promises of comfort conventionally given to man if he but
asks. The pleas are implicitly subjective because of the emotive use
of the repeated interrogative adverb "where" and the use of the first
person plural pronoun "us". The vocative addresses; exclamations of
frustration; the repetition of "where" with its suggestion of panicked
searching; the appositional phrase "mother of us" with its connotations
of comfort and succour; the structural repetition obvious in "where is
your comforting?" and "where is your relief?"; all add to the impression
of fear and panic.

One notices immediately the contrast between the first and second
quatrains. Line 5 starts with the singular first person pronoun, "My",
so that the implicit subjectivity of lines 3 and 4 is made explicit
through "My". Lines 5 to 8 are the only ones which are completely
subjective: they are the only lines which contain the first person
singular pronoun forms. This explicit subjectivity incorporates
retrospectively the whole of the first quatrain, particularly the
invocation, the "cries", to Mary and to the Holy Ghost. The intensity of
the suffering is captured through the use of the word "heave" in
association with "cries". The image of a weeping-spell, which is
exhausting and which leaves one gasping for breath and perhaps nauseous,
so much so that one can no longer weep, is evoked. Weeping itself
becomes impossible and the attempt to relieve the pain by weeping is

futile. The phrase "herds-long", which modifies adverbially the manner
of his hearing, seems to suggest lowing herds of cattle, which "huddle"
tails into the wind at the approach of a storm. This interpretation is
in turn supported by the use of the word "fury" (in line 7) which is used
ambiguously to express both a natural tempest and the tempest of the
protagonist's anger. The imagery of a storm is extended by "lull, leave
off" and the verb form "shrieked" which suggests ` e wailing and the
howling of the wind.

Crucial to any attempt to reach the significance of the quatrain and
hence of the poem is a recognition of the deletions evident in lines 5, 6
and the initial half of line 7:

> My cries heave, herds-long:
> [My cries] huddle in a main, a chief-/woe, world-sorrow
> [My cries] on an age-old anvil wince and sing -
> Then [my cries] lull, then [my cries] leave off.

There is a structural parallelism within lines 5 and 6. The manner of
the cries 'heaving' is paralleled to the place where they "huddle";
both are paralleled to the place where the cries are made to "wince and
sing". This image is a reference to God as the blacksmith who tempers
man's soul. This purifying of man's soul is reminiscent of the 'fanning'
and threshing of grain to separate the grain from the chaff. In the same
way, sorrow/grief is an implement through, and upon which, man's soul may
be honed. The honing ('schooling') causes the soul to "wince" and retreat,
but after its tempering it will "sing" in its perfection. Similarly, the
best will remain when the soul has been 'wrung out'.

Further parallelism exists between the appositional phrases. The word "main" is appositionally modified by "chief-" and "world-" and the word "woe" by "sorrow". The use of near synonyms to amplify "main" and "woe" intensifies the emotional effect of both words. Nothing else is chief, no sorrow is greater - it is a world-sorrow; it encompasses life itself. Yet one may not wallow in despair; God denies one the right to wallow in despair, for despair is a denial of faith. Thus the "Fury", the tempest of despair (and anger), like a storm of tears, cannot be sustained. There comes a lull in the storm until only a cried-out wretch remains, devoid of any emotion. God denies man the satisfaction of his sorrow and his despair. It is in recognition of this denial that Hopkins in his deepest despair calls on God to take his life from him; to fell him; to make him fall.

The use of the imperative subjunctive form "let me" is both exhortative and optative. Hopkins is both commanding and pleading. The half sentence "force I must be brief" is almost wry in its acknowledgement of the shortness of life on earth as opposed to the eternity of immortality. The word "force" is an abbreviated form of 'perforce' meaning: 'of necessity, by moral constraint, compulsory (1542); by violence, by force (1670)' (OED). The OED also gives for "force" the sense 'mental or moral strength, power of effective action, or overcoming resistance'. This sense of the word relates to the power of God over man and, by contrast, to the lack of power Hopkins has over his despair. The word "brief" as an adjective has the senses of 'of short duration, concise (ME), curt in manner' (OED). The tone effected by the use of the imperative

subjunctive can be said to be 'curt in manner' and 'concise'. Life,
as Hopkins points out, is 'short in duration'. Thus "brief" may refer
to both the tone of the command and to the existence of "I". The
word "brief" is also a dialect synonym of 'rife', which, in turn, has
the ME dialect senses of 'prompt, ready, quick'. The suggestion is,
therefore, that not only is Hopkins recognising the brevity of life,
but also the necessity (anticipated in "force") of being ready for
one's death.

One senses a slowing down in pace towards the wry and rueful acceptance
of "force I must be brief". This perception is supported by the musing
nature of parenthesis of the first two lines of the sestet - "O the mind,
mind has mountains; cliffs of fall/Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed."
The first half of this sentence is an exclamatory consideration of "the
mind". As occurred in lines 5 and 6, each noun in lines 9 and 10 is
modified.

        mind   - mountains
        mountains   - cliffs
        cliffs   - fall
        fall   - frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed

The deletions, usually of the determiner ('the') and the auxiliary verb
(either 'has' or 'are'), build up the images relating to 'fall' to the
climax of "no-man-fathomed" and emphasise the contrast between the
height (compare "pitch" in line 1) of the mountains of the mind and the
depth of the chasm ("fall"). When the word "fall" is considered as the
verb "to fall", it echoes "pitched" of line 1. Each of the nouns
"mountains" and "cliffs" are places from which one can be pitched. Thus

the words "cliff", "sheer", and "mountains" are all associated
simultaneously with both height and depth. The word "fall" itself
implies a height from which one falls. The sense of "fall" being
depth is reinforced through "fathomed" which is used colloquially as
'reasoned' and nautically as 'measuring' (plumbing with a plumbline) the
depth of the ocean. It is implied, therefore, that no man has ever plumbed
the depth of despair, because no man can reach the bottom: it is too deep.
The words "frightful" and "sheer" reinforce both "fall" and one another,
as fright comes from facing either an extreme ascent or an extreme
descent - one which offers no break and no halting place. (Compare
Oxford English Dictionary definitions for "sheer"; a 6 and adv 2.) This
dichotomy of meaning is echoed in line 12 by "that steep or deep":
"steep" referring to both high mountains and cliffs and "deep" to the
fathomless chasm. The sense repetition of "steep", "deep", "sheer",
"cliffs", "mountains" and "fall" unifies the content of the lines.

The sentence immediately following the declarative sentence contained in
lines 9 and 10 appears at first glance to be an imperative, until one
examines the effect of the enjambment and the arrangement of the syntax.
Inherent in the sentence is a warning to those who have never experienced
despair not to denigrate it.

Because the subject NP of the declarative sentence and the auxiliary verb
of the relative clause have been deleted and because the modal "May" has
been displaced from the VP and placed in the next line immediately
preceding the relative clause, the impression is given of a command
expressing disdain. It is the succession of this pseudo-imperative by

145.

"May" and the modifying relative clause (which 'supplies' the deleted
main clause NP subject) which turns the speaker's apparent disdain into
an unequivocal warning.

Hopkins warns "[they] who ne'er hung there" about the frailty of man's
endurance by beginning the next declarative statement with "Nor" and by
shifting the adverb "long" to immediately after the auxiliary verb "does",
which itself has been moved from its usual position before the verb it is
supporting, here "deal" (to 'contend with' as in "Thou art indeed just,
Lord, if I contend/With thee;"). Furthermore, the position of the
negative co-ordinating connective ensures both that its 'negativity' is
transmitted to the verb so that 'does not deal' is read and that the
warning is twofold: the torment of depair must not be deprecated nor
must it be thought that man's endurance of the torment of despair is
lasting. The use of the archaic form 'durance' both exploits its sense
of 'endurance' (to endure toil, suffering, ...) and allows it to pair
phonetically with "deal" and, by so doing, suggest the association of
both words with 'coping, contending with'. By using the personal
pronoun "our", Hopkins has shifted the focus from the impersonal abstract
"mind", through a reference to the indefinite relative pronoun "who", to
"our". He thus includes us (the rest of mankind) in his suffering for
the first time.

Because the reader is now also part of the suffering soul, Hopkins
commands ambiguously both his own soul and that of the reader to seek
shelter in despair, which, like a quilt (a comforter - a 'quilted
coverlet' (OED)),gives some protection from a storm, here the storm of

the confusion of his faith. (The reader is reminded of the lines of Lear in the storm and the protection and concern he shows for the Fool). The use of the deictic "Here" reveals Hopkins's recognition that he is a 'place of despair' and it also implies his offering of comfort (albeit 'small') to other souls as well as his own. These souls are all 'wretches', despicable creatures whose behaviour (their despair, hence their lack of faith) is reprehensible to God. But "wretch" is also used in the sense of 'a miserable, unhappy, unfortunate person'. The combined effect of these two senses of the word "wretch" implies that such a person is unhappy because his behaviour is reprehensible, because he is faithless, because he wallows in despair. The use of "comfort" suggests both the reading noted in "Carrion Comfort" of despair being a "carrion comfort", and the reading of "comfort" as the Holy Ghost. Ironically the Holy Ghost is also referred to biblically as a mighty wind, a tempest, which beats at the souls of men. Job, the Old Testament prophet, is said to have been spoken to in his despair by God out of a whirlwind. The implication of these readings is that it is God who is harrowing the souls of the despairing, so that the despairing feel lost and forsaken. This point of view is supported by the existentialist statement:
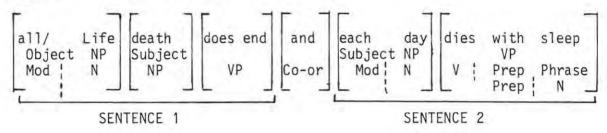
all/Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.

Here there are no illusions about the promise of a life-after-death or the hope of a new day (as in "Carrion Comfort"), only a statement that despair is the only comfort and it might as well be used as such, because that is all there is. The isolation of "all" in line 13 reinforces this

implication through the enjambment through which "all" modifies "Life",
thus all creation. The dramatic effect of the line is enhanced through
the structural, phonetic and lexical parallelisms. Structurally, the
two halves of the sentence, both active sentences, are joined by the
co-ordinating connective "and". Each of the sentences is a simple
sentence with a contrastively modified NP: in the first sentence the
object NP has been fronted and is modified; in the second sentence the
subject NP has been modified.

```
┌                 ┐┌       ┐┌        ┐┌     ┐┌             ┐┌               ┐
│all/       Life  ││death  ││does end ││and  ││each     day ││dies with sleep│
│Object     NP    ││Subject││         ││     ││Subject  NP  ││      VP        │
│Mod ¦      N     ││ NP    ││   VP    ││Co-or││Mod ¦    N   ││ V ¦ Prep Phrase│
└    ¦            ┘└       ┘└        ┘└     ┘└    ¦        ┘│     Prep ¦  N  │
     └────────────────────────────────────┘   └───────────────────────────┘
              SENTENCE 1                              SENTENCE 2
```

Phonetically the line is unified through inverse parallelism which
emphasises the semantically contrasting items. The alliterative [d]
brings an aural staccato quality to the line which adds to the deliberate,
dogmatic tone of the statement - a statement of profound despair.

      all/Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.

The effect of the paralleling of the lexical items and of the use of
"dies", etymologically related to "death", is that all contingencies of
life and light are dogmatically negated. Conventionally, 'life' is
associated with 'day' and 'death' with 'sleep'. The word 'sleep' is a
euphemism for 'death', and 'day' a poetic synonym for 'life' through its
association with 'light' and through its contrast with 'night' - a lack
of light.

Each of the declarative sentence pairs in the octave alternates with
direct speech pairs: lines 1 and 2 with the direct address question of
lines 3 and 4; lines 5 and 6 with the direct speech of a half-line of
7 and line 8. Similar sentence-type alternations are used in the sestet:
the declarative of line 9 and the initial half-line of 10 alternates with
the apparent imperative of "Hold them cheap", the final half-line of line
10; the declarative of line 11 and the initial half-line of 12 alternates
with the half-line imperative of "Here! creep" (line 12). The sestet ends
on two succeeding declarative sentences. The alternation of declarative
sentences with other sentence types adds structurally to the unity of the
poem and expressively to the protagonist's confusion.

This impression of shifting focus (and thus of confusion) is enhanced by the
lack of pronouns (hence of an addresser) in the first two lines, the direct
third person address of line 3 and 4 (and the use of the third person
pronoun "your"), and the descent into subjectivity evident in the second
quatrain through the first person pronoun(I)forms: "I", "me" and "my".
The sestet reveals a similar exploitation of the deictic properties of
pronouns. The first two lines are, like the first two lines of the octave,
completely without an addressee referent. The third line introduces the
impersonal indefinite relative pronoun "who" and also the first person
plural pronoun "our", which, as in the octave, incorporates mankind into
Hopkins's experience. There is a return to direct address in "Here!
creep, Wretch", but there is no definite indication of who the "Wretch",
a second person, is. The sonnet ends as it began with a strongly-worded
declarative statement that expresses conviction.

4.2.3 No 67 "I WAKE and feel the fell of dark ..."

67

I WAKE and feel the fell of dark, not day.
What hours, O what black hoürs we have spent
This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!
And more must, in yet longer light's delay.

With witness I speak this. But where I say
Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
To dearest him that lives alas! away.

I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree
Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;
Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.

Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see
The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.

While the previous two sonnets begin dramatically through the use of
unusual negative forms, this sonnet begins quietly with a declarative
sentence which achieves its effect visually through the capitalised
"WAKE" which is isolated in the line through the capitalisation and thus
suggests a joyous exclamatory 'I awake' which descends into gloom through
"fell of dark". The use of the present tense "WAKE" and "feel" further
adds immediacy to the line and contrasts with the past tense verbs of
line 3. The use of the perfect tense and the first person plural
address in line 2 suggests a continued shared experience which is
re-examined by both Hopkins and his heart. The gloom is created through
the contradiction of day bringing the darkness of night, the blow, the
bitterness, the "fell". (The word "fell" is multiply ambiguous as it
also has the sense 'gall', therefore, 'rancour', both of which senses

are exploited in the sonnet. The word "gall" is used in the sestet.)
Hopkins feels not only mentally battered, but also physically battered
and bruised by his dark struggle. The darkness of his mind has beaten
him down.

The spontaneity and immediacy of his reflection on his experience are
expressed through the direct address to his heart, the exclamations, the
deletions, the repetitions, the use of fronting, and the use of the
plural first person pronoun, "we". The exclamations "What hours, O what
black hoürs", "what sights", "[what] ways" are all reminiscent structurally
of colloquial responses to awesome experiences whether harrowing or joyful.
Each of these phrases is moved from their normal post-verb predicate
phrase position to before the subject-verb sequence, so that they are
foregrounded.

                we have spent   (What hours)
                you, heart, saw   (what sights)
                you [heart] went   ([what] ways)

The effect of the foregrounding and the deletions is to catalogue the
time, the sights and the journey so there is a multiplicity of
experience. By foregrounding the phrases, the verbs are isolated at
the end of their respective sentences so that the emphasis falls on the
actions: "spent, "saw" and "went". Thus there is a cataloguing of both
the nouns and the verbs, which (further associated through alliteration)
reinforces the impression of varied experience. All the verbs are past
tense forms which reflect the narrative nature of the lines: something
which is remembered and which is reflected upon.

The use of the first person plural pronoun "we" implies an exclusivity

and a sharing of the experience, but the use of "you" suggests the

experience as one in which Hopkins's heart was an innocent companion

who played a passive role. Yet it is his heart which "saw" and which

travelled the way and, like his mind, is now "spent". The past participle

form of the verb 'spend', "spent", is multiply ambiguous:

```
4     to pass (time, one's life) in some action or state (ME)
5     to use up, to exhaust or consume by use;  to wear out (ME)
9a    to expend or employ(speech or language) (late ME)
 c    to shed (tears, blood) (arch 1602)
10    to use superfluously, wastefully;  to throw away (late ME)
11    to allow time to pass by;  to live or stay (through a certain
      period) to the end.
```

<div align="right">(OED)</div>

In its predicative form, the past participle "spent" has the senses:

```
2     passed, gone, come to an end
3     completely exhausted and lost.
```

As Hopkins explains in the second quatrain, he has "spent" his life in

this state of torment and is exhausted and lost. Through the dark

journey of the night he has fought the instinctive feelings of his heart

with the rational urgings of his mind. He has shed tears in his "lament"

which "Is cries countless". Both he (his mind) and his heart have

lived through the experience and it is past, but as the light of day has

been darkened by the memory of night, so the experience is "spent" but

only for the moment; the experience must recur because his mind has not

yet seen the light - it is still locked in darkness.

The conversational tone is sustained in the second quatrain through the
declarative pronouncement "with witness I speak this" and through the use
of the first person pronoun,"I". The use of the word "speak", in
association with "witness", emphasises the impression of someone 'bearing
witness' through personal experience to the veracity of an experience or
event. Through the use of the 'negative' co-ordinator "but", the next
sentence qualifies this statement, initially implying reservation but
later increasing in degree the witness he offers. By contrasting his
use of the word "Hours" as what he might "say" with what he "means" -
"Hours I mean years, mean life", Hopkins implies that "Hours" is an
understatement and that in fact the duration of his suffering has been
far longer. The progression from "Hours" to "years" to "life" and the
deletion of "I" in "[I] mean life" suggest the urgency of his need to
articulate the length of the fact of his suffering, so that the phrase
itself becomes a cry.

By introducing the next sentence of this quatrain with the 'positive'
co-ordinator "and", it is suggested that not only is the suffering
lifelong, but the crying also. His "lament", his passionate expression
of grief, is composed of an infinity of "spent" tears. The melody
itself is the sound of his crying. The enjambment of line 6 results in
an ambiguity which suggests that his lifelong suffering is his "lament"
and introduces "lament" as the dirge sounded by his cries. The word
"countless" is also ambiguous. Both its sense of 'infinite' and its
sense of 'to count for nothing' are exploited. The ambiguity itself
is exploited through the inversion of the normal attributive Adj + N order

153.

to N + Adj ("cries countless"). The inversion also ensures the
association of "countless" with the second occurrence of "cries" and,
through the similé marker "like", with "dead letters". Thus his lament
is not only never-ending, it is unanswered and disregarded. (The words
"dead letters" reinforce this impression, because such letters are those
which lie unclaimed and undelivered and from which no response can,
therefore, be expected because the recipient no longer lives at that
address.)

The last line of the octave is ambiguous because there is no clear
referent for "dearest him". It could refer either to a beloved earthly
friend who might have been the recipient of letters ("cries") from
Hopkins or to Christ as the non-responsive recipient of the cries (which
are thus like dead-letters because they go unheard). The lack of
conventional capitalisation for "him" when referring to Christ, exploits
the ambiguity and makes more poignant the interjected "alas!" because it
suggests utter isolation, both from God and from man.

The poignancy of the last lines of the octave is a foil for the harsh
condemnatory tone of the first sentence of the sestet, "I am gall, I am
heartburn". The function of the first person pronoun "I" is different
from that of its function in the second quatrain in which the protagonist
bears witness. In the first line of the sestet the function is admonitory
and denigratory. The protagonist pours scorn upon himself. The
co-ordinating structure of the sentence emphasises the bitterness of
his self (and refers retrospectively to "fell" as "gall"). He, himself,

is what has soured his soul and hurt his heart (as he recognises
explicitly in "My own heart let me more have pity on" (No 69 discussed
in 4.2.4).) The next sentence of the sestet (the second half of line 9
to the end of line 11) accounts for his being "gall" and "heartburn" in
terms of "God's most deep decree" (line 9) that sinners must suffer the
bitterness of sin, the reward of which, from the Fall, is death. In being
cast out of paradise Adam lost for man immortality and God's compassion.
Thus, because he is sinful, Hopkins's taste of himself is as bitter as
gall.   (Compare Notes, Gardner and MacKenzie, 1980: 229.)

The images of line 11, of which each NP + V pair alliterates so that
each image is unified, all refer to aspects of human creation:

> Bones built
> flesh filled
> blood brimmed

These are all aspects of God's perfect creation of Man, which man
through his sin has soiled, so that the very vitality of the body is a
constant reminder of the bitterness of sin. Adam's sudden consciousness
of his nakedness revealed his sin to God. So it was that the body became
the mortal part of the dualism of body and soul, which part is a
constant reminder of sin and a constant torment to the soul.

Gardner and MacKenzie (Notes, 1980: 289) point to a possible structural
ambiguity in line 12. The subject NP of "sours" may be either "Selfyeast
of spirit" or "a dull dough". The latter possibility seems illogical
in that 'yeast' is the active catalyst which will make dough either
'live' or "dull". If the yeast is 'dead', the dough will "sour" and

not rise, be "dull". It appears then that the more likely NP subject
for "sours" is a "Selfyeast of spirit". Yet, the sentence structure
could be

Object NP	Subject NP	Verb
Selfyeast of spirit	a dull dough	sours

This structure would be an example of object fronting, a foregrounding
move which places emphasis on the object of a sentence. (This is the
move which Hopkins has used in lines 2 and 3 and in line 14 of No 65 and
line 1 of No 67). Thus the emphasis is laid on "Selfyeast of spirit" so
that the implication would be that "a dull dough" (the sinful body) sours
the "Selfyeast of spirit" (the vital soul). It does not seem crucial,
however, which reading is 'correct' in that, as so often in Hopkins,
the ambiguity is itself functional as it stresses the interaction of
body and soul and that the one affects the other.

The introduction in line 12 of the first person pronoun "I" after the
musing conclusion of "Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours" leads to
Hopkins's rueful acceptance that those who die unrepentant sinners ("The
lost") are, like him, exiled from God. The word "scourge", with its
connotations of punishment and flagellation, is linked to "decree" (line
9) and "curse" (line 11), not because sinners are punished directly by
God, but because they punish and lash themselves through their sin, which,
through free will, they choose to commit. Thus, like Adam who was to
labour by the sweat of his brow beyond the gates of paradise all the
days of his life, sinners in Hell labour in blood and sweat and tears
against the darkness, fear and desolation of the separation from God.

Although Gardner and MacKenzie (Notes, 1980: 189) consider that "but worse" applies to "The lost", it seems more likely, on the basis of Catholic belief in Hell and Purgatory, that "but worse" applies to Hopkins's suffering. In the Catholic tradition, "The lost" are just that. Hopkins, however, is not lost, he knows his sins and he has time to redeem himself and to gain absolution for his sins - knowing his choice, his suffering is worse than that of "The lost" because they are unknowing.

Most noticeable in this sonnet is the conversational tone which lacks the contrasts of defiance, acquiescence and querulousness of the previous two sonnets. In this sonnet, Hopkins seems to have accepted his desolation and is able to consider it objectively. In this poem there is none of the hope which percolates through the emotional turmoil of "Carrion Comfort" nor is there the pragmatic cynicism of the last line of "No worst,": "all/Life death does end and each day dies with sleep". Each of the declarative statements in sonnet 67 lacks the exclamatory phrasing and interjections of the previous two poems. Even the exclamations to the heart suggest woeful sighs at the wonder of the terrible journey, rather than excitement or frustrated anger. The lexical items of the apparently exclamatory phrases in lines 2 and 3 are all controlled and unaggressive. This impression is reinforced by the lack of plosives (relatively harsh sounds) in these two lines. Generally, fricatives and glides (relatively soft sounds) interact so that there is a suggestion of whispering.

```
What hours, O what (black) hoürs we have spent
[wʰ] [h] [z]  [wʰ]            [h] [z][w][h]  [s]

This night!  what sights you, heart, saw;  ways you went!
[ʃ][s]        [wʰ] [s] [s][y] [h]    [s]    [s][z][y] [w]
```

Glides	Fricatives

[wʰ] voiceless (velar)	[s] voiceless [z] voiced (alveolar)
[w] voiced (velar)	[ʒ] voiced (dental)
[y] voiced (palatal)	[h] voiceless (glottal)

There is only one occurrence of a voiced plosive in the two lines; the voiced bilabial plosive [b] (used so effectively in "The Windhover") occurs in "black" (which also ends on a plosive, that of the voiceless velar [k]). The emphasis in the line thus falls on this monosyllable which refers back semantically to "fell" and "dark" in line 1 and to "night" in line 3. The word "night" is the only other word in lines 2 and 3 which has no initial or final fricative or glide consonant. The initial nasal sound [n] of "night" is, like a plosive, a stop consonant. There is thus complete closure of the vocal tract. But, whereas the plosives are non-resonant sounds, the nasals are voiced and sonorant. The word "night" ends on the voiceless plosive [t]. The word "night", like "black", is thus also foregrounded phonetically because it contrasts with the sounds of the other words in the line. The diacritic marking of "hoürs" as bisyllabic suggests both the desolation and the extended duration of the hours. This articulation of "hoürs" as a bisyllabic word is similar to the type of word-lengthening used in spoken discourse to stress and thus intensify the expression of a chosen word - thus super becomes 'su:per' or cold becomes 'co-eld'. The metre of the line is thus affected and the stress falls on the first syllable of "hoürs" [aw].

In those sentences in which the words themselves are emotive, there is no exclamatory punctuation:

Line 9   I am gall, I am heartburn.

The words "gall" and "heartburn" are both highly expressive, but in lacking any indication of exclamation, the sentence becomes a statement of fact, rather than a breastbeating denunciation of the self. Similarly, the sestet does not end with an exclamation. Thus the potential emotive quality of "lost", "scourge", "sweating" and "worse" is neutralised by the lack of the exclamation mark. The sentence is a controlled expression of Hopkins's recognition of himself as his own "scourge". The whole sonnet has an air of pensive hopelessness.

4.2.4   No 69   "My own heart let me more have pity on ..."

69

My own heart let me more have pity on; let
Me live to my sad self hereafter kind,
Charitable; not live this tormented mind
With this tormented mind tormenting yet.

I cast for comfort I can no more get
By groping round my comfortless, than blind
Eyes in their dark can day or thirst can find
Thirst's all-in-all in all a world of wet.
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.

In this sonnet there are several shifts of mood. The first quatrain of
the octave makes use exclusively of the first person imperative
subjunctive ("let me"). In the second quatrain the main clause verb is
present indicative ("I cast"), but each of the subordinate clause verbs
is dominated syntactically by the modal "can" which implies 'possibility'.
This 'possibility' is negated, however, by "no" in line 5, which
modification negates also the comparative clause verbs "get" (understood
in line 7) and "find" (line 7). In its second person address, the
sestet reveals a combination of ordinary imperative forms ("come" (line 9),
"call off" (line 10), and "leave" (line 11)) and subjunctive imperatives
("let be" (line 10), "let (joy) size" (line 11), and "[let] see you"
(line 13)). The second person subjunctive imperatives of the sestet
contrast with those of the first person subjunctive imperatives of the
first quatrain in address. Whereas the subjunctive imperatives of the
first quatrain appeal to a second person to let the speaker take action,
those of the sestet appeal to the second person to allow the third person
to take action. This shift to the third person adds an objectivity to
the sestet which suggests that Hopkins allies himself with his heart
against his mind.

Each quatrain is a sentence. The first quatrain is a co-ordinate
catalogue of the poet's pleas. The second quatrain is a complex sentence
composed of a relative clause which expands on the NP antecedent of
the main clause. The relative clause has in it two juxtaposed compara-
tives.

First quatrain:

> My own heart let me more have pity on;
> [and] let/Me live to my sad self hereafter kind,/[and]
> Charitable;
> [and] [let me] not live this tormented mind

Such cataloguing together with the use of the first person imperative
subjunctive adds to the litany effect of the lines which suggests the
cries and invocations of the suffering soul wandering in a spiritual
wilderness.

Because the NP phrase "My own heart" has been moved from its post verbal
position to the front of the line, emphasis is placed on it so that there
is recognition of Hopkins's realisation that it is he, himself, who
punishes his heart. As a priest confessor he would show pity at the
sorrow of his penitent in his priestly absolution of the penitent's
sins. Crucial to the priest in his role as confessor, are charity and
kindness. Hopkins implies that his mind has castigated, and still is
castigating, his heart in self-examination in a way in which no confessor
would do. The repetition of 'torment' in the past participle form,
"tormented", and in the present participle form, "tormenting", exploits
the tenses to emphasise the past, present and continuous sufferings of
the mind which lead to the recurrent, insistent, battering of his
heart by his mind. The word "yet" adds pathos to the line because it
implies that, even while he pleads, his mind is in torment.

The second quatrain acts as a background to the poet's pleas. It
explains the poet's anxiety through the use of a relative clause and two
embedded comparatives:

161.

Main clause
I cast for comfort

Relative clause with embedded co-ordinative ("or") comparatives
("than")
[which] I can no more get/By groping round my comfortless
than blind/Eyes in their dark can day [get]
or thirst can find/Thirst's [comfort] all-in-all in all a world of wet

(The word "get" is taken to be the verb understood in the first half of

the co-ordinative comparative because the structure is disjunctive

co-ordinative and a compared form logically requires the same verb (or

modifier) as that of the form to which it is being compared: I play

better than he [plays].)

By using the absolutes of the blind never being able to see and of

thirsty mariners not being able to quench their thirst from the sea,

Hopkins expresses forcibly the hopelessness he feels and relates to -

the stumbling, hesitant ("groping") progress of the blind, and the

frantic behaviour and hallucinations of the thirsty. The connotations

of "cast" ('search', 'look for here and there') contrast with the

certainty of those of "get" - 'to capture, to gain, to win' - which

are then also contrasted with "groping" and "find" ('to look for').

But the contrast between the positive "get" and the uncertainty of

"cast", "groping" and "find" are neutralised by "no" in line 5, because

it negates "get". In his spiritual darkness and desolation, Hopkins is

as abject as the blind in their darkness and the thirsty in their thirst.

The repetition of "all" results in ambiguity as it adds magnitude to the

162.

suffering and implies that there is for each suffering ("comfortless")
really only one remedy: for the blind, sight; for the thirsty, pure
water, and for Hopkins, Christ's pity - the "all-in-all". The use of
adjectival form of 'comfort', "comfortless", instead of the more
usual substantive form 'comfortlessness' accentuates the lack of comfort
and is thus far more striking than either 'comfortlessness' or even a word
such as 'hopeless' or 'hopelessness' which would place emphasis on 'hope'
rather than 'comfort' and blurr Hopkins's contention that hope lies in
the promise of comfort and not vice versa.

The sestet reveals a shift in focus from the invocation of the octave to
an imperative address to the mind. Hopkins, having appealed for help in
his torment, commands his mind to release his heart. The repetition of
"self" introduced in line 2 in "my sad self" emphasises Hopkins's
recognition that he, himself, must resolve his heart's torment. It is
his mind that has left his heart in its sorry state. He demands that
his mind stop questioning, so that he will be able to accept in faith and
with joy, God's gifts.

The tautological addresses of the first line of the sestet "Soul, self ...
Jackself" express both Hopkins's recognition of the inseparability of
"soul" and "self" and his rueful recognition of his mind as the cause of
his sorrow. The order of the words in its downgrading from "soul"
(supposedly sublime) to "Jackself" (insignificant) suggests Hopkins's
attempt to minimise the power of his mind over his heart, and thus his
life, by denigrating his own being as insignificant and inconsequential.
This depreciatory attitude is reinforced through the words "poor" and
"jaded". The word "poor", besides the sense of being 'indigent', also

has the senses of 'humility, insignificance'; 'sorry, paltry';
'spiritless, despicable' and 'hapless'. Each of these senses modifies
"Jackself", which carries connotations of 'the simple everyday self'/
'insignificant', and the implication of 'knavery' (OED). The senses
of the words thus overlap and reinforce one another and the general
reprobatory tone which is further implied by the senses of the word
"jaded" (line 10). Traditionally, the term "jaded" was applied
contemptuously to a horse which was worn-out, sorry or inferior.
The term has since come to be used of someone (earlier a woman) worn
out by hard work, who grows languid and dull, who flags, because he has
been driven too hard. Through the proximity of the words "Jackself",
"poor", and "jaded", Hopkins implies that his mind has driven his heart
so that it flags. Hence not only is his heart jaded, so is his self. The
whole sonnet is permeated by the world-weariness reminiscent of "wring-world"
(line 6, No 64) and "a chief-/woe, world-sorrow" (lines 5 and 6, No 65).

The word "You" (line 10) functions in three ways: as the object NP of
the verbal "do advise" in the enjambment of line 9; as the subject of
the imperative "let be"; and, because it is modified by "jaded", as an
exhortatory address form which then reinforces the admonishing tone of
lines 9 and 10 which extends to the other imperatives of lines 10, 11 and
13. Each of the succeeding imperatives have "You" (the usual NP subject
imperative form) as an understood subject.

        [you] call of
        [you] leave
        [you] let joy size
        [you] [let God] see you

(The phrase "see you" may also be colloquial for 'Don't you see?' (compare

the Welsh 'Look you!') but in the light of Hopkins's avowed religious
beliefs, the phrase is more likely to be an exhortation to his soul to
let God in so that He might help the soul.)

The positive action by the agent "you", inherent in the verbs "let be",
"call off" and "leave", stands in contrast to "joy" and "[God]" being the
active agent of "size" and "see" respectively. The irony is that only if
the mind allows (Latin licet - it is allowed) can "joy size" or "[God] see".
The irony lies in the paradox of the doctrine of free will existing together
with the doctrine of an omnipotent God. The doctrine of free will includes
the choice of man to let, or not let, God's munificence reach him. Thus only
if the mind 'allows' it, may "joy size" 'govern', 'control' and 'be the
measure' of life. (Compare Notes, Gardner and MacKenzie, 1980: 290, for two
readings of "Let joy size".)

The phrase "call off" (line 10) suggests the harrying of prey by dogs.
This phrase used in conjunction with "thoughts" extends the implication
of 'being harried' to the heart's being 'worried' by the mind. The
implication of the verb "call off" is, like that of "let", that it is the
"self" that must "call off", that it is the "self" who must be the instigator
of relief. Parallel to the image of the harried heart is that of a frail
plant (the comfort, the hope) which is being choked off, so that it cannot
establish itself or grow, because it has no root-room.

The fragmented phrases of the final three lines of the sonnet are effective
because they suggest the way in which one offers several reasons in an
attempt to persuade or exhort oneself, or another, of the efficacy of the

advice one is giving. That advice/counsel is being given is evident
from both the use of the verbs "advise" and the fragmented justifications.
The tone of the last three lines of the sestet is less exhortatory and
more gently persuasive than the first lines because there is only one
imperative, that of "see you". The lexical items are themselves less
emotionally 'loaded' than those of the first three lines.

The use (in line 12) of the WH-Question words "when" and "what", as an
adverb and as noun respectively, refers implicitly to the questions of the
mind, the 'what, why, where'of sonnets like "Carrion Comfort" (No 64) and
"No worst ..." (No 65). The injunction of line 12, to leave the questions
to God, is extended to the end of the poem. The mind must leave the "when"
and "what" to God because God is beyond and before time. His light will
shine when he ordains it, not when man demands it. Ironically, man will see
it only if man chooses to let it reach him. The image of the sky lit between
dark folds of mountains is a dramatic metaphor for a smile as the involuntary
expression of joy. The proximity of the word "wrung" to "smile" (line 12)
and the grammatical relationship of the verb "'s (not) wrung" to the
subject NP "smile" adds a pathos to the line which reduces the rather
saccharine (while childlike) quality of the last two lines. The verb
"wrung" is far more like the verbs of the octave ("tormented" and "groping",
for example) than those of the sestet. There is an agony of effort inherent
in "wrung" that casts back to the explicit sorrows of the octave and only
implicitly to the word "jaded" of the second line of the sestet. The word
"wrung" suggests both the 'wringing' of the heart and soul in the agony of
despair (compare "wring-world", No 64, line 6) and that God's smile (love/
munificence) cannot be "wrung". It is a gift He gives freely, but one which
can only be received if the recipient is open (at 'peace with himself') to
the gift.

The mood of this sonnet is less emotive than the previous three. The structural crux of the poem is the predominant use of the subjunctive imperative form "let ..." which implies a longing and a hope quite different from the frustration and rage expressed through the paralleling of positive and negative declaratives and questions of a sonnet like "Carrion Comfort".

4.3 Conclusion

The language of the later sonnets seems to reveal far more exploitation of syntactic structures (compare Milroy, 1977: 198-199) than is apparent in the 'Welsh' sonnets in which effects have more often been achieved through lexical heightening, deletions, and phonetic effects. Hopkins's language reveals his ability to manipulate and exploit the levels of language so artistically that each level sustains and highlights the others.

When one remembers that Hopkins's view of the language of verse was that it should be "current language heightened", one recognises in his deletions, interjections, fragmentations and shifts in sentence type, the qualities of spoken language. In poems of distress like "Carrion Comfort", the protagonist's anxiety is expressed through the mixing of grammatical structures so that ordinary real-life spoken agitation is communicated through the verse. In these sonnets, Hopkins seldom describes the situation. He uses the language to make the experience

current and immediate so that the reader experiences with the
protagonist. Even in a more doleful sonnet such as "My own heart ..."
(No 60), the impression communicated is one of actual discourse rather
than of reportage. Almost invariably the dominant tense is a present
tense form. The use of the present tenses adds to the reader's sense of
current experience and expresses Hopkins's feeling that he will continue
to suffer in this way.

CHAPTER FIVE

Evidence of Hopkins's Poetic Theory in his Verse

5.1 Introduction

The crux of Hopkins's poetic theory lies in his belief that the language
of verse should be "current language heightened". His determination to
capture the "inscape" of things led to the adoption of the qualities of
spoken discourse with all its freedom and creativity. Hopkins uses the
freedom of spoken discourse and yet remains within the rigorous confines
of the Petrarchan sonnet form. His sensitivity to language enabled him
to recognise both the limits imposed on a speaker and the channels of
creativity open to him. Thus Hopkins exploits syntactic structures (the
deletions, sentence types, interruptions and fragments) of the performance
grammar of discourse and all the areas of lexical innovation open to the
speaker through neologisms, borrowings and back-formations, among others.
Hopkins strove to find the inscape not only of the things of the world
and of abstract ideas and feelings, but also of words themselves.

The heightening of current language occurs through an increase in density
of spoken language structures within a poem, delimited as it is by time
and space. The other artificial disciplining in the sonnets of spoken
language forms (other than the use of phonetic devices on juxtaposed
semantically related items) is in the density of parallel structures of

similarity or contrast. Although such paralleling may occur in discourse, particularly in that which is either persuasive or argumentative, it is likely to be spread over a far looser string of utterances.

While Milroy (1977: 200) considers repetition and compression to be the basic features of Hopkins's heightening of current language, the position in this thesis is that repetition and compression are themselves qualities of spoken language and that it is in the density of occurrence of structures and the paralleling of such structures that the heightening occurs. It would also seem that deletion and reduction to prevent the repetition of similar phrases occurs more often than simple repetition or restatement of ideas. Compare the answers to questions and the S-V deletion discussed below, page 174 forward. A further heightening occurs because Hopkins superimposes the "figure of spoken sound" on the "figure of grammar": he deliberately juxtaposes (for example) semantically related words so that they alliterate to an extent which seldom occurs in the everyday speech of ordinary people.

5.2 Current Language and its Heightening

5.2.1 The Lexical Innovation of Current Language and its Heightening in the Sonnets

5.2.1.1 The Lexical Innovations of Spoken Language found in the Sonnets

Basic to an understanding of language is recognition of its dynamic and creative nature. In a world of changing things and ideas, it is perfectly normal for a native speaker to coin words through compounding, borrowing and derivation (for example) to fill the incidental gaps in the lexicon

of his language. Derivatives and compounds may be forms similar
semantically or phonologically to existing words. Thus coolth is an
analogous formation from warmth, and enthuse a back-formation from
enthusiasm. Hopkins's "Selfyeast" (No 67, line 12) is similar structurally
to self-pity or self gratification; his "Betweenpie", like between times.
His longer compounds which include "Mealed-with-yellow" (No 33, line 11)
and "no-man-fathomed" (No 65, line 10) are hardly different in structure
from the now clichéd I'm-all-right-Jack, happy-go-lucky or high-and-mighty,
which are all lexicalised phrases. Compounding may allow the assimilation
into one item of the semantic yield of each of the separate items. Thus
"flake-dove" (No 32, line 7) incorporates all the senses of dove and all
the senses of flake and allows new senses of the two words in conjunction.
(Compare Milroy, 1977: 213.)

Ordinary language regularly uses affixes to derive various category forms
from one another, so that the original word can change categories: a
verb becomes a noun for example. The word self is generally used to mark
pronouns either as emphatics or reflexives. What is unusual about "Jackself"
(No 69, line 9) is the combination of the proper noun Jack with self. The
word wimple ("wimpling" in No 36, line 4) is most usually a noun, but is
also a specialised hawking term which may be a verb. The addition of the
present participle marker -ing to it in "The Windhover" is then not unusual
nor is the use of the word as a modifier, a frequent ordinary language
function of both the present and past participles - compare 'running water'.
The word "comfortless" (No 69, line 6) is the usual negative derivative
adjective form from the noun comfort - comfort + less (as opposed to
un + comfort + able). What makes the word unusual is its linguistic
position as a noun. It is part of the prepositional phrase "round

my comfortless" and is modified by the possessive adjective "my".

The word has thus been recategorised. Both these environments are

those of the noun.

$$\text{PS Rules (Simplified)} \quad NP \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{lll} (Det) & (\underline{Adj}!) & N \\ & & Pro \end{array} \right\}$$

$$S \rightarrow NP \quad VP$$

$$VP \rightarrow V \quad (\underline{NP}) \; (NP) \; (Prep \; P) \; (Adj) \; (Adv)$$

$$Prep \; P \rightarrow Prep \; NP$$

(Compare Chapter Two above, page 56 and Milroy, 1977: 220)

Borrowing, either from earlier forms of a language or from another

language, is yet another way in which lexical innovation occurs in

ordinary language.   While Hopkins abhorred archaisms, he

exploited archaic senses of words in current use. The words "durance"

(No 65, line 12) and "brinded" (No 37, line 2) are the older forms of

endurance and _brindled_ respectively. The word "fell" (No 67, line 1) is

used to introduce ambiguously the sense 'gall' introduced in line 9 of

the sonnet in the actual word "gall". (Milroy (1977: 160) implies that

a word such as "brinded" is a Hopkinsian backward formation rather than

a genuine archaic form.)

Consideration of examples such as those discussed above makes it evident

that Hopkins exploited and extended the ordinary language rules in his

striving to find the 'right word' to express his thoughts and emotions.

5.2.1.2 Lexical Heightening

Underlying all Hopkins's theory is the concept of comparison. Hopkins's

compounds do not derive their originality from the structures of lexical

innovation but from being put into unusual semantic combinations.

Milroy makes the following remark:

> Thus, even when such pairs or sets exist in standard usage with standard meanings, Hopkins is capable of using the words in new ways and suggesting new meanings and associations by exploiting the internal relationships in sub-systems which he has perceived in the language.
>
> (Milroy, 1977: 160 (my emphasis))

It is by combining (on the basis of the ordinary language rules) normally unassociated forms that Hopkins is able to suggest new meanings and to revitalise standard words and expressions. The juxtaposing of strings of such 'new' items further heightens each of the forms and adds increasingly to the range of meaning of the phrases and lines. There is a mutual trading-off in meaning between the items within the limits of the context of the poem. Hopkins induces the reader to find the "likeness" or "unlikeness" of the items with themselves and with the rules and items of ordinary grammar, so that new relationships are perceived. Milroy explains cogently:

> ...Hopkins's coinings or special uses of words depends, therefore, on the relationships contracted by the words in two different dimensions of language: on the one hand, the underlying systems to which the words are made to belong, and on the other, the order in which Hopkins actually employs them - their context in the poems.
>
> (Milroy, 1977: 161 (my emphasis))

It is not that the structure of the neologisms is different in form from that current in ordinary speech that heightens the innovations, but the unusual collocations and structural positions in which the items occur and also the frequency with which they occur. Hopkins uses more innovation in one sonnet that any 'normal speaker' would in one piece of discourse.

Unusual collocations are further heightened through the use of phonetic
devices such as alliteration, assonance, vowelling-off and rhyme. Unusual
comparisons are foregrounded by their similarity in sound or by their
complete dissimilarity. Hopkins was adept at placing rhyming pairs in
similar typographic positions - usually at the end of a line, but sometimes
before a caesura. The many alliterating forms (such as "couple-coloured"
(No 37, line 2) and "dapple-dawn-drawn" (No 36, line 2)) which are paralleled
structurally with other alliterating groups were noted in Chapter Three.
By making words in close proximity look and sound similar, Hopkins is able
to guide the reader to recognise relationships which he would not normally
perceive.

The effect of the unusual compounding, concatenations and imposed phonetic
similarity is a density of sound and meaning seldom used in normal speech.
The compression of normally disparate forms into compounds and their
heightening phonetically captures the intensity of the mood of the poet
in a way which would be achieved in spoken language through pitch,
amplitude and gesture, for example.

5.2.2   The Syntactic Structures of Current Language and their
        Heightening in the Sonnets

5.2.2.1 The Syntactic Structures of Spoken Language found in the Sonnets

Deletions, fragments, exclamations, direct speech forms and the shifting
use of the various sentence-types are all basic to spoken language. Hopkins
employs all the forms in the sonnets under discussion.

The compression in the sonnets is achieved mainly through deletions of various kinds so that similar clause types or major categories are concatenated in a string. (Compare Milroy, 1977: 197.) The effect of such concatenation is to emphasise the major structures or categories and minimise items which are semantically empty or less relevant in the poem. The most common deletions used are those involving the Subject NP, the verb, or both. Such elliptical structures are perfectly normal in spoken discourse because it is context bound and the deletions are thus recoverable from context.

Q   Are you going?   A   I am [going]
Q   When are you going?   A   [I am going] to-morrow

The fragments 'I am' and 'to-morrow' are fragments only on the surface level because they are reductions of a fuller structure which is in answer to a question. The deleted elements are those which are repetitions of information carried in the question.

Similarly, a sentence such as I can run, jump, hop but not skip, is reduced from the following sentences (the conjoining connectives are bracketed):

1   I can run   (and)
2   [I can] jump   (and)
3   [I can] hop   (but)
4   [I can] not skip

In the reduced sentence the Subject NP pronoun has been deleted in each of the sentences other than 1 and the sentence connective and has been deleted between sentences 1 and 2. The sonnets nearly all show evidence of such deletions:

No 65: lines 5 to 7

My cries heave ... [and my cries] huddle ... [and my cries] ....
wince and sing -
Then [my cries] lull, then [my cries] leave off.

No 32: lines 3 to 8

Each NP has understood (before it) "Look at".   For example:

[Look at] The bright boroughs, and [look at] the circle-citadels
 there!
[Look at] Down in dim woods the diamond delves!

<div align="right">(lines 3 and 4)</div>

"Pied Beauty" (No 37) is yet another sonnet which shows evidence of a
great deal of deletion. The phrase "Glory be to God" (or a slight
variant with "for") is understood at the beginning of at least each line.
Some or other sentence connective is also anticipated.

The deletion of sentence connectives is standard to spoken speech in
which only the final pair of a list is conjoined by the connective.
Similarly, the complementiser that and the relative can be deleted.
(Compare Milroy, 1977: 214.) In sonnet No 64, line 9, the main clause
as well as so and so that have been deleted:

    ... [so] That my chaff might fly; [so that] my grain lie, sheer
    and clear.

In No 65, line 13, the relative pronoun which has been deleted:

    creep/ ... under a comfort [which] serves in a whirlwind:

Such a deletion is not 'permissible' in ordinary spoken language in this
context, although it is conceivably dialectal.

<div align="right">/176. ....</div>

In No 69, line 5, <u>which</u> has again been deleted:

   I cast for comfort [which] I can no more get

In this context such a deletion would be permissible in normal spoken language.

(The crucial difference between the two forms seems to be that ordinary standard spoken language allows the deletion of the object relative pronoun only and not of the subject.)

Ordinary spoken English is far less inclined to use the sometimes ponderous relative embeddings of written speech. Spoken English is also more inclined to reduce full subordinate clauses to complementary phrases of various kinds. All these forms of reduction involve deletions of the type noticed in the sonnets, but the sonnets carry them out more fully and where it would not always be permissible in spoken language. The concatenation of appositional phrases noted in the sonnets in Chapters Three and Four all result from deletions and reductions in one way or another.

The 'mixing' of sentence types is a striking feature of spoken language partly because, in the speech act, continuous feedback is a basic element. Thus questions, negative and positive declaratives, and imperatives are found randomly spread throughout spoken discourse. Hopkins has exploited this quality of discourse in such sonnets as Nos 64 and 65 so that the sonnets themselves sound like conversation. The octave of "Carrion Comfort" (No 64) shows striking use of dogmatic negative statements and querulous questions. The sestet begins with the WH-question word "Why?". The rest of the question has been deleted as the content of the previous quatrain is its reference. The question word is followed by apparently declarative

reasons for the speaker's suffering. However, the line is ambiguous as to sentence type, as is evident through the use of "Nay" (line 10), which rejects the suggested reasons given in line 9 for his being tormented. The lack of question mark at the end of line 9, on the other hand, implies the declarative.

Question "Why?"

Answer   Ambiguous: declarative/interrogative

     [Main cl] [so] That my chaff might fly;
  and [Main cl] [so that] my grain might lie, sheer and
     clear.

Lines 10 and 11 reject the proffered reasons for the harrowing of Hopkins's soul. The only negative is "Nay" which rejects the possible answer to "Why?". The verbs of these lines are all positive and the clauses declarative.

Answer Nay ... my heart (lo!) lapped strength
     [and] [my heart] stole joy
     [and] [my heart] would laugh
     [and] [my heart] [would] chéer

(The ellipsis replaces the foregrounded place adverbial phrases "in all that toil, [in all] that coil" and the adverbial clause of time "since (seems) I kissed the rod,/[the] Hand rather". Each of the verbs, "lapped", "stole", "would laugh", "[would] chéer", is modified by the adverbials.)

Lines 12 and 13 are made up entirely of questions, each question being answered by a question:

Cheer whom through?
the hero whose heaven-handling flung me and the hero who fóot tród/Me?
or me that fought him?
O which one?
is it each one?

The effectiveness of these lines lies in the sudden change from the
declarative "[My heart would] chéer" (line 11) to "Cheer whom though?"
(line 12). The question "Cheer whom though?" occurring as it does as
an idea association suggests the suddenness of the new thought. Such
sudden associations in the form of sentence fragments occur throughout
the sonnets as parentheses:

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-  slack they may be -                              (No 64, line 2)
-  the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!  (No 36, line 8)
(who knows how?)                                   (No 37, line 8)
```

These parentheses (often also exclamatory) add to the impression of
conversation which pervades the sonnets. The above structures and
alternations of sentence-type are little different from those found in
ordinary spoken argumentative discourse. In themselves then they do not
constitute heightened current language. The octave of sonnet 65 ("No
worst, there is none.") shows similar shifts between sentence-type:

<u>Lines 1 and 2</u> Declarative (Negative first half line. The rest
of the line positive, with negativity
embodied in the lexical items, eg: "pitch",
"grief" and "pangs".)

<u>Lines 3 and 4</u> Interrogative

<u>Lines 5, 6 and 7</u> Declarative

<u>Line 8</u> Imperative (Main clause with embedded subordinate adverbial)

Lines 3 and 4 appear parenthetical because they occur between two sets of
declarative sentences which are related in content. An association
between the two sets of declaratives and the questions is implied.

Linked with such shifts in sentence-type is the use of the vocative and
of exclamations. As in informal speech, some vocatives are also
implicitly exclamatory and are used in conjunction with an interrogative.

"Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?

<div align="right">(No 65, line 4)</div>

The exclamatory effect is achieved not only through the connotations of the lexical items and the vocative "Mary" and its appositional phrase "mother of us", but also through the shift from the declarative of line 2 to the questions in lines 3 and 4. The exclamatory nature of line 3 is reinforced through the repetition of "Where, where".

Explicit exclamatory phrases occur throughout the sonnets.

ah!	(No 31, line 14)
Ah well!	(No 32, line 8)
ah my dear,	(No 36, line 13)
O my chevalier!	(No 36, line 11 also vocative)
O thou terrible,	(No 64, line 5 also vocative)
But ah,	(No 64, line 5)
lo!	(No 64, line 11)

All such exclamations add to the impression of spontaneous conversation and add, where the vocative is used with exclamation, to the impression of personal experience rather than of experience at a remove.

If most of the syntactic structures used by Hopkins in the sonnets are similar to those of normal spoken language, then one must consider how Hopkins employed the structures to 'heighten' current language.

5.2.2.2 Syntactic Heightening

It is the combination of different structures within the confines of each sonnet which foregrounds the structures. The dimensions of time (duration)

<div align="right"></div>

and space do not affect discourse. A poem, however, occupies both time and space. Hopkins has been able to imitate the shift in structural form peculiar to discourse by concentrating it in all its variety within the limits of the fourteen lines of the Petrarchan sonnet's formal structure: octave/sestet, quatrain/tercet and the volta between the octave and the sestet. The reductions and deletions of complementations, relatives and adverbials into juxtaposed strings of words or phrases, the deletion of repetitive NPs and verbs and the deletion of conjunctions all in the same utterance would be unusual in discourse. It was noted above (p 178) that in themselves the use of various syntactic structures do not constitute a heightening of current language. Used together in a sonnet, however, they do consitute a heightening, because they occur more frequently temporally and spatially and because there is more frequent repetition of structures than there would be in a spoken discourse of similar length and duration. The syntactic structures are themselves further heightened by the density of the lexical and phonetic heightening which occurs within them. Density of occurrence is thus a major factor in the heightening of current language structure in verse.

The second heightening factor is parallelism. Informal speech is far less organised both vertically and horizontally than the language of verse. Because there are no limits on time and space in informal speech, any amount of retracing of ideas, discontinuity of structures and separation of related ideas is possible. The addresser is able to rephrase and reorganise his conversation at will and the addressee is able to question the addresser at will. No form of written language allows such freedom. Although written speech can be made to have the appearance of informal

speech, written speech has to have order imposed upon it if it is to be coherent. The language of Hopkins's sonnets is stringently ordered so that, while the impression of informal discourse is overwhelming, the meaning of the poem is revealed through the formal relationship of the items and structures to each other.

Hopkins's third method of heightening is the imposition of the "figure of spoken sound" on the "figure of grammar". The "figure of spoken sound" includes not only the "lettering of syllables" (alliteration, assonance, consonance) but also the contractions and elisions of speech. Hopkins sometimes also negates normal word-stress patterns (either to improve the metre of the line or to emphasise an important word) by using diacritics, by typographical positioning, or by juxtaposing strongly stressed mono-syllabic words. The use of intonation and emphatic stress, possible in speech, has to be artificially marked in verse. Hopkins is also able, because of his highly developed language skills, to select his words for phonetic effects in ways which are uncommon to the ordinary speaker. Informal speech itself seldom shows any density of phonetic devices. (In fact, when such phonetic effects occur, they are immediately noticed and, very often, remembered. Advertising slogans rely on the 'originality' of such effects.)

Finally, spoken discourse generally implies at least an addresser and an addressee. The effect of conversation in Hopkins's verse is achieved by the mixing of the phatic and conative functions of language (discussed in Chapter Two) so that there is what Jakobson calls the "split addresser"

and the "split addressee". Almost exclusively, Hopkins uses first and second person pronouns with the effect of dialogue. This effect is heightened by the use of question and answer and of direct address and imperatives (all of which imply second person address).

5.3 Conclusion

What is different about Hopkins's verse when compared to the verse of other more conventional poets is his exploitation of current language forms. These include both the syntactic and lexical structures of informal speech. It is not the content matter of the poems which sets them off from other verse, but the way in which the content matter has been expressed and ordered. Much of Hopkins's verse was considered unpoetical because it contained the elements of informal speech.

Hopkins's verse is, however, not informal. It is highly structured and highly disciplined, both syntactically and lexically. Hopkins's intention was to capture the "inscape" of things which he felt could be expressed only through the spontaneity and emotive freedom of informal speech because informal speech is the normal expression of experience. In order to experience "inscape", its expression had to be tangible to Hopkins (both as writer and reader) usually, aurally and emotionally, never as reportage, always as current. (Hence the almost exclusive use in the sonnets of the present tense forms.) Each reading of each sonnet is a vital re-experience of living. Hopkins achieves this re-experience through exploiting the devices of spoken language and by extending their use beyond the limits of current language.

CONCLUSION

This thesis examines some of Hopkins's sonnets in the light of Hopkins's
views on poetics and in the light of modern stylistic theory. Milroy
(1977: 13) makes the point that "in order to understand the springs of
his poetic language it is far more important to understand Hopkins's
linguistic attitudes and interests in general than to investigate his
links with literary tradition". Fundamental to Hopkins's beliefs is
the conviction that verse is "current language heightened". The larger
part of this thesis has been concerned with an examination of the way in
which "current language" has been "heightened" in the sonnets through
the density of occurrence, exploitation and extension of the normal
lexical, phonetic and syntactic levels of language.

Consideration has also been given to the theories and work of such
writers as Jakobson, Levin, Riffaterre, and Reinhart, among others, in
the belief that many of Hopkins's ideas pre-empted those of later writers.
Jakobson refers to Hopkins's theories in his discussion of parallelism.
Levin's coupling differs very little from both Hopkins and Jakobson's
concept of parallelism. Levin's interest in deviations would probably
be criticised by Hopkins because deviation implies a deviation from a
norm (in this case ordinary language) while Hopkins saw poetic language
as heightened current language and, therefore, not deviant. Hopkins's
drive to find the inscape of things (and words), results in the kind of
compression which Levin discusses, but, although much of the compression

in Hopkins's verse results from deletion, it is not deletion of the
non-recoverable kind and there is no indication that such deletions
form part of the content of the sonnets. Riffaterre's theory that more
than one reading is necessary before one understands the poem one is
reading concurs with Hopkins's view that there are two levels of
comparison: the 'thing' with itself and the 'thing' with the world
outside. The language of the poem is compared with ordinary language and
then with the language in the rest of the poem. Hopkins's two levels
would possibly be: heightened language and the current language against
which the heightening has taken place.

The reader must acknowledge Hopkins's dictum that his verse is "current
language heightened", because Hopkins's model was, as he himself stressed,
speech not prose. As Milroy (1977: 21) points out "the essence of
'ordinary speech' ... is that it is a social activity, best observed in
conversation. It is context-tied - that is to say, it takes for granted
the context in which it takes place and will be vague and inaccurate
even about specifying objects referred to ..." (my emphasis). The
inconsistencies, ambiguities and lexical coinings of Hopkins's verse
are to be resolved in terms of each poem as context. Hopkins reveals
through his verse his belief that "Verse is speech having a marked
figure. ... It is the "figure of spoken sound" (Journal and Papers: 267).
The language of the sonnets shows a highly disciplined formalised structure
which merely gives the impression of the spontaneity and the informality
of speech; it is "current language heightened".

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