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A Study of Gerard Manley Hopkins

Howard E. Sylvester

SYLVESTER

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HOPKINS

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A STUDY OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

by

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CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION

The general aim of this study of Gerard Manley Hopkins is to add to the limited amount of knowledge concerning a poet whose influence within the past twenty years has been considerable. A corollary purpose of this paper, therefore, is to investigate and clarify some of the metrical experiments and practices of Hopkins. Critics, touching upon the verse-technique of Hopkins, have been cautious in their approach to his particular experiments in "sprung" and "counterpointed" rhythm. Various casual writings upon Hopkins have called attention to the poet's peculiarities of syntax, but the nature of these peculiarities has not been carefully or thoroughly explained. It is hoped that this investigation will contribute to a better understanding of Hopkins's work.

The first chapter of this study deals with the life of Hopkins, and suggests some of the things that may have led to his priestly vocation and the individuality of his poetry. The new material contained in the first chapter came from a study of Hopkins's note-books, papers, and letters. Only one biographical account of Hopkins has been written, that of Father G. F. Lahey, who is himself a Jesuit priest and whose work on that account may be expected to err a little in respect to Hopkins's vocation.[1]

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[1] G. F. Lahey, Gerard Manley Hopkins, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1930). 172 pp.

Chapter II is an examination of Hopkins's intellectual processes, with the intention of discovering the manner in which Hopkins viewed the external world, his vocation, and his art. It attempts to justify Hopkins's priesthood on the premise that religious discipline was instrumental in the development of his poetic gift, and it further attempts to show that the spiritual torment which Hopkins suffered was not evidence of a discontent with Catholic dogma.

The third chapter takes up the problem of Hopkins's metrical practices. It discusses the origin and nature of sprung and counterpointed rhythm, the manner in which Hopkins rimed, and takes up the peculiarities of Hopkins's syntactical constructions. There is a discussion of the reasons why Hopkins's poetry tended in a direction away from that of his Victorian contemporaries.

The fourth chapter attempts to place Hopkins in the tradition of English literature. Hopkins is compared to other metaphysical poets, and the similarities and differences of his approach to subject-matter are pointed out. He is studied in relation to Wordsworth, with emphasis on the essential separateness of their views of the natural world. The character of Hopkins's poetry is explained in the light of his interest in the philosophy of Duns Scotus; and the excellent adaptation of the form to the philosophical content of Hopkins's verse is shown. There is an investigation of his

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mal processes, with the intention of discovering the things
in which Hopkins stress the strength, his rebellion,
and his art. It attempts to justify Hopkins's matchless on
the grounds that religious illusions are important in the
development of his poetic gift, and it further attempts to
show that the spiritual journey which Hopkins suffered was
not evidence of a diseased mind but a logical sequence.

The third chapter discusses the problem of Hopkins's
material deficiency. It discusses the origin and nature of
spring and summer of his mind, the source in which Hopkins
found, and in the possibility of Hopkins's physiolo-
gical eccentricity. From this discussion of the reasons why
Hopkins's poetry tended in a direction away from that of his
Victorian contemporaries.

The fourth analysis attempts to place Hopkins in the
tradition of English literature. Hopkins is compared to
other metaphysical poets, and the similarities and differ-
ences of his approach to subject-matter are pointed out. He
is studied in relation to Coleridge, with an analysis of the
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The character of Hopkins's poetry is examined in the light of
his interest in the philosophy of John Duns Scotus and the cred-
ibility of the work in the philosophical context of
Hopkins's verse is shown. There is an investigation of his

influence upon modern verse, and some suggestions are made concerning Hopkins's ultimate position in the body of English literature.

It is hoped that the conclusions of the investigator will not seem too arbitrary. There was a lack of complete and dependably thorough critical material upon Hopkins, and it was necessary that the investigator, in some instances, make his own judgments. There is no intention to formulate any absolute pronouncements upon the subject's work. Gerard Manley Hopkins was great as a personality and as an artist, and it is hoped that this study will add to the understanding and appreciation of a fine poet.

CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

Gerard Manley Hopkins was born on June 11, 1844, in Stratford, Essex, England. He was the eldest of the eight children of Manley Hopkins, Consul General of the Hawaiian Islands to Great Britain. Manley Hopkins was a man of considerable talent. He published a history of Hawaii, a work on marine insurance, and other works relative to marine subjects. He had a taste for the abstract, a quality he passed on to his son, and had some pretensions to poetry, having written a Spicilegium Poeticum, but his talent in poetry never attained a level comparable to that of his son Gerard. Gerard's mother, daughter of a famous London physician, Samuel Smith, was a woman of gentle nature who had a love for metaphysical speculation. A woman of considerable education, she was familiar with German thought and literature, a student of philosophy, politics, and history, and her influence upon her eldest son was to instill in him some of her own love for the mystical. Her own family, sisters and brothers, were talented as artists and musicians, and this artistic strain, along with the poetical turn of her husband's nature, was combined in the mind of her son, Gerard Manley Hopkins.

As a small child, Hopkins was fortunate in falling

under the guidance of an aunt. This sister of his father was both a musician and a portrait painter, and she found the boy, Gerard, an apt pupil in music and drawing. Under her direction and tutelage the boy developed his talents to the extent that he might well have become a painter if he had not chosen the field of poetry instead.[1] His note-books are filled with excellent sketches of flowers, trees, and scenes which captured his attention. All of his life he was interested in music (an interest evident in his poetry) and he seems to have taken a larger interest in that subject toward the end of his life. His voice is said to have been sweet and clear, and even after he had become a Jesuit he often appeared at entertainments to sing for his brother Jesuits the songs he had composed and set to music.

Slender of body, delicate in appearance and health, the boy Gerard had an abhorrence of physical and moral ugliness. He could not bear to see beauty altered or destroyed; he was distressed by human suffering and decay. In his Journal for 1873, he wrote:

> The ashtree growing in the corner of the garden was felled. It was lopped first; I heard the sound and looking out and seeing it maimed there came at that moment a great pang and I wished to die and not to see the inscapes of the world destroyed anymore.[2]

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[1] G. F. Lahey, Gerard Manley Hopkins, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1930), p. 2.

[2] Humphrey House, editor, The Note-Books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 174.

under the guidance of an [illegible]. There is no [illegible] that a musician and a poetic genius. [illegible] Gerard, in spite of his [illegible] tion and [illegible] has by overcome his [illegible] [illegible] time he might have [illegible] the field of poetic [illegible]. His [illegible] excellent [illegible] tures his [illegible]. All of his life he has [illegible] music for [illegible] [illegible] have taken a longer interest in [illegible] of his life. His voice is [illegible] and even after he had [illegible] entertainments so [illegible] had composed and sang [illegible].

Standard of beauty, [illegible] the boy Gerard has an [illegible] of [illegible] ness. He could not [illegible] he was distressed by [illegible] al for LOVE. He [illegible]

> The [illegible]
> was failed. [illegible]
> and IGNORING [illegible]
> that become a [illegible]
> to see the [illegible]

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1 R. [illegible], [illegible] Ford University [illegible].

2 [illegible], [illegible] Gerard [illegible] 1857), p. 171.

Later in life he was much disturbed, in passing through the slums of Dublin and Liverpool, by the poverty, drabness, and physical suffering he saw there.

When he was eight years old, in 1852, he spent a summer with his younger brother in Hinault Forest at the home of relatives. The holiday was spent in roaming the woods and in becoming familiar with natural beauty. In the autumn of 1852, Hopkins entered a day-school in Hampstead. Two years later he was sent to Sir Robert Cholmondley's Grammar School at Highgate, an institution famous by association with the names of former pupils such as Lamb, Keats, Coleridge, and DeQuincey. At Highgate, Hopkins made the acquaintance of Ernest Hartley Coleridge, a grandson of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and the friendship which developed was lifelong. Hopkins's precosity is evident in the description, written when he was twelve, of a Highgate schoolmate, Marcus Clarke, whom Hopkins described as a "kaleidoscopic, parti-coloured, harlequinesque, thaumatropic being!"[3]

Father Lahey, in his account of Hopkins's life, relates a story of Gerard's sojourn at Highgate which he holds to be characteristic of the poet as a boy. According to Father Lahey, Hopkins had observed that everyone drank far too much at meals and, disturbed by the incontinence of others, deter-

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[3] Lahey, op. cit., p. 4.

mined that he would forego all liquids for the period of a week. He did so and would have succeeded in his resolve had he not collapsed during drill from faintness.[4] Father Lahey imputes Hopkins's self-denial to a spiritual strength far beyond his years. A different version is related by C. N. Luxmoore in a letter to Arthur Hopkins:

> Such a conflict [i.e.--between Hopkins and the Headmaster, Dyne] was aroused by your brother's abstinence from all drink for three weeks, the pretext being a bet of 10/to 6d, the real reason a conversation on seamen's sufferings and human powers of endurance. I was only the other day chatting it over with the Wilsons in Sussex, and one, then a big fellow, said he remembered Gerard showing him his tongue just before the end and it was black. Of course such an effort was not done in a corner; for the three weeks it was the talk of the school, & had the authorities been in touch with their boys . . . they had stopped the whole thing at the outset with a few kindly words.[5]

Luxmoore further relates that the Headmaster swooped down on Hopkins after the twenty-second day, when the bet had been won, and made him return the 10d. Hopkins protested that he was being treated unfairly in that he had suffered the abstinence and that the Headmaster's decision really rewarded the other boy. The Headmaster, a stubborn and quick-tempered man, was outraged by the boy's insistence, and Hopkins very nearly found himself rusticated because of his determination to defend

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[4] Lahey, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

[5] C. N. Luxmoore, "C. N. Luxmoore to Arthur Hopkins," in The Note-Books and Papers, edited by House, p. 439.

his rights.

In the same letter Luxmoore throws further light on the character of young Hopkins:

> Quiet, gentle, always nice, and always doing his work well I think he must have been a charming boy from a master's point of view, but he was completely changed by any wrong or ill treatment on their part. Once roused by a sense of undeserved injustice he usually so quiet and docile was furiously keen for the fray, and only bristled the more, when as was usually the case the authorities tried force and brow-beating to silence his arguments and beat him down. Then it was always a Homeric struggle to be fought inch by inch.[6]

At Highgate, Hopkins was nicknamed "Skin" by his schoolmates. He took part in the ordinary school activities and there is no firm evidence, despite Father Lahey, that he set himself apart or was reluctant to participate actively in the games played by the Highgate boys.[7] Luxmoore describes him as rippling over with fun, full of jokes, more than capable with pencil and pen, excellent at riming; and at games as taking his part with a will, though not placing the game first as did most of the other boys.

When he was fifteen Hopkins won a school prize for poetry. The poem was "The Escorial," a rather medieval work

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[6] C. N. Luxmoore, op. cit., pp. 438-39.

[7] Lahey quotes a letter of Gerard's brother in which Arthur writes that Hopkins led a sort of charmed life unaffected by the boisterous games and rousings of his fellow students. All evidence of Hopkins's schoolmates indicates that while he was not excellent at sports he was no namby-pamby, and entered into games with zest.

which reflects a knowledge of Keats and which demonstrates the young poet's eye for architecture and painting. "The Vision of the Mermaids," written in 1862, Hopkins's last year at Highgate, had a larger conception than "The Escorial." It is a highly fanciful, lushly-colored, thoroughly sensuous work which shows an almost complete lack of restraint in the ordering of impression. It echoes Keats in such passages as:

> Now all things rosy turned; the west had grown
> To an orb'd rose, which, by hot pantings blown
> Apart, betwixt ten thousand petall'd lips
> By interchange gasp'd splendour and eclipse.
> The zenith melted to a rose of air;
> The waves were rosy-lipp'd; the crimson glare
> Showered the cliffs and every fret and spire
> With garnet wreaths and blooms of rosy-budded fire.[8]

"The Vision of the Mermaids" was written near Christmas of the year 1862. That same term Hopkins was awarded a scholarship, and at the beginning of the Christmas Term of 1863, he entered Balliol College, Oxford.

At Balliol Hopkins was plunged into the intellectual excitement that pervaded Oxford during the middle part of the nineteenth century. He came to know the great Jowett, who was not yet Master of Balliol but who had gained a reputation for himself, and great notoriety, for his researches into the

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[8] Gerard Manley Hopkins, Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited with notes by Robert Bridges, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 131.

works of the Church Fathers. Jowett was a tremendous figure among the undergraduates, who pondered and discussed his every utterance. Walter Pater, too, was associated with Oxford, and the clarity of his style as well as the daring of his philosophy was familiar to his students, Hopkins among them, who attended his lectures. Jowett, who had come under the influence of the German exponents of higher criticism, had scandalized England, and the Oxford world in particular, by his editions of St. Paul. Oxford was a camp divided against itself. On the one side were the rationalistic, almost heretical exponents of higher criticism; on the other were the followers of the Oxford movement, the return to form and ceremony in religious ritual. This atmosphere charged with controversy affected nearly all Oxford undergraduates of the time. To some it was a challenge to follow the steps of Jowett and the German exigesists; to others it signified a return to idealism and formal religion. Hopkins was one of the latter.

But Hopkins's conversion to the Oxford movement and ultimately to Catholicism was not a thing of the moment. It came slowly and as the result of a great spiritual struggle. During his first years at Oxford he evidenced disbelief in the tenets he was later to embrace when he entered the Society of Jesus. W. E. Addis, an Oxford companion, wrote in a letter quoted in Lahey's Life that "He was at first a little tinged with the liberalism prevalent among reading men. I remember

long arguments we had on the eternity of punishment and in a walk on Headington Hill he said, 'I can never believe that the Song of Solomon is more than an ordinary love song'."[9] In his Platonic Dialogue, "On the Origin of Beauty," written in 1865, two years after his walk with Addis, Hopkins took the Prayer Book to task for stodgy language:

> As soon as composition becomes formal and studied, that is as soon as it enters the bounds of Art, it is curious to see how it falls into parallelisms. Read for instance the Exhortation in the Prayerbook, which they say is full of repetitions, meaning by that, as we may now see, that it uses parallelism to attain dignity but attains, shall we say? only pomposity, because the members of the parallelism do not bear the just proportion to each other.[10]

For every instance and account of Hopkins's momentary skepticism are many others demonstrating his desire and effort to bring himself to a condition of complete faith. His notebooks and journals are filled with jottings which show his yearning after belief. Many of his early poems are appeals for certainty. One of these, an untitled piece, foreshadows the subject of the greatest of his later sonnets:

> My prayers must meet a brazen heaven
> And fail or scatter all away.
> Unclean and seeming unforgiven
> My prayers I scarcely call to pray.
> I cannot bouy my heart above;
> Above it cannot entrance win.

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[9] Lahey, op. cit., p. 19.

[10] The Note-Books and Papers, edited by House, pp. 89-90.

I reckon precedents of love,
But feel the long success of sin.
My heaven is brass and iron my earth:
Yea iron is mingled with my clay,
So harden'd is it in this dearth
Which praying fails to do away.
Nor tear nor tears this clay uncouth
Could mould, if any tears there were.
A warfare of my lips in truth,
Battling with God, is now my prayer.[11]

Two months after the poem quoted above was written a significant entry in his diary is recorded: "I confessed to Dr. Pusey Dec. 16, 1865."[12] Dr. Pusey was the celebrated leader of the movement of the Anglican ritualists.

Although Hopkins confessed to Pusey and had confessed before him to Liddon, who along with Pusey was one of the important survivors of the Tractarian movement, he seems to have been dissatisfied with the Anglican Church and began to evidence with growing emphasis an interest in Catholic dogma. He began to indulge in a voluntary asceticism which grew more pronounced as he approached the day when he was to take his stand and decide upon embracing the Catholic faith. He noted in his diary during Lent of the year 1866 that he was to eat no pudding on Sundays, was to drink no tea save when to keep awake and then without sugar, and that he was to write no verses, and "Not to sit in an armchair except I can work in

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[11] The Note-Books and Papers, edited by House, pp. 49-50.

[12] Ibid., p. 53.

no other way."[13] Verses he did allow himself to write during Lent with the exception of Passion Week and Fridays. One of his Lenten poems written in 1866, "Nondum," is a passionate outcry against the deafness of Heaven, and in it he expressed his desire to become a true believer:

> God, though to Thee our psalm we raise
> No answering voice comes from the skies;
> To Thee the trembling sinner prays
> But no forgiving voice replies;
> Our prayer seems lost in desert ways,
> Our hymn in the vast silence dies.
> . . . . . .
> We guess; we clothe Thee, unseen King,
> With attributes we deem are meet;
> Each in his own imagining
> Sets up a shadow in thy seat;
> Yet know not how our gifts to bring,
> Where seek thee with unsandalled feet.
> . . . . . .
> Speak! whisper to my watching heart
> One word--as when a mother speaks
> Soft, when she sees her infant start,
> Till dimpled joy steals o'er its cheeks.
> Then, to behold Thee as Thou art,
> I'll wait till morn eternal breaks.[14]

The early diaries written at Highgate and while Hopkins was an undergraduate at Balliol show the growth of the poet's mind and temperament. His note-books were a storehouse of raw material for later use in poetry. His interest in etymology led him into long discussions of the origin and derivations of words, and the final result of that interest was to afford

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[13] The Note-Books and Papers, edited by House, p. 53.

[14] Hopkins, Poems, pp. 140-41.

him a vocabulary which was peculiar to him and inevitable to his poetic diction. Probably the most valuable characteristic of Hopkins's nature was his keenness of observation. He had the interest of a naturalist in the forms of flowers, leaves, trees, and birds. And his interest was particular and exact. He noted the difference between the green of grass and that of young wheat. He set down detailed descriptions of clouds and the action of light upon them, of pools of water, butterflies, moonlight, and the appearance of a hand held to the light of a candle. Some of these observations were translated almost immediately into poetic language, as when following a note on the action of water rushing over a sunken stone he wrote: "Reverted, with thrown back and tossing cape"; and again: "Glazed water vaulted o'er a drowsy stone."[15] Many of his observations are direct in their appeal to the senses. In the same entry as that noted above he describes oak roots as "silvery, smooth, solid and muscular." Regard for sensuous impression colors Hopkins's early work to a great degree. He translated almost directly his sense observations into poetry. In the Journal written after he had entered the Jesuit Order his impressions are no less sensuous but they have undergone what may be termed intellectual purification. That is to say, when Hopkins introduced the sensuous into his

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[15] The Note-Books and Papers, edited by House, p. 49.

later poetry he did so with the aim of illuminating some principle, some portion of his philosophy. It is no longer the sensuous for sense alone.

At Oxford, Hopkins read for the "Greats" and of a necessity became conversant with the Greek and Latin Classics. He devoted little space in his diaries to notes on his readings, but there is evidence that he was fairly well informed in the major English literary periods and with the Continental classics. He was interested in contemporary trends of literature.

The last entry in Hopkins's early diaries is dated January, 1866. At the end of August, 1866, Hopkins took definite steps to effect his determination to enter the Catholic Church. What struggles and spiritual difficulties he may have had cannot be determined because the interval between his final entry in the early diaries and his letter to John Henry Newman in August of 1866 remains a blank. But that his decision was no immediate and easy resolution is evident from the communication to Newman at that time.

> Rev. Sir,
>
> I address you with great hesitation, knowing that you are in the midst of your own engagements and because you must be exposed to applications from all sides. I am anxious to become a Catholic, and I thought that you might possibly be able to see me for a short time when I pass through Birmingham in a few days. . . .I do not want to be helped to any conclusions of belief, for I am thankful to say my mind is made up, but the necessity of becoming a Catholic (although I have long foreseen where

> the only consistent position would lie) coming on me suddenly has put me into painful confusion of mind about my immediate duty in my circumstance. I wished also to know what it would be morally my duty to hold on certain formally open points, because the same reasoning which makes the Tractarian ground contradictory would almost lead one to shrink from what Mr. Oakley calls a minimizing Catholicism. . . . you will understand that by God's mercy I am clear as to the sole authority of the Church of Rome.[16]

Newman replied to Hopkins's letter, saying that he would be glad to meet and confer with Hopkins at any time. Hopkins went to him, and they apparently met several times thereafter, for Hopkins's letter of October 15, 1866, implies an understanding relationship:

> Very Reverend Father,
>
> I have been up at Oxford just long enough to have heard from my father and mother in return for my letter announcing my conversion. Their answers are terrible: I cannot read them twice. If you will pray for them and me just now I shall be deeply thankful. But what I am writing for is this -- they urge me with the utmost entreaties to wait till I have taken my degree -- more than half a year. Of course it is impossible, and since it is impossible to wait as long as they wish it seems to me useless to wait at all.[17]

The parents of Hopkins were not alone in their distress at Gerard's avowed intention to renounce the Anglican faith and enter the Church of Rome. H. P. Liddon wrote a series of letters in which he entreated his young friend to consider seriously the step he was about to take. Liddon argued that

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[16] Lahey, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

[17] Ibid., pp. 35-36.

the claims of the Roman Church depended upon the Supremacy of the Pope, and that that supremacy had grown up in times subsequent to the Nicene Council. To Liddon, Hopkins's resolution was unfair to the Anglican faith, and he importuned him to examine the opposing issues before he deserted the church in which he had been placed, to use Liddon's expression, "by the good Providence of God."[18] Liddon was suspicious of Hopkins's motives in yielding to Catholicism. In one instance he suggested that Hopkins might have been unduly influenced by the previous conversion of a dear friend, W. E. Addis. He referred to Hopkins's call as demanding "something more solid than the precarious hypothesis of a personal illumination."[19]

Liddon's exhortations did not deter Hopkins from his purpose. The one concession that he made was to request an audience with Pusey at the behest of his family who hoped that the revered leader of the Anglican faith might be able to turn Hopkins from his course. Pusey, however, refused to see Hopkins. His reply to Hopkins's request was tinged with bitterness, and in it he said that he would not admit Hopkins to "satisfy relations." "I know too well what that means. It is simply to enable a pervert to say to his relations, 'I have

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[18] Lahey, op. cit., p. 39.

[19] Ibid., p. 42.

the claims of the Roman Church depended upon the authority of the Pope, and that that authority had grown in time subsequent to the Pilate Council. In Lydia, Hopkins's revelation was unlike to the Anglican faith, and he importuned him to examine the opposing issues before he deserted the church in which he had been placed, as was Lydia's argument, "by the dead Providence of God."[18] Lydia's and Hopkins's motives is yielding to conflicting. In one instance he suggested that Hopkins might have been unduly influenced by the previous conversion of a dear friend, Mr. Adams. He referred to Hopkins's gift as demanding "something more noble than the presumptuous hypothesis of a personal illumination."[19]

Lydia's going features did not define Hopkins's main purpose. The one concession that he made was to respond to audience with fancy at the behest of his family who feared that the central leader of the Anglican with right be able to turn Hopkins from his course. Prose, however, reduced to mere Doctrine. His reply to Lydia's remarks were simple and direct, and in it he said that he would not solve Hopkins to "subtle relations." "I know how dark this seems, but it is simply to enable a person to pay to his relations."[20] He

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[18] Lundy, op. cit., p. 20.

[19] Ibid., p. 21.

seen Dr. Pusey, and he has failed to satisfy me.' Whereas they know very well that they meant not to be satisfied, that they came with a fixed purpose not to be satisfied."[20] On the same day of Pusey's reply and refusal to see him, Hopkins journeyed to Birmingham and was received into the Catholic faith by Newman.

After his conversion Hopkins returned to Oxford and continued to pursue his studies. He was urged by Newman to devote himself to his work and not to bring a reproach upon his Catholicism from friends who might think his conversion had led him to shirk his duty. Hopkins persisted, and took his degree in the spring of 1867. In the interval between his conversion and the taking of his degree, Hopkins's family had come gradually to countenance his step in renouncing the Anglican faith, and he spent some time at home before taking a summer vacation on the Continent. On his return from the Continent he took up the duties of tutoring young men who were preparing for Oxford. The position was made available to him through the efforts of Newman, and Hopkins held it until Easter vacation of 1868. For some undetermined reason Hopkins did not return to his duties. Undoubtedly he had made up his mind to offer his whole being to the Catholic

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[20] Lahey, op. cit., p. 47.

faith, for in May of 1868, Newman wrote him a letter of congratulation upon his chosen way of life, that of a Jesuit priest. "Don't call 'the Jesuit discipline hard': it will bring you to heaven," wrote Newman. "The Benedictines would not have suited you."[21]

What prompted Hopkins to choose the Jesuit Order cannot be known, and one can only conjecture the reasons. Hopkins's ascetic nature was probably largely responsible. He enjoyed denying himself the things he loved most, possibly out of a sense that what he enjoyed too fully was necessarily detrimental to the spirit. When he was ordained as a Jesuit, he vowed to write poetry no more. For seven years he kept his vow, until 1875, when he wrote "The Wreck of the Deutschland" to commemorate the death by drowning of five nuns exiled from Germany by the Falk laws. His period of poetic silence was not wasted. It was a fallow-time during which his sensitive mind was creating the principles upon which his later poetry was to be written.

In September of 1868, following a tour of the Continent, Hopkins entered the Novitiate at Roehampton. The two years spent at Roehampton were of little importance externally. Information concerning his life at Roehampton is to be found for the most part in his letters to Robert Bridges,

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[21] Lahey, op. cit., p. 47.

whose friendship Hopkins had gained at Oxford and which lasted throughout his life. His letters to Bridges were intermittent during the early years of his life as a Jesuit and grew in volume toward the end of his life. While at Roehampton, Hopkins wrote Bridges the now famous letter in which he refers to himself as a Communist:

> I must tell you I am always thinking of the Communist future. The too intelligent artisan is the master of the situation I believe. Perhaps it is what everyone believes, I do not see the papers or hear strangers often enough to know. . . .However I am afraid some great revolution is not far off. Horrible to say, in a manner I am a Communist. Their ideal bating some things is nobler than that professed by any secular statesman that I know of (I must own I live in a bat-light and shoot at a venture). Besides it is just.--I do not mean the means of getting to it are. But it is a dreadful thing for the greatest and most necessary part of a very rich nation to live a hard life without dignity, knowledge, comforts, delight, or hopes in the midst of plenty--which plenty they make. They profess that they do not care what they wreck and burn, the old civilisation and order must be destroyed. This is a dreadful look out but what has the old civilisation done for them? . . .they got none of the spoils, they came in for nothing but harm from it then and thereafter. England has grown hugely wealthy but this wealth has not reached the working classes; I expect it has made their condition worse. Besides this iniquitous order the old civilisation embodies another order mostly old and what is new in direct entail from the old. . . .But as the working classes have not been educated they know next to nothing of all this and cannot be expected to care if they destroy it. The more I look the more black and deservedly black the future looks, so I will write no more.[22]

Bridges failed to answer the letter in which Hopkins

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[22] Claude Colleer Abbott, editor, The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1935), pp. 27-28.

made his remarkable pronouncement of his Communism, and Hopkins, in distress at his friend's silence, wrote a second letter asking Bridges to overlook his radicalism although he remembered saying "nothing that might not be fairly said."[23] The misunderstanding is significant of the difference between Hopkins and Bridges. Bridges was a thoroughgoing conservative, lacking the native generosity of Hopkins, who was liberal in nearly everything he considered.

From Roehampton, Hopkins was transferred to St. Mary's Hall, Stonyhurst, where he took a three-year course of philosophy, and from there he returned to Roehampton to teach the classics. His life during those years was ordered and not particularly arduous. He performed his duties at the school, and in his leisure filled his journals with detailed and exact notes. After his philosophical studies and the termination of his duties at Roehampton, he went to London as a select preacher; from London he went to Oxford, and finally to Liverpool.[24]

Hopkins spent two years in Liverpool and then returned to Roehampton where he began his third term of study in preparation for his final vows. His letters from Liverpool and

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[23] The Letters, edited by Abbott, p. 29.

[24] Lahey, op. cit., p. 133.

made his remarkable pronouncement of his dismissal, and Bridges, in distress at his friend's silence, wrote a second letter asking Bridges to overlook his vituperation although he remembered saying "nothing such might not be really said."[23] The misunderstanding is significant of the difference between Hopkins and Bridges. Bridges was a true English conservative, lacking the native generosity of Hopkins, whose silence is nearly overwhelming by comparison.

Upon Robinson, Hopkins was recommended to St. Mary's Hall, Stonyhurst, where he took a three-year course of philosophy, and from there he returned to Roehampton to teach the classics. His life during these years was both rewarding and particularly arduous. Intellectually he was [illegible] and in his leisure filled his journals with verbatim and exact notes. After his philosophical studies and the termination of his duties at Roehampton, he went to London as a junior preacher; from London he went to Oxford, now finally to Liverpool.[24]

Hopkins spent two years in Liverpool and then returned to Roehampton where he began his first term of study in preparation for his final vows. His letters from Liverpool and

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[23] The Letters, edited by Abbott, p. 90.

[24] Lahey, op. cit., p. 1[illegible].

Roehampton to Bridges and Dixon, with whom he had begun correspondence in 1878, are important because of the critical opinions offered by Hopkins, and interesting because they afford insight into his character. Hopkins apparently never failed in his devotion to the life he had chosen. He had periods of acute spiritual distress but they seem not to have arisen because of doubt as to his vocation. His health, never excellent, began to decline, and his letters up to the cessation of his correspondence were increasingly filled with complaints at his physical disabilities. His energy was easily dissipated and it troubled him that he could not find the inspiration to create. "I shall be sorry to leave Stonyhurst," he wrote Bridges; "but go or stay, there is no likelihood of my ever doing anything to last. And I do not know how it is, I have no disease, but I am always tired, always jaded, though the work is not heavy, and the impulse to do anything fails me or has in it no continuance."[25]

In 1884 Hopkins received the most important appointment of his life -- that of Fellow in the Royal University of Dublin in the department of classics. He was gratified at his election but expressed the apprehension that he was not well-enough equipped or worthy of the position, and the fear that

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[25] The Letters, edited by Abbott, p. 183.

he was too frail physically to stand up under the labor of university work.[26] Dublin he found to be a "joyless place."

Hopkins's duties at the university consisted in teaching Latin and Greek and in examining in the classics for the various degrees of the Royal University. He enjoyed his teaching, but the examination of candidates for degrees he disliked. Apart from his duties he applied himself to literary composition, published articles of criticism, and worked on his poems. He was much interested in Greek drama, and at the time of his death was engaged in a work in which he purported to have solved the true meaning of difficult passages in the plays of Aristophanes. At the same time he was engaged in extensive correspondence with Bridges, Patmore, and Dixon, and many of his most striking and valuable pronouncements in literary criticism are to be found in those letters.

Rarely did Hopkins leave Dublin, or even the confines of his college, after his appointment. Of the few leaves he did take several were spent in Wales, a country he had found to be particularly inspiring for his poetry. In a letter to Bridges, written after a short holiday in Wales, Hopkins told of a sonnet he had just completed, and then made the curious remark: "I am recovering from the effects of my Welsh holiday

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[26] The Letters, edited by Abbott, p. 190.

and returning to helplessness."[27]

A few days after Low Sunday, toward the middle of April, 1889, Hopkins fell ill of typhoid fever. His condition became desperate early in June, and on Wednesday, June fifth, he received the Holy Viaticum. His parents hurried from England and were present at his bedside when he died, a little after noon, on June 8, 1889.

At the time of his death, Hopkins was nearing forty-six years of age, still a comparatively young man. He had created his finest poems during the last three years of his life. His creative powers were only approaching their fullest activity, and certainly it is a matter of regret that he, like so many men of genius, should have been stricken in his prime.

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[27] The Letters, edited by Abbott, p. 245.

CHAPTER II

THE MIND OF HOPKINS

Nearly every critic who has reviewed the work of Gerard Manley Hopkins since his poems were first published in 1918, and since the publication in recent years of his correspondence, has held one or the other of two opinions: that the poet in Hopkins was stifled by the priest, or contrarily, that the priest was corrupted by the poet. Rarely have these reviewers taken the middle ground--that the priestly Hopkins was elevated by the chasteness of poetic temper, and the poet disciplined and hammered into excellence by the sternness of priestly vocation.

In Hopkins's life, as in the lives of every human being, were instances of action and attitudes of mind not strictly compatible with his chosen vocation. The important consideration is not how often a struggle between opposing elements was manifest, but rather how often that struggle fired to fusion the paradox of character. Ultimately it is Hopkins's poetry which must justify his life. It is his poetry we admire first of all. How he arrived at poetic excellence, the struggles and agonies he experienced in creating, are of secondary consideration.

Early in life Hopkins began to show those elements of

temperament which were to make possible his poetry and to lead him to the rigorous discipline of the Jesuits. He was repelled by physical ugliness and once, when a younger brother was suffering a childhood disease, Hopkins was found sobbing, and when asked what troubled him cried out: "Because Cyril has become so ugly."[1] At Highgate he denied himself salt at meals for a period because he had observed other boys used too much of it.

As he grew older his asceticism increased, but the character of it changed from the extravagant instances of his youth to a self-denial founded in his view of life. After he was elected a Fellow of Royal University, he was very strict in his adherence to the rules of his order and of the college. It was difficult for anyone to prevail upon him to accept invitations to luncheons or teas outside the college.[2] His strict conformance to rule was not in any way the result of fear of reprimand from his superiors. Indeed it was difficult to get him to ask permission when there was no doubt but that it would be granted.

The strictness and asceticism he evidenced as a priest may be traced, in part at least, to outstanding traits of his

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[1] G. F. Lahey, Gerard Manley Hopkins, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1930), p. 3.

[2] Ibid., p. 145.

adolescence and young manhood, a sensuous and over-exuberant emotional nature and a disposition to religious feeling almost to excess. He was easily aroused emotionally, his heart always excited in the presence of beauty, and his praise of what he saw and felt turned naturally in what he wrote to praise of God. Long before he entertained the idea of entering the Church of Rome he was writing religious verse, and it is not unlikely that his poetry would have been devoted to God even had he not turned priest. As early as 1864 he wrote the first draft of one of his most perfect lyrics:

> I have desired to go
> Where springs not fail,
> To fields where blows no sharp and sided hail
> And a few lilies blow.[3]

In these early lines it is possible to detect Hopkins's desire to retreat from the world which eventually led him into a monastic life. In another early poem, "The Habit of Perfection," he speaks of the glory and satisfaction of a life given to the celebration of the Lord, but in that poem his sensuousness outweighs his purpose, and he lingers over such lines as: "Shape nothing, lips; be lovely-dumb," and "O feel-of-primrose hands, O feet / That want the yield of plushy sward."[4]

In an unfinished essay, "Parmenides," written while he

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[3] Gerard Manley Hopkins, Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited with notes by Robert Bridges, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 8.

[4] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

was an undergraduate at Balliol, Hopkins first used two terms, "inscape" and "instress," which figured largely in the way he looked at the visible world. The terms were never clearly defined by Hopkins. Inscape he described as a proportion of the mixture of particular oneness, or Being, and Non-being, "under its siding of the Many."[5] From his use of inscape in his journals and communications, it is possible to arrive at the conclusion that inscape is a modification of universal order. It is pattern, a distinct and discrete unity to be apprehended and evaluated only in relation to the whole, the underlying scheme or universal order. Everything has its inscape peculiar to itself, but these inscapes are capable of being changed or modified as seen in relation to a greater part--the Whole being impossible of immediate perception.

The placing of what Hopkins meant by "instress" is a simpler matter. Instress refers to the impact of inscape upon a beholder; it is how inscape affects the individual internally, the effect of beauty upon the emotions and spirit. Inscape is always beautiful: beauty is its particular virtue. Instress, then, is the recognition or complete realization of beauty wherever it may be found.

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[5] Humphrey House, editor, The Note-Books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 101.

It is but a step from an understanding of Hopkins's use of inscape and instress to recognition of his application of them in his theology and his poetry. Christ is the underlying pattern of all the universe. What we see when we behold the beautiful is a pattern derived from the beauty of the Lord, muddied possibly, sharpened perhaps, by our not-being in Christ. Hopkins expressed the conception poetically in "The Wreck of the Deutschland" when he wrote:

> I kiss my hand
> To the stars, lovely-asunder
> Starlight wafting him out of it; and
> Glow, glory in thunder;
> Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:
> Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,
> His mystery must be instressed, stressed;
> For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I
> understand.[6]

The inscapes of the world, the beauty of God in nature, Hopkins was able to see at all times, but the peculiarity of instress was that it could be felt only when the beholder of inscape was alone, had no companion. After a winter walk with a friend during which Hopkins had noticed the appearance of cold-killed grass against the snow, he wrote: "I saw the inscape though freshly, as if my eye were still growing, though with a companion the eye and ear are for the most part shut and instress cannot come."[7]

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[6] Hopkins, Poems, p. 13.

[7] The Note-Books and Papers, edited by House, p. 171.

It is not a mere form of verbalization or knowledge, one of Lumpe can introduce to recognition of the possibilities of them in his theology and his poetry. Shelley is the underlying pattern of all the writers. Much as Hopkins we see the beautiful in a nature descriptive from the beauty of the lovely, modified possibly, sharpened somewhat, by the Hot-Gospel of Jesus. Hopkins expressed the connection specifically in "The Wreck of the Deutschland" when he wrote:

I kiss my hand
To the stars, lovely-asunder
Starlight, blue-black cinder, and the coal-dust
Fire, fetch fire, quench
Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:
Since, she, he, it worlds the world with, worldless, unworldly,
Spiritless, mean to freedom, stirring as
For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand.[6]

The Inscape of the world, the beauty of God in nature, Hopkins was able to see in all things, but the peculiarity of interest was such it could be felt only when the Designer of Inscape was alone, and to commune. After a winter walk with a friend during which Hopkins had noticed the appearance of gold-filled grass against the snow, he wrote "I saw the Inscape though transit, as if my eye were still gazing, through with a reminiscence like one and our eye for the same sight and Inscape cannot come."[7]

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[6] Hopkins, Poems p. 124.

[7] The Note-Books and Papers, edited by Cohen, p. 177.

Another instance of the inscapes of Christ seen in nature by Hopkins appears in "Hurrahing in Harvest." Hopkins describes himself as walking the world, grasping the manifestations of the Lord in scenes about him:

> I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes,
> Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our
> Saviour;
> . . . . . .
> And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding
> shoulder
> Majestic--as a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet!--
> These things, these things were here and but the
> beholder
> Wanting; . . .[8]

Perhaps the most perfect expression of Hopkins's conception of Christ as the force under and through all things is to be found in "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection."[9] In this work, his last caudated sonnet, possibly the greatest of all his poems, Hopkins sees Christ as the articulator of the universe, who draws together and brings to intellegibility all the fragmentary, disjointed elements of being. The poem begins with a series of impressions of clouds, trees, wind, earth, and a feeling of the activity of man. Man is pictured as the most precious, "clearest-selvèd spark" of nature's "million-fuelèd bonfire," and in the flux of the world, man is blurred and blotted out by time. The hope of man rests in the Resurrection,

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[8] Hopkins, Poems, pp. 30-31.

[9] Ibid., p. 67.

Another instance of the presence of Christ manifestations by Emptiness appears in "Morning in Harvard Square," where he describes himself as walking the world, grasping and manipulating of the land in masses about him:

I walk, I lift up, I lift up masses, masses,
Open all that glory in the heavens to glory the
Delicate
. . . . . .
and the gorgeous hung skies are his world-wrapping
Delicate
Delicate--he supplication adjusment, vast-volume-
lines gathering, these towers rise here and but yes
Delicate
Worship! . . .[8]

Perhaps the most perfect expression of Christ's presence in creation of Whitman as the Spirit moves and brooding all things is to be found in "Song Celebrating Me," where he speaks of the coming of the Resurrection.[9] In this work, his last, he addressed himself, possibly the problem of all his life, Christ. Hopkins sees Christ as the molecular of the universe, the drawn together and brings to intelligibility all the universe, distinctive elements of being. The poem begins with a series of impressions of clouds, trees, wind, earth, and finally feeling of the activity of man. Man is observed in the presence, "planet-spired spark" of Hopkins's "multiple-world-centre," and in the flux of the world, man is blessed and blessed and by sins. The hope of man rests in the Resurrection

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[8] Hopkins, Poems, pp. 70-71.

[9] Ibid., p. 87.

which will resolve all discords and bring into meaning that which was painful and incomprehensible on earth. In "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire," Hopkins writes as if he were straining for understanding, and when the significance of the Resurrection brings that understanding, that man as insignificant fragments will be fused into an indestructible, flashing, many-sided unity by the miracle of Christ, he exclaims:

> In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
> I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am, and
> This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond,
> Is immortal diamond.[10]

In yet another poem, Hopkins expressed the same idea:

> . . . Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
> Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
> Selves--goes itself; <u>myself</u> it speaks and spells,
> Crying <u>What I do is me: for that I came</u>.
>
> I say more: the just man justices;
> Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;
> Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is--
> Christ--for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
> Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
> To the Father through the features of men's faces.[11]

Careful study of such poems as "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire," and others in the same vein, makes it impossible for a reader to believe the statement of John Gould Fletcher, who wrote: "The conformity to a daily discipline of mind, combined with the practical indifference to worldly success,

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[10] Hopkins, <u>Poems</u>, p. 67.

[11] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 53.

worked in the end to stifle a poetic equipment as great as that possessed by any English poet."[12] The prevailing subject of Hopkins's work is the glory of God. He was impressed by the awfulness and incomprehensibility of the Divine, and believed that nature was the best place in which to find them. Hopkins wrote few occasion-pieces, and like any poet, chose for subject-matter those things which occupied his attention primarily. His indifference to worldly success is no criterion for judging his poetry; it supports, rather, the argument that the motivation for his poetry was sincere. Removed from the world as he was, Hopkins had no compulsion to write for money or fame. He was free to write according to his inclination. When Bridges rebuked him for his metrical oddness, Hopkins replied, "I cannot think of altering anything. Why shd. I? I do not write for the public. You are my public and I hope to convert you."[13]

Bridges often pleaded with Hopkins to allow him to publish his verses, but Hopkins steadfastly refused, insisting that he had no great desire to be published:

> When I say I do not mean to publish I speak the truth. I have taken and mean to take no step to do so beyond the attempt I made to print my

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[12] John G. Fletcher, "Gerard Manley Hopkins--Priest or Poet?" The American Review, VI (Jan., 1936), pp. 331-46. (p. 345).

[13] Claude Colleer Abbott, editor, The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 46.

> two wrecks in the Month. If some one in authority knew of my having some poems printable and suggested my doing it I shd. not refuse, I should be partly, though not altogether, glad. . . .I cannot in conscience spend time on poetry, neither have I the inducements and inspirations that make others compose. Feeling, love in particular, is the great moving power and spring of verse and the only person that I am in love with[14] seldom, especially now, stirs my heart sensibly and when he does I cannot always 'make capital' of it, it would be a sacrilege to do so. Then again I have of myself made verse so laborious.[15]

A careless reading of Hopkins's letter might lead to the conclusion that Hopkins feared offending his superiors, that his intellectual and emotional acceptance of the creed he had chosen was beginning to lag, and that he was too pressed by duty to write poetry. Hopkins's fear of authority amounted to an abiding respect for the rules of his Order. Jesuits are discouraged from gaining particular personal notice, but Jesuits have become famous and Hopkins might have, had he desired to push his work. There was no criticism from authority when the few pieces published by Hopkins did appear. The main obstacle to the appearance of Hopkins's poems in print was their seeming obscurity, the oddness of his metrical innovations, and his use of marks to indicate proper reading. The editors of the Catholic magazine, The Month, refused to publish "The Wreck of the Deutschland," on the grounds that it was too bizarre. If a Catholic editor, knowing the intention of this

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[14] Christ is undoubtedly the one whom Hopkins is "in love with."

[15] The Letters, edited by Abbott, p. 66.

poem perfectly acceptable on grounds of dogma, refused "The Wreck of the Deutschland," it takes no great amount of imagination to see what might have happened if this poem, and others equally bizarre, had been offered for publication to the ordinary editor. Hopkins would have been driven to defend what he considered as needing no defense.

As to the possibility of an emotional lag in his feeling for his vocation, it is but necessary to notice the qualifying word "sensibly" used in connection with the way Christ affected him, and to notice the piety of his conviction that it would be sacrilege to "make capital" of his feeling.

The last reason Hopkins gave Bridges, that he had of himself made verse so laborious, is most significant. The complexity of his verse-forms and rhythms, the unceasing care he gave to the reshaping and perfecting of his work, and the intensity of feeling which led him to create, placed such a burden upon his energy that his output of necessity was small. At no time did his duties keep him entirely from creating. His powers were but approaching maturity when death stopped his labors, and it is not great hazard to assume that his theories would have been perfected and practiced had he lived to pursue them.

The possibility, however, that Hopkins's priestly vocation may have stultified his poetic genius should not be minimized or ignored. There is a considerable likeness between

Hopkins and Collins, between Hopkins and Gray, and even Housman. The body of production of all these poets was small. All of them were transition poets, and all were the possessors of retiring and somewhat timorous natures. Collins was temperamentally much like Hopkins, having the same disposition toward nervous depression and an unusual sensitivity to the external world. His work may be compared to that of Hopkins in its re-vitalization of form, its delicate perception of musical quality, and in sensitive grasp of word values.[16] In Collins are the same prophetic accents of a new poetry.

Gray's likeness to Hopkins is in the discipline which tempered his talent. The contemporary view of life, still largely classical, was opposed in Gray by a tendency toward the then undeveloped romantic mode. Gray, disciplined by a desire to achieve harmony of tone and perfection of form, tried unsuccessfully to create a satisfactory balance between the contrary forces driving him.[17] He failed, as Hopkins may have failed, because he did not possess sufficient creative energy to fuse opposing elements, and this lack of artistic force whas what reduced him to a semi-sterility.

Hopkins's likeness to Housman is that both imposed on

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[16] See the discussion of these qualities in Collins in Emile Legouis and Louis Cazamian, A History of English Literature, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1935), pp. 860-63. (pp. 861-62).

[17] Ibid., pp. 863-67. (pp. 863-64).

themselves a kind of arbitrary discipline which they went out of their way to find. Beautiful as Housman's poetry is, it is slight, and the melancholy infused into it is the mark of a personality unhappy with the world it had to encounter. Housman compensated for his lack of spiritual energy by a rigorous scholarliness in the classical field. He did not achieve artistic discipline, like Dante, Shakespeare, or Milton, through sheer abundance of creation, but through the less admirable and successful method of an intensive but uninspired pedantry.[18] Both Housman's devotion to scholarship and Hopkins's wrestlings with God may have been the subconscious efforts of essentially dry and infertile and timorous natures to stimulate artificially the creative impulse.

Notwithstanding the likenesses of Hopkins to Collins, Gray, and Housman, it would be unfair to Hopkins to class him as a defeated personality because of the narrowness of his life, the slight bulk of his poetry, or the discipline imposed on him by his vocation. Hopkins was unlike any of those poets in his devotion to his chosen way of life. His narrow life, the Jesuitical discipline, and the Catholic faith constituted for Hopkins the answer to the essential problems of life.

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[18] An excellent discussion of Housman's deliberate self-discipline may be found in Edmund Wilson, "A. E. Housman," The New Republic, XCII, 1191 (Sept. 24, 1937), pp. 206-10. (p. 208).

There is little or no evidence that Hopkins in readily accepting religious discipline was subtly rationalizing his unhappiness or sense of futility as Housman was when the latter engaged in bitter pedantic attacks on other pedants. Catholicism was to Hopkins a way of seeing the universe as well as a way of day-by-day living, and this view of the world gave him a rare facility of being able intellectually to recognize opposing ideas without embracing them emotionally or allowing them to destroy his own views. The Victorian world Hopkins live in was a turmoil of opposing conceptions, all seemingly inimical to one another, yet Hopkins was capable of viewing them, as, for instance, he viewed Communism, without serious effect on his personal ideology. Acceptance of a religious faith may indicate a weakness of personality and a desire to escape a world too difficult to solve, but it does not necessarily indicate these qualities. Hopkins's Jesuitical affiliation, if it narrowed him, also toughened him; if it restricted the range of his experience, it may also just as well have intensified it.

As a critic, Hopkins was respected by both Bridges and Dixon. Bridges often followed suggested changes made by Hopkins. Hopkins, on the other hand, though not averse to criticism, rarely altered his poems at the suggestion of Bridges. Hopkins had the conscious assurance of an artist who knows his theories to be sound, and he was patient but firm under the

criticism of others. When Bridges sneered at "The Wreck of the Deutschland," insisting that nothing could cause him to read the poem again, Hopkins wrote:

> My verse is less to be read than heard, as I have told you before; it is oratorical, that is the rhythm is so. I think if you will study what I have here said you will be much more pleased with it and may I say? converted to it. . . .You say you wd. not for any money read my poem again. Nevertheless I beg you will. Besides money, you know, there is love. If it is obscure do not bother yourself with the meaning but pay attention to the best and most intelligible stanzas. . . .If you had done this you wd. have liked it better and sent me some serviceable criticism, but now your criticism is of no use, being only a protest memorialising me against my whole policy and proceedings.[19]

Eventually Bridges came to respect Hopkins's point of view concerning his poetry and to admire it highly, but it was not without a struggle. There was a continual conflict between Bridges and Hopkins on matters of poetic technique. For every criticism offered by Bridges, Hopkins countered with a sound defense, or calmly admitted possible errors but declined to rectify them. In one instance Bridges attacked Hopkins for faulty riming, to which Hopkins replied:

> Some of my rhymes I regret, but they are past changing, grubs in amber: there are only a few of these; Others are unassailable;
> Some others again there are which <u>malignity may munch</u> at but the Muses love. To this class belongs what you quote. You will grant that there are things in verse which may be read right or wrong, which depend for their effect upon pronunciation.[20]

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[19] <u>The Letters</u>, edited by Abbott, pp. 46-47.

[20] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 180.

At another time, when Bridges had taken him to task for riming monosyllables and dissyllables, saying that they could not be used to rime to a monosyllable or dissyllable both in the same stanza, Hopkins argued that "if it can ever, then one of the two is accommodated to the other; and if one can be so can two or if one to one then one to two."[21]

As long as Hopkins filled his letters to Bridges with critical matters, the friendship of the two men was secure. But whenever Hopkins treated matters of dogma or politics, a coolness arose that several times nearly ended the correspondence. One of these letters, in which Hopkins called himself a Communist, has already been mentioned. In another, Hopkins tactfully endeavored to convert his friend to Catholicism, or if not to Catholicism, at least to God. Hopkins felt that Bridges' ideas concerning the Deity were "not as they should be." Bridges' reply to Hopkins's letter is missing, but Bridges must have stated his position in forcible language, for in the next letter Hopkins wrote: "Morals and scansion not being in one keeping, we will treat them in separate letters. . . .You so misunderstand my words . . . that I am surprised, and not only surprised but put out. For amongst other things I am made to appear a downright fool."[22] After this misunder-

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[21] The Letters, edited by Abbott, p. 181.

[22] Ibid., p. 62.

standing, Hopkins never attempted to convert Bridges, and treated religious subjects in his letters with no direct appeal to his friend.

Politically, Hopkins remained much more of a liberal throughout his life than Bridges, who clung to his conservative views. After his "Communistic" letter, which pained Bridges, Hopkins mitigated his language in speaking of his political views, but his essential attitude never changed. He had an intense sympathy for the exploited masses of people in England and in Ireland. Part of his anguish at the miserable condition of the working class came from his own sensitive reaction to brutalized humanity, his distaste for what was low and vulgar; but a greater part of it was derived from sound social ideas. He deplored the tactics of the ruling classes which greedily engulfed all the fruits of industry and conquest when in actuality the profits of labor belonged to the working classes that had created them. He was disgusted with England's treatment of Ireland and with the Englishman's indifference to conditions in that country. "It has always been," he wrote, "the fault of the mass of Englishmen to know and care nothing about Ireland, to let be what would there (which, as it happened, was persecution, avarice, and oppression). . . . Home Rule is in fact likely to come and even in spite of the crime, slander with which its advance is attended, may perhaps in itself be a measure of a sort of equity and, considering

that worse might be, of a kind of prudence."[23]

In the only poem he wrote which may be considered political in nature, "Tom's Garland: upon the Unemployed,"[24] Hopkins states clearly his sympathy for the underprivileged classes and his disgust with those members of the commonwealth who underestimate the disgrace and humiliation unemployment brings to the downtrodden:

> Tom--garlanded with squat and surly steel
> Tom; then Tom's fallowbootfellow piles pick
> By him and rips out rockfire homeforth--sturdy Dick;
> Tom Heart-at-ease, Tom Navvy: he is all for his meal
> Sure, 's bed now. Low be it: lustily he his low lot
> (feel
> That ne'er need hunger, Tom; Tom seldom sick,
> Seldomer heartsore; that treads through, prickproof,
> thick
> Thousandsofthorns, thoughts) swings though. Commonweal
> Little I reck ho! lacklevel in, if all had bread:
> What! Country is honour enough in all us--lordly head
> With heaven's lights high hung round, or, mother-ground
> That mammocks, mighty foot. But no way sped,
> Nor mind nor mainstrength; gold go garlanded
> With, perilous, O no; nor yet plod safe shod sound;
> Undenizened, beyond bound
> Of earth's glory, earth's ease, all; no one, nowhere,
> In wide the world's weal; rare gold, bold steel, bare
> In both; care, but share care--
> This, by Despair, bred Hangdog dull; by Rage,
> Manwolf, worse; and their packs infest the age.

The poem was not immediately construed by Bridges, but that is not surprising, considering Bridges' lack of sympathy toward political liberalism. Hopkins was forced to write a note of

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[23] The Letters, edited by Abbott, pp. 256-57.

[24] Hopkins, Poems, p. 63.

explanation to Bridges to clarify his intention, and in that note he describes the plight of Tom, who is of a lower but no less honorable class of society, the workingman. Tom's garland is the badge of his service, the nails in his boots, the steel with which he works. Tom works hard, but in spite of his labor, for the very reason of his having work, is able to throw off care light-heartedly. In contrast, are the poor who are unemployed and uncared for, who "share care with the high and obscurity with the low, but wealth and comfort with neither."[25] Hopkins's anger was directed towards those higher than Tom in society, who viewed light-heartedly the plight of those who were less than Tom, those unfortunates who were not sharing in the fruits of the commonwealth.

Viewed in the light of Hopkins's explanatory note, the poem is not, as has been suggested, the expression of a cleric who desired to whitewash the status quo and to censure the unfortunate. It is the passionate statement of a liberal soul enraged at the smug indifference of the middle and upper classes to misery and want. In common with numerous theological-, or philosophical-, minded critics of modern society, what Hopkins wanted was more than a dull equity in the ranks of society, and what he resented was the completely a-moral and inorganic

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[25] The Letters, edited by Abbott, pp. 273-74.

concept of society wherein the individual served no ends but his own. Had Tom been a working man serving a spiritualized commonwealth, neither Tom nor Hopkins would have been dissatisfied with Tom's lot. In short, Hopkins's thinking about the state was in the Burke-Coleridge tradition, not in the tradition of utilitarianism and liberalism founded on laissez-faire.[26]

Throughout Hopkins's life, and more particularly after he became a Jesuit, he was harried by an internal conflict. The struggles of indecision which afflicted him often brought Hopkins to prostration and even near death. The agonies he suffered did not arise from moral conflict; his devotion to the religion he had embraced never flagged. The source of his difficulty lay in an inner sense of his own inadequacy. He felt he was unable to measure up to the rigorous demands of the spiritual life he had chosen to lead. He felt wanting in the requisites of temperament which would lead him directly to God through his chosen vocation. The subject of his most poignant sonnets is this struggle of indecision within himself about himself. Of these sonnets Dixon wrote:

> I can understand that your present position, seclusion and exercises would give to your writings a rare charm--they have done so in those that I have seen: something that I cannot describe, but know to

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[26] This Burke-Coleridge tradition, with its overtones of religious authority in the state is well described in Granville Hicks, Figures of Transition, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1939), pp. 1-68.

> myself by the inadequate word terrible pathos--something of what you call temper in poetry; a right temper which goes to the point of terrible; the terrible crystal. Milton is the only one else who has anything like it: & he has it in a totally different way: he has it through indignation, through injured majesty, which is an inferior thing.[27]

Hopkins believed the struggle he experienced was God-given in order that he might purge and perfect himself. He felt that the Lord touched him and distressed him that he might better be fitted to do the Lord's work. In the sonnet, "Carrion Comfort," Hopkins cries out that he will not feed on despair, determines that he will find the strength to persevere:

> Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;
> Not untwist--slack they may be--these last strands of man
> In me or, 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 bruised 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, cheer.
> Cheer whom though? the hero whose heaven-handling flung me, foot tread

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[27] Claude Colleer Abbott, editor, The Correspondence of Gerard M. Hopkins and R. W. Dixon, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 80.

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.[28]

In the second quatrain of this sonnet, Hopkins asks God why he has been subjected to such terrible spiritual agony, and finds the answer: "That my chaff might fly; my grain lie sheer and clear." Such was the answer Hopkins hoped to find: that his spirit might be winnowed by the tempests that ravaged his heart and that his grain would lie "sheer and clear."

It must be clear that the difficulties Hopkins had were not a result of his life as a Jesuit priest. His priestly vocation was a drain on his time and energy, the hours he had to spend in Retreat wearied him physically and robbed him of hours that might have been spent in writing, but his life did not keep him from writing. He did not mind not having hope of publication or public recognition for his work. What tortured him were his periods of inability to produce. There were long intervals during which he could not bring himself to write, or could find no compulsion to continue what he had started. "If I could but get on, if I could but produce work I should not mind its being buried, silenced, and going no further; but it kills me to be time's eunuch and never to beget."[29] Hopkins appealed against being "time's eunuch" in a

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[28] Hopkins, Poems, p. 61.

[29] The Letters, edited by Abbott, p. 222.

sonnet which for purity of its intention and the nobility of its tone has almost no equal in poetry:

> Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
> With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
> Why do sinner's ways prosper? and why must
> Disappointment all I endeavor end?
> Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
> How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
> Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
> Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,
> Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes
> Now, leavèd how thick! laced they are again
> With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes
> Them; birds build--but not I build; no, but strain
> Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
> Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.[30]

The discipline Hopkins was forced to undergo as a Jesuit was not detrimental to his poetic gift. By nature Hopkins was diffusively emotional, and there were times when his emotions got out of hand and led him into almost ridiculous excesses of feeling. Once, when he was listening to an account of a Saint's life, he began to cry and sob and could not stop.[31] His fits of emotional depression caused him, at times, to believe he was going mad. Without the discipline of mind Hopkins was forced to practice as a priest, his emotions might never have been brought into focus, and the magnificently concise expression of his mature poetry might never have come into being. Hopkins was in need of discipline, and he was keen enough to recognize that an artist flourishes

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[30] Hopkins, Poems, pp. 68-69.

[31] The Note-Books and Papers, edited by House, p. 128.

best under restraint. The unbridled genius wastes his powers in efforts which without direction become meaningless; it is under the stress of meeting severe requirements that the artist produces his best work. Hopkins noted the need of direction for the artistic mind when he wrote in "The Origin of Beauty":

> You see, as others have seen, that genius works more powerfully under the constraints of metre and rhyme and so on than without, that it is more effective when conditioned than when unconditioned. . . . the concentration, the intensity, which is called in by means of an artificial structure brings into play the resources of genius on the one hand, and on the other brings us to the end of what inferior minds have to give us.[32]

In his poetry Hopkins disciplined himself by the strictness of the metrical theories he put into practice. "Only remark, as you say there is no conceivable licence I shd. not be able to justify," he wrote Bridges, "that with all my licences, or rather laws, I am stricter than you and I might say than anybody I know."[33] As the artificial structure of his verse disciplined his poetic genius and brought it to expression, so did the artificial structure of Jesuit discipline bring his soul into order. Without the sternness of his vocation, Hopkins might have remained the adequate poet of his youth; with it he became the voice of intense personal expression, the poet of "the terrible crystal."

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[32] The Note-Books and Papers, edited by House, pp. 83-84.

[34] The Letters, edited by Abbott, p. 44.

CHAPTER III

THE METRICAL PRACTICES OF HOPKINS

The work of nearly all poets shows a progressive change as the artist moves toward mature expression, but few poets have evidenced such a radical change under as peculiar circumstances as Gerard Hopkins. The poetry of Hopkins's youth is interesting, sometimes excellent, but never surprising in any departure from orthodox forms and devices. The work of his maturity is like that of no other poet. Just as one may speak of a definite Chaucerian, Miltonic, or Keatsian style in poetry, so may one speak of the work of Hopkins. The personality of Hopkins is so deeply impressed upon his poetry, the nature of his metrical devices so individual, that the mark of his influence upon later poets is almost immediately perceptible.

The earliest poetry of Hopkins was greatly influenced by Keats and Spenser; it is possible, however, that the influence was largely that of Keats, and that Hopkins used Keats's adaptation of the Spenserian stanza as a model rather than the original. The prize poem, "The Escorial," written while Hopkins was a student at Highgate, is in Spenserian stanzas, and echoes Spenser in occasional turns of phrase. "Hard by a royal palace," for instance, brings to mind immediately

CHAPTER III

THE MORTUOUS PERFECTIONS OF MORTALS

The work of Keats's all shows a gradual change as the moral nature became more mature and the poets have evidenced such a radical change from romantic idealism as Gerard Hopkins. The poetry of Keats's youth is luxurious, sometimes excessive, but never hypocritical in any departure from orthodoxy from that of Keats. The work of his maturity is like that of no other poet. One may speak of a definite conception, "Truth is Beauty" as the key of poetry, so may one speak of the work of Keats. The personality of Keats is so deeply impressed upon his poetry, the nature of his material [illegible] as Keats's, that the work of his maturity upon Keats's poetry is almost impossible to pretend.

The earlier poetry of Keats was greatly influenced by Keats and Chapman; it is romantic, novel, [illegible] Keats was largely that of Keats, and this tendency was adaptation of the Spenserian stanza is a real [illegible] from the original. The style was, "The Eve of St. Agnes" [illegible] Keats was a student at Hyperion, in the Spenserian stanza, and poems dealt in sensational terms of pleasure. [illegible] royal palace." His influence, before he [illegible]

Spenser's "Hard by a forest's side," from The Faerie Queene. But it is clearly evident that Hopkins's greatest indebtedness was to Keats. "The Escorial" has the same medieval charm as Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes." There is the same interest in details of Gothic architecture, the same lushness of imagery, and a likeness in dramatic intention. Hopkins's interest in architecture is evident in stanza six of "The Escorial":

> No finish'd proof was this of Gothic grace
> With flowing tracery engemming rays
> Of colour in high casements face to face;
> And foliag'd crownals (pointing how the ways
> Of art best follow nature) in a maze
> Of finish'd diapers, that fills the eye
> And scarcely traces where one beauty strays
> And melts amidst another; ciel'd on high
> With blazon'd groins, and crowned with hues
> of majesty.[1]

Stanza thirteen of "The Escorial" is near to the mood of "The Eve of St. Agnes." One remembers the stormy night in Keats's poem, the old Beadsman, and the wind that raised the carpets along the stone floor:

> But from the mountain glens in autumn late
> Adown the clattering gullies swept the rain;
> The driving storm at hour of vespers beat
> Upon the mould'ring terraces amain;
> The Altar-tapers flar'd in gusts; in vain
> Louder the monks dron'd out Gregorians slow;
> Afar in corridors with painèd strain
> Doors slamm'd to the blasts continually; more low
> Then pass'd the wind, and sobb'd with mountain-
> echo'd woe.[2]

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[1] Gerard Manley Hopkins, Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited with notes by Robert Bridges, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 127.

[2] Ibid., p. 129.

Spender's "Ears by a Forest's side," from The Heart's Grave.

But it is clearly evident that Hopkins's greatest influence was to Eliot. "The Leopard" and the same medieval image as Yeats's "Rose of St. Agnes." There is also the use of details of Dante's architecture, the sense I adopt of "Ruin" and a likeness in dramatic locution. Hopkins's influence on architecture is evident in seven mix of "Ten Lectures":

> So Tristan's proof was this: at Golden Cross
> Slim figures pressed congealing away
> Of colour in high vaulting lies to least
> And Tristan's dreams (pounding how the ways
> Of pet and low follow nature) in a mass
> Of tinted disgrace, what fills the eye
> And scarcely breaks always one beauty shrive
> And melts without sculpture; field on high
> With Tristan's groins, and crowned with ivy
> Of masonry.[1]

Stephen Spender of "The Scorpion" is more to the point of "Rose of St. Agnes." One remembers the story that is inside a poem, the old beadsman, and the stone floor and the stone floor:

> But from the mortuary floor in vaults high
> Above the clattering building upon the rifts
> The shrivel stone as hour of weapons beat
> Upon the mouldering terraces unsaid
> The Alter-tapers flared in gusts in vain
> Longer the nights drawn out unseen alone
> Alone in corridors with potted crests
> Doors flamed to the blade continually upon
> Their pots of the wind, and moody bells
> echo'd woes.[2]

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[1] Stephen Spender, Poems of Dedication (London: The Scorpion Press, edited also notes by Joseph Auslander, (London: The Scorpion Press, versity Press, 1947), p. 127.

[2] Ibid., p. 129.

A later poem of Hopkins's youth, "The Vision of the Mermaids," has a richness of sensuous imagery to be compared with that in Keats's "Endymion":

> Soon--as when Summer of his sister Spring
> Crushes and tears the rare enjewelling,
> And boasting 'I have fairer things than these'
> Plashes amidst the billowy apple-trees
> His lusty hands, in gusts of scented wind
> Swirling out bloom till all the air is blind
> With rosy foam and pelting blossom and mists
> Of driving vermeil-rain; . . .[3]

Father G. F. Lahey has pointed out another influence upon the young Hopkins, that of Swinburne, and has suggested that the student may have exceeded his model.[4] The poem is "Ad Miriam," which opens:

> When a sister, born for each strong month-brother,
> Spring's one daughter, the sweet child May,
> Lies in the breast of the young year-mother
> With light on her face like the waves at play,
> Man from the lips of him speaketh and saith,
> At the touch of her wandering wondering breath
> Warm on his brow: lo! where is another
> Fairer than this one to brighten our day?[5]

The quoted stanza is a good example of the type of verse throughout the rest of the poem. It resembles Swinburne in the abundance of alliteration used as well as the form in which it is cast. Technically, the piece is adequate, but further than that it has no particular merit. It is plain

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[3] Hopkins, Poems, p. 133.

[4] G. F. Lahey, Gerard Manley Hopkins, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1930), p. 88.

[5] Hopkins, Poems, p. 144.

A later poem of Hopkins's section, "The Leaf-Leaping Wormwalds," has a richness of expression largely in the original with that in Keats's "Endymion":

> Soon—as when Jupiter of his clemency
> Grapples and bears the eagle up to Ganymede
> And Dardanus, it have thrown, driving it, [illegible]
> Bishops amidst the Yellow dog-days
> His large hands, in grate or seething-vat
> Stirring one Pilom still his [illegible]
> With long iron and nothing thinking the [illegible]
> Of driving years [illegible]. . .[3]

Father G. M. Lahey has pointed out accurate parallels between the young Hopkins, that of "Pilgrim," and the Keats-like club the student may have accessed this [illegible] "Ad Mirtum," which opens:

> Soon a sharper, bolt to bolt shoots [illegible]
> Darling's one daughter, the sweet Mirtil [illegible]
> Also in the breast of the young [illegible]
> With light on her face like the [illegible]
> Man from the hill of the [illegible]
> At the sports of men [illegible]
> Here on his forest [illegible]
> Rather than this one do [illegible]
> [illegible]

The quoted source is a good example of [illegible] throughout the rest of the poem. It [illegible] the abundance of alliteration used as well as the [illegible] which it is made. Obviously, the other is [illegible], but [illegible] that it has no [illegible].

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[3] Hopkins, Poems, p. 1[illegible].

[4] G. M. Lahey, [illegible] Hopkins [illegible] Jesuit Novitiate Press, 1[illegible], p. [illegible].

[5] Hopkins, Poems, p. 14[illegible].

that at the time of the composition of "Ad Miriam," Hopkins had not achieved his own strength. He was still imitating the work of others. John Gould Fletcher traces the influence of Keats and William Morris on Hopkins. "Father Lahey," he writes, "whose literary judgments may be safely disregarded, says Moore and Tennyson."[6]

In technique, Hopkins's early poetry was thoroughly traditional. There was no attempt by Hopkins to institute any new rhythms or to depart in any fashion from the established forms of poetic expression. His early poems are lyrical in nature, and that lyricism is of a type common to English literature as a whole. That lyricism which is peculiar to the mature work of Hopkins had not yet begun to form its accents in the poet's mind.

With "The Wreck of the Deutschland," the mature work of Hopkins sprung into being. But before the appearance of "The Deutschland," there had been seven long years of silence. When Hopkins entered the Novitiate at Roehampton, he destroyed most of his early work. What remained was in the possession of friends, or was kept by Hopkins for his own purpose. During the period of silence, he wrote no poetry, but the voluntary vow he had taken did not keep him from thinking

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[6] John G. Fletcher, "Gerard Manley Hopkins--Priest or Poet?" The American Review, VI, (Jan., 1936), p. 332.

about poetry, and when the incident of the wreck of the steamer Deutschland gave him occasion to feel relieved of his silence, he gave expression to his new rhythms. "I had long had haunting my ear," he wrote Dixon, "the echoes of a new rhythm which I now realized on paper."[7]

The new rhythm which had been haunting Hopkins's ear was "sprung rhythm" and, although he incorporated sprung rhythms into his "Wreck of the Deutschland," he did not claim the invention of them. In a letter of explanation to Bridges, he wrote:

> I do not of course claim to have invented sprung rhythms but only sprung rhythm; I mean that single lines and single instances of it are not uncommon in English and I have pointed them out in lecturing--e.g. 'why should this : desert be?--which the editors have variously amended; 'There to meet : with Macbeth' or 'There to meet with Mac : beth'; Campbell has some throughout the Battle of the Baltic--'and their fleet along the deep : proudly shone'--and Ye Mariners--'as ye sweep : through the deep'--etc; Moore has some which I cannot recall; there is one in Grongar Hill; and . . . in Nursery Rhymes, Weather Saws, and Refrains they are very common--but what I do in the Deutschland etc. is to enfranchise them as a regular and permanent principle of scansion.[8]

Hopkins's use of the great colon in demonstrating sprung rhythm is not clear, nor do his examples go much further in clarifying the difficulty. In a later letter to Dixon, however,

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[7] Claude Colleer Abbott, editor, The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 14.

[8] Claude Colleer Abbott, editor, The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 45.

about poetry, and when the Incident of the wreck of the steamer *Deutschland* gave him occasion to feel "relieved of his silence, he gave expression to his new insight. 'I had long had hearing my ear,' he wrote given, 'the manner of new rhythm which I now realized on paper.'[7]

The new rhythm which had been haunting Hopkins's ear was "sprung rhythm" and, although he incorporated strong rhythms into his "Wreck of the Deutschland," he did not claim the invention of them. In a letter of explanation to Bridges he wrote:

> I do not of course claim to have invented sprung rhythm but only sprung rhythm; I mean that sort of rhythm and single instance of it was not unknown to English and I have looked upon it as being the recovery of a native English metre. Why should this : those be--with the advice that variously weighed. There no meet : with modern or there to meet with and : death! Cast it, one throughout the Battle of this Bride--and then right along the deep : probably about--and to have come to a sudden : through the deep--out about the I cannot venture where is one in Spenser Milton and in Marvell Dryden, Wordsworth Shakespeare and very common--but most I do in the Deutschland the to antithesis view as a regular and variously pattern of accession.[8]

Hopkins's use of this great colon in descriptive sprung rhythm is not clear, for he has examples on much another in clarifying the difficulty. In a letter to Canon Dixon

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[7] Claude Colleer Abbott, editor, *The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon*, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 14.

[8] Claude Colleer Abbott, editor, *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 45.

Hopkins elaborated the principles of sprung rhythm:

> To speak shortly, it [sprung rhythm] consists in scanning by accents or stresses 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. . . .Here are instances--Díng, dóng, béll; Pússy's ín the wéll; Whó pút her ín? Líttle Jóhnny Thín. Whó púlled her óut? Líttle Jóhnny Stóut. For if each líne has three stresses or three feet it follows that some of the feet are of one syllable only. So too Óne, two, Búckle my shóe, passim. . . .[9]

As Hopkins suggests, sprung rhythms are common in nursery rimes. "Líttle Jack Hórner" and "There wás a líttle gírl / Who hád a líttle cúrl" are examples. There is an instance of it in Keats, which appears in a letter written by John to Fanny Keats:

> . . . Then he fóund
> That the gróund
> Was as hárd,
> That a yárd
> Was as lóng,
> That a sóng
> Was as mérry,
> That a chérry
> Was as réd,
> That leád
> Was as wéighty,
> That fóurscore
> Was as éighty,
> That a dóor
> Was as wóoden
> As in Éngland--. . .[10]

Of the attempts to systematize a new rhythm of poetry

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[9] The Correspondence, edited by Abbott, p. 14.

[10] John Keats, "Letter to Fanny Keats," (in English Romantic Poets, edited by Stephens, Beck, and Snow, New York: American Book Co., 1933), p. 630.

by accentual emphasis, Hopkins knew of Coleridge's effort in "Christabel," but discounted it in a letter to Dixon:

> I cannot just now get at Coleridge's preface to Christabel. So far as I can gather from what you say and I seem to have seen elsewhere, he was drawing a distinction between two systems of scanning the one of which is quite opposed to sprung rhythm, the other is not, but might be developed [sic] into, that. . . .[11]

In the preface to his "Christabel," Samuel Taylor Coleridge had written:

> I have only to add that the metre of the Christabel is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle; namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless, this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, for the mere ends of convenience, but in the nature of the imagery or passion.[12]

Whatever Coleridge's intention may have been, he failed, as Hopkins said, to realize his aim. Only the first stanza of "Christabel" carries the mark of an earnest attempt to use the four-stress, multi-syllabled rhythm. The main body of the poem is written in octosyllabic couplets.

Hopkins mentions other examples of the use of sprung rhythm among English poets, and cites the use of them by Milton in the choruses in "Samson Agonistes," but suggests that Milton

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[11] The Correspondence, edited by Abbott, p. 21.

[12] Samuel T. Coleridge, preface to "Christabel," (quoted in "Bibliographies and Notes," English Romantic Poets, edited by Stephens, Beck, and Snow, New York: American Book Co., 1933), p. 842.

disguised his use of them because "the want of a metrical notation and the fear of being thought to write mere rhythmic or even unrhythmic prose drove him to this."[13] Hopkins gave no examples of sprung rhythms from the choruses of "Samson Agonistes," but an examination of the poem brings to light the following instances of the rhythm:

> . . . Which shall I first bewail,
> Thy bondage or lost sight,
> Prison within prison
> Inseparable dark?
> Thou art become, O worst imprisonment!
> The dungeon of thyself; thy soul
> Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain,
> Imprisoned now indeed,
> In real darkness of the body dwells,
> Shut up from outward light,
> To incorporate with gloomy night:
> For inward light, alas!
> Puts forth no visual beam. . . .[14]

The lines, "Which shall I first bewail, / Thy bondage or lost sight," etc., may be scanned as iambs if the rhythm is forced; but when the sense of the lines is allowed, when they are scanned according to meaning, the stresses shift as indicated, and Hopkins's contention that Milton's lines allow two possible scansions is found to be true. With three exceptions the lines quoted above fall into a three-stress pattern; one of those exceptions, "Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain," is in counterpointed rhythm.

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[13] The Letters, edited by Abbott, p. 156.

[14] John Milton, "Samson Agonistes," lines 151-63.

A letter to Bridges gives another clue to the source of sprung rhythms. Hopkins wrote: "I am enquiring and presently I shall be able to speak more decidedly--it existed in full force in Anglo saxon verse and in great beauty."[15] Hopkins left little record of his research into the rhythms of Anglo-Saxon poetry save for a fragment of "Piers Plowman," which he marked for scansion in his own way.

> What this mountain bemeneth / and this derke dale
> And this feire feld, ful of folk / feire I schall
> ow schewe.
> A lovely ladd on leor / in linnene iclothed
> . . . . . .
> Al hou bisy thei ben / aboute the mase?
> The moste parti of the peple / that passeth nou
> on eorthe. . . .[16]

Hopkins's decision on sprung rhythms in "Piers Plowman" was that they existed there "in a degraded and doggrel shape."[17] "I am reading," he wrote, "that famous poem and am coming to the conclusion that it is not worth reading."[18] Whatever his ultimate opinion of "Piers Plowman," Hopkins wrote an interesting analysis of the rhythmic structure of that work:

> The beat varies for the most part between anapaestic and iambic or dactylic and trochaic but it is so loose

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[15] The Letters, edited by Abbott, p. 156.

[16] Humphrey House, editor, The Note-Books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 235.

[17] The Letters, edited by Abbott, p. 156.

[18] Loc. cit.

> that not only the syllables are not counted but not even the number of beats in a line, which is commonly two in each half-line but sometimes three or four. It almost seems as if the rhythm were disappearing and repetition of figure given only by the alliteration.[19]

It is interesting to notice Hopkins's reaction to the alliterative character of the verse of "Piers Plowman," deploring as he does the disappearance of rhythm. There is more than a suggestion in Hopkins's statement that he was in ignorance of, or had overlooked, the basic principle of Anglo-Saxon verse--that of alliterative repetition of stress, which is perhaps the greatest strength of Beowulf. Instead of the disappearance of rhythm, as Hopkins suggests, what was happening at the time of "Piers Plowman" and the alliterative revival in the fourteenth century, was the break-down of Anglo-Saxon versification and the evolution of verse techniques which led to modern English poetry.

Although Hopkins himself analyzed so few examples of Anglo-Saxon poetry, it is not difficult, because of the freedom of syllabication in Anglo-Saxon verse, to find approximations of sprung rhythm in early English poetry, as in "The Gossips' Feast":

> Call fórth owr góssippis bý and bý,
> Elynóre, Johán, and Márgery
> Márgret, Alís, and Cécely,

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[19] The Note-Books and Papers, edited by House, p. 235.

For þéi will cúm,
Both áll and sóm
Góod góssippis mýn, a![20]

Another good example may be found in the "Debate of the Cleric and the Maiden":

Sórewe and sýke and dréry mód
Býndeþ mé so fáste
Þat Y wéne to wálke wód,
Ȝef hít me léngore láste;
My sérewe, my cáre, al wíþ a wórd
He mýhte awéy cáste;
Whet hélpeþ þé, my suéte lemmón,
My lýf þus fórte gáste?[21]

Latin poetry was another source from which Hopkins gathered ideas for sprung rhythm. He discovered in Saturnian verse the use of accentual rhythm without count of syllable.

Quod ré suá diffídens / ásperé afflícta
Parénś timéns hic vóvit, / vóto hóc solúto,
Decumá factá pollúcta, / liberí libéntes
Donúm danúnt Hérculi / máximé mérito,
Simúl te oránt se vóti / crébo condémnes . . .[22]

In "The Wreck of the Deutschland," Hopkins gathered all he had gleaned of sprung rhythms from his reading, and created a form which he called "sprung rhythm." As Hopkins himself said, "The Wreck of the Deutschland" strikes the eye with a sort of "unmitigated violence," but careful analysis of the poem shows that it has none of the chaos suggested by

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[20] Literary Middle English Reader, edited by Albert S. Cook, (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1915), p. 373.

[21] Ibid., p. 418.

[22] The Note-Books and Papers, edited by House, p. 234.

the term "violence." It is a carefully and masterfully executed piece of work. The stanzas of "The Wreck" are written in the set-stress and many-syllable scheme made possible by Hopkins's research into the principles of sprung rhythms. The stress scheme of "The Wreck," which should not be confused with the rime scheme, is divided into two parts. The first section of the poem, consisting of ten stanzas, has a stress pattern of 2, 3, 4, 3, 5, 5, 4, 6. That is to say, the first line of each stanza has two stresses, the second line has three, the third, four, etc. In the second section of "The Wreck," the stress pattern is 3, 3, 4, 3, 5, 5, 4, 6. Throughout each of the stanzas the number of unaccented syllables is unequal, and while there is an occasional variation in the stress pattern, the poem adheres closely to the accentual scheme. The two stanzas following are from the first section of "The Wreck":

> I did say yes
> O at lightning and lashed rod;
> Thou heardst me truer than tongue confess
> Thy terror, O Christ, O God;
> Thou knowest the walls, altar and hour and night:
> The swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl
> of thee trod
> Hard down with a horror of height:
> And the midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with
> fire of stress.[23]

> I am soft sift
> In an hourglass--at the wall
> Fast but mined with a motion, a drift,

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[23] Hopkins, Poems, p. 12.

And it crówds and it cómbs to the fáll;
I stéady as a wáter in a wéll, to a póise, to a páne,
But róped with, álways, all the way dówn from the táll
Féllsor flánks of the vóel, a véin
Of the góspel próffer, a préssure, a prínciple,
Christ's gift.[24]

From the second section of "The Wreck":

They fought with Gód's cóld--
And they coúld not and féll to the déck
(Crúshed them) or wáter (and drówned them) or rólled
With the sea-romp over the wréck
Night roared, with the heart-break hearing a heart-
broke rábble,
The wóman's wailing, the crying of chíld without chéck--
Till a lióness aróse breasting the bábble,
A prophetess towered in the túmult, a virginal tongue
told.[25]

Despite the obscurity of this poem, the stanzas just quoted suffice to demonstrate the regularity of Hopkins's principle of sprung rhythm. Today it is difficult to see why Bridges should have refused to re-read "The Wreck of the Deutschland." It is obscure, but only at the first reading, and mainly because of the peculiarity of Hopkins's diction. It is well to note Hopkins's remarks on the method of scansion by which poems written in sprung rhythm may be analyzed:

> Remark also that it is natural in Sprung Rhythm for the lines to be <u>rove over</u>, that is for the scanning of each line immediately to take up that of the one before, so that if the first has one or more syllables at its end the other must have so many less at its beginning, say, of a stanza to the end and all the stanza is one long strain, though written in lines asunder.[26]

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[24] Hopkins, <u>Poems</u>, p. 12.

[25] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 17.

[26] <u>Ibid.</u>, "Author's Preface," p. 4.

There are, of course, many other examples of sprung rhythm in Hopkins's poetry. The sonnet, "The Windhover," is written in that rhythm, and "Binsey Poplars":

> O if we but knew what we do
> When we delve or hew--
> Hack and rack the growing green!
> Since country is so tender
> To touch her being so slender,
> That, like this sleek and seeing ball
> But a prick will make no eye at all,
> Where we, even where we mean
> To mend her we end her,
> When we hew or delve:
> After-comers cannot guess the beauty been.[27]

The more carefully sprung rhythm is investigated, the more increasingly difficult it becomes to see how Hopkins was able to justify it as a principle of versification. There is an inconsistency in Hopkins's use of sprung rhythm throughout his poetry. "The Wreck" has a strict metrical pattern; so do several other poems.[28] But in contrast to these is "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire," which Hopkins probably meant to have six stresses to the line, but which the ordinary reader, unaquainted with Hopkins's technique, would read as having from six to ten accented syllables. The first two lines of "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" may be scanned

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[27] Hopkins, Poems, p. 39.

[28] "The Windhover" and "Tom's Garland" are in a five stress pattern; "Felix Randal" and "To what serves Mortal Beauty?" have six stresses to the line; and "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" has eight stresses to the line, on Hopkins's own statement in The Letters, edited by Abbott, p. 245.

in this fashion:

> Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows flaunt
> forth, then chevy on an air-
> built thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers in gay-gangs
> they throng; they glitter in marches.[29]

The first line scans as having nine stresses and the second line apparently has ten stresses. Scanning the same lines as Hopkins might have, with Hopkins's marked caesura indicated,

> Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows | flaunt
> forth, then chevy on an air-
> built thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers in gay-gangs |
> they throng; they glitter in marches.

it is possible to make the lines conform to a six-stress pattern. This disagreement between scansions is a result of Hopkins's disregard of secondary accent. Unless the poem is marked throughout, as Hopkins marked "Harry Ploughman" for Bridges,[30] it is impossible for the reader to place the accented syllables exactly where Hopkins meant they should be placed. Hopkins was aware of the confusion his metrical practices would cause and wrote Bridges:

> My meaning surely <u>ought</u> to appear of itself; but in a language like English, and in an age of it like the present, written words are really matter open and indifferent to the receiving of different and alternative verse-forms, some of which the reader cannot possibly be sure are meant unless they are marked for him. Besides metrical marks are for the performer and such marks are proper in every art. Though indeed one

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[29] Hopkins, <u>Poems</u>, p. 67.

[30] See above, pp. 67-68.

> might say syntactical marks are for the performer too.[31] . . . above all remember what applies to all my verse, that it is, as living art should be, made for performance and that its performance is not reading with the eye but loud, leisurely, poetical (not rhetorical) recitation, with long rests, long dwells on the rhyme and other marked syllables, and so on.[32]

Even when the marks Hopkins wished used are placed for the "performer" of his poetry, the problem of sprung rhythm is not solved. Where the stress pattern is rigid, the idea of a sprung rhythm principle is understandable; but where the pattern is not definite, as in "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo," where the first line has fifteen stresses and the other lines vary in number of accents from one to fourteen, the conclusion must be that Hopkins's method of placing accent was an arbitrary one, and that the number of stressed syllables depended upon the immediate objective Hopkins had in mind when he was composing.

The very looseness and arbitrariness of Hopkins's employment of sprung rhythm depreciates the value of that device for the poet who turns to Hopkins as a model for metrical innovation. If sprung rhythm can be used to effect only by Hopkins, and if any poet borrowing that rhythm becomes Hopkins-like, then sprung rhythm must have been a poetic idiosyncrasy individual to Hopkins and, as such, has no particular value to metrics. Sprung rhythm, however, has been used effectively

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31 The Letters, edited by Abbott, p. 265.

32 Ibid., p. 246.

by modern poets, and as will be shown later, it is Hopkins's syntax, not his sprung rhythm, which constitutes his greatest achievement in poetic originality.

A second important poetic principle investigated by Hopkins was counterpointed rhythm. Hopkins did not claim the invention of counterpointed rhythm any more than he had claimed the invention of sprung rhythms. He described counterpointed rhythm as a common device used by poets to escape monotony in verse. An important element in counterpointed rhythm is the caesura, which is used to break up the rhythm into sense-words of a different length from sound-words.[33] "By counterpoint," wrote Hopkins, "I mean the carrying on of two figures at once, especially if they are alike in kind but very unlike or opposite in species. The more marked the rhythm . . . the more need of a marked caesura to break it."[34] The most common use of counterpointed rhythm is in the Alexandrine, which after the caesura shifts the metrical emphasis to gain its especial effect. The common Alexandrine, however, is monotonous, and is so, as Hopkins pointed out, because the caesura usually falls in the middle of the line, dividing it into equal lengths of 3:3.[35] It may be divided also into the lengths $2\frac{1}{2}:3\frac{1}{2}$, or

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[33] The Note-Books and Papers, edited by House, p. 238.

[34] Loc. cit.

[35] Loc. cit.

by modern poets, and as will be shown later, it is Hopkins's
speech, not his actual verse, which concentrates his
achievement in poetic originality.

A second important poetic principle of Hopkins's
doctrine was counterpointed rhythm. Although this principle
involves a conventional rhythm and was taught by Hopkins's
his lovedition of Sprung rhythm. Hopkins defined counterpoint
rhythm as a common metric used by poets to create musical
verse. An important element in counterpointed rhythm
caesura, which is used to break up the rhythm into
two different length that coexist. The caesura
across boundaries. "I mean the caesura or cut (Tomeos) which
especially if they are rhythmic in time, but so as
in poetics. The not, perhaps, the greatest, is the
need of a marked caesura to break it. The
of counterpointed rhythm is in the Alexandrine, which
the caesura marks the marked emphasis to give the
effect. The common Alexandrine, however, is monotonous
is so, as Hopkins pointed out, because the caesura
falls in the middle of the line, dividing it into two
of six.[85] It may be divided also into the Iambic

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[83] The Notes-Book and Letters, edited by House,

[84] Loc. cit.

[85] Loc. cit.

$3\frac{1}{2}:2\frac{1}{2}$, but these, too, are monotonous when repeated twice running. Hopkins incorporated counterpointed rhythm into his verse by using it in five-foot lines and dividing them 3:2, or 2:3.

> And all is seared with trade;//bleared, smeared
> with toil; . . .[36]

> Landscape plotted and pieced--//fold, fallow, and
> plough; . . .[37]

> God, lover of souls,//swaying considerate scales, . . .[38]

> There God to aggrandise,//God to glorify.[39]

> And, cast by conscience out,//spendsavour salt?[40]

Hopkins most often used counterpoint in his six-foot lines and quite often the caesura occurs in the middle of the verse. He escapes sameness by the intention of difference between sound and sense words, and because the peculiarity of his diction masks what in another poet would be tiring regularity.

> World broods with warm breast and with ah!//
> bright wings.[41]

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[36] Hopkins, Poems, p. 26.

[37] Ibid., p. 30.

[38] Ibid., p. 32.

[39] Ibid., p. 46.

[40] Loc. cit.

[41] Ibid., p. 26.

In this last example, a correct reading according to sense makes two caesuras necessary, so that the line reads

> World broods with warm breast//and with ah!//
> bright wings.

Examples of Hopkins's use of counterpointed rhythm in six-foot lines are:

> For a rainbow footing it//nor he for his bones
> risen.[42]

> Being mighty a master,//being a father and fond.[43]

> Master more may than gaze,//gaze out of countenance.[44]

> Hard as hurdle arms,//with a broth of goldish
> flue . . .[45]

It is possible to find examples of Hopkins's work in counterpointed rhythm without much searching, and the effects of his experiments in that rhythm are striking to the ear, but the metrical analysis of contrapuntal rhythm is quite another matter, for it defies orthodox devices of scansion. "The May Magnificat" offers an interesting problem in the unravelling of Hopkins's structure of counterpointed rhythm:

> Candlemas,//Lady Day;
> But the lady Month,//May,
> Why fasten that upon her,
> With a feasting in her honour?

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[42] Hopkins, Poems, p. 31

[43] Ibid., p. 32.

[44] Ibid., p. 60.

[45] Ibid., p. 64.

Is it only its being brighter
Than the most are must delight her?
    Is it opportunest
    And flowers finds soonest?

Ask of her,//the mighty mother:
Her reply//puts this other
    Question://What is Spring?--
    Growth in everything--

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

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

All things rising,//all things sizing
Mary sees,//sympathising
    With that world of good
    Nature's motherhood.[46]

The signification, //, in the verses above marks the presence of the caesura in counterpointed lines. In the first line quoted the caesura is definite, and the verse may be scanned as two cretics. Only if the caesura is allowed to have a substituted value of an unaccented syllable will the line conform to the prejudice which exists in English poetry for the use of but five common meters; even then the line is found to be catalectic. In the second line the pause comes between the two accents of the spondee, which is a substitute foot in a trochaic line. The key to Hopkins's theory of

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[46] Hopkins, Poems, pp. 37-38.

contrapuntal verse-writing is in the marked contrast which he strove to achieve between rhythms within the line and between line and line. In the preface to his poems he wrote:

> . . . the reversal of the first foot and of some middle foot after a strong pause is a thing so natural that our poets have generally done it, from Chaucer down, without remark and it commonly passes unnoticed and cannot be said to amount to a formal change of rhythm, but rather is that irregularity which all natural growth and motion shews. If however the reversal is repeated in two feet running, especially so as to include the sensitive second foot, it must be due either to great want of ear or else is a calculated effect, the superinducing or mounting of a new rhythm upon the old; and since the new or mounted rhythm is actually heard and at the same time the mind naturally supplies the natural or standard foregoing rhythm, for we do not forget what the rhythm is that by rights we should be hearing, two rhythms are in some manner running at once and we have something answerable to counterpoint in music . . . and this is Counterpoint Rhythm.[47]

When the caesura exists within the line, as in the common Alexandrine, or marked lines of the stanzas quoted from "The May Magnificat," the effect gained is rhythmic contrast between parts of the line: "Candlemas,//Lady Day." The natural rhythm of the line is trochaic, but the caesura supplies a rest in place of the expected unaccented syllable and the character of the rhythm changes. It must be noted that the ear seems to hear the echo of the missing syllable even as the strong accent following the pause is read. The technical handling of the line, "But the Lady Month,//May,"

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[47] Hopkins, Poems, "Author's Preface," pp. 2-3.

is much the same. Again the natural rhythm is trochaic, but caesura gives the effect, in the final foot, of a spondee.

When counterpointed rhythm exists between two lines, the natural pause at the termination or the first line serves as the caesura, as in the lines, "Why fasten that upon her,/ With a feasting in her honour?" or, "Is it opportunest / And flowers finds soonest?" In both instances an iambic rhythm is counterpointed with a trochaic.

Whatever Hopkins hoped to gain for his poetry by the use of counterpointed rhythm is not clear, but other than a certain variety and an occasional freshness, the experiment had no lasting value. As Hopkins admitted, there was nothing new about counterpointed rhythm. All Hopkins did was to invent a term describing the variation of caesura and to explain the effects to be gained by it. As a regular principle of versification, counterpointed rhythm was not successful, and could not be because it is not a principle, but a device. Milton used variation of caesura to fine effect, so did Hopkins, but it remains a device important only in relation to the poetic genius employing it.

Hopkins's interest in music caused him to develop a system of annotation for his work in an attempt to gain for poetry the same abundance of variety of expression possible in music. The marks which Hopkins used in his poetry appalled Bridges, and at Bridges' suggestion, Hopkins reluctantly

allowed many of his marks to be struck from his poems. "You were right," he wrote Bridges, "to leave out the marks: they were not consistent for one thing, and are always offensive. Still there must be some. Either I must invent a notation applied throughout as in music or else I must only mark where the reader is likely to mistake, and for the present this is what I shall do."[48] The marks Hopkins used in his work were:

1 ′ -- the metrical stress [this mark he retained].
2 ◠ -- pause or dwell on a syllable; need not be metrical.
3 ~ --quiver or circumflex; makes one syllable equal two; most used for diphthongs or liquids.
4 ⌒ -- between syllables slurs them into one.
5 ⌒ -- over three or more syllables gives them the time of one-half foot.
6 ◡ -- the outride; under one or more syllables makes them extra-metrical; a slight pause follows.
7 ^ -- strong stress.[49]
8 ⌐ -- over two neighboring syllables means that, though one has and the other has not the metrical stress, in the recitation-stress they are to be about equal.[50]

Hopkins's use of metrical notation appears in a facsimile reproduction of "Harry Ploughman," and the marks are shown below as they appear in that work.

Hard as hurdle^arms, with a broth of goldish flue
Breathed round; the rack of ribs; the scooped
flank; lank
Rope-over thigh; knee-nave; and barrelled shank--

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[48] Hopkins, Poems, p. 95.

[49] The marks are given at the bottom of a facsimile reproduction of "Harry Ploughman" included in The Letters, edited by Abbott, insert between pp. 262-63.

[50] The Correspondence, edited by Abbott, p. 129.

Héad and fóot, shoûlder and shánk--
By a grey eye's heed steered well, one crew, fall to;
Stând at stress. Each limb's barrowy brown, his thew
That onewhere curded, onewhere sucked or sank--
Scared ór sánk--,
Though as a beechbole firm, fînds his, as at a roll-
call, rank
And features, ín flesh, whát deed he each must do--
His sinew-service where do.

He leans to it, Harry bends, look. Back, elbow, and
liquid waist
In him, all quâil to the wallowing o' the plough:
's cheek crîmsons; cũrls
Wag or crossbridle, in a wind lifted, windlaced--
See his wind- lillylocks -laced;
Chũrlsgrace, too, child of Amansstrength, how it hangs
or hũrls
Them--broâd in bluffhíde his frówning féet lashed!
ráced
With, along them, cragirion under and cold fũrls--
With-a-fountain's shining-shot furls.[51]

It is the inclusion or omission of Hopkins's marks that makes metrical analysis of his poetry such a difficult task. With them it is impossible to conform to any established system of scansion. Without them the analyst suffers the danger of wrenching Hopkins's metre and of obscuring the poet's objective. Actually there is no need to approach Hopkins's work categorically; nothing is to be gained by forcing it into agreement with an accepted system of verse analysis. Hopkins's approach to poetry was unique and his voice is inimitable.

If Hopkins had made no experiments in verse technique, he still would have influenced poets and left his mark on

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[51] The Letters, edited by Abbott, insert between pp. 262-63.

modern poetry through the remarkable quality of his figures of speech and his odd, empiristic syntax. Hopkins saw the world keenly and with as fresh an eye as any poet before him or since. At times his vision seems unduly complicated; at times, grotesque; but, commonly, the reader arrives at an appreciation of the preciseness of Hopkins's imagery.

Many of Hopkins's images, and probably all of them, were the result of careful observation and long thought. There was very little in Hopkins of the intuitive flash leading to the inevitable term. In one of his early diaries, Hopkins made the cryptic entry "Also of the bones sleeved in flesh."[52] The first stanza of "The Wreck" contains the line: "Thou has bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh."[53] Immediately before the note on "bones sleeved in flesh" is the observation, "Juices of the eyeball," and a little later--"Juices of the sunrise."[54] The idea of juices as an essence must have appealed to Hopkins, for in a sonnet written years later he wrote: "What is all this juice and all this joy?"[55]

Not content with framing one satisfactory simile or metaphor, Hopkins, it may be said, worked his vein of thought

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[52] The Note-Books and Papers, edited by House, p. 53.

[53] Hopkins, Poems, p. 11.

[54] The Note-Books and Papers, edited by House, p. 53.

[55] Hopkins, Poems, p. 27.

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[83] The Note-Books and Poems, [illegible]

[84] Hopkins, Poems, [illegible]

[85] The Note-Books and Poems, [illegible]

[86] Hopkins, Poems, op. cit.

completely out. In the early diaries, when casting about for figures of speech on stars, he noted:

> The sky minted into golden sequins.
> Stars like gold tufts.
> -- -- golden bees.
> -- -- golden rowels.
> Sky peak'd with tiny flames.
> Stars like tiny-spoked wheels of fire.
> Lantern of night pierced in eyelets.[56]

"The Starlight Night,"[57] a sonnet written in his maturity, contains in quick succession the following images for stars: "fire-folk," "bright boroughs," "circle-citadels," "diamond delves," "elves'-eyes," "grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies," "Wind-beat whitebeam," "airy abeles set on a flare," "Flake-doves," "a May-mess, like on orchard boughs," "March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow sallows," "a barn," and "This piece-bright paling." The suggestions for some of his star-images are re-workings by Hopkins of earlier impressions.

The critic considering "The Starlight Night" is at loss to account for the packed imagery of the poem until he remembers Hopkins's conception of the world as infinite variety, in fluxion, but striving toward an equilibrium which is Christ. In the poem, Hopkins endeavors to capture a few of the aspects--"sidings," as Hopkins said--of stars. The figure of stars as at once the house, barn, and fence about all, within which Christ is at home, strikes the mind as a

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[56] The Note-Books and Papers, edited by House, p. 32.

[57] Hopkins, Poems, p. 26.

strained and ridiculous conceit, yet its aptness is apparent in relation to Hopkins's view of Christ. The piled-up images of stars in "The Starlight Night" did not exhaust Hopkins's resources in that direction. In his "The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breathe," he wrote:

> The thick stars round him roll
> Flashing like flecks of coal,
> Quartz-fret, or sparks of salt,
> In grimy vasty vault.[58]

The sensuous quality of Hopkins's poetry is outstanding, and it is a quality that has attracted the attention of every critic of his work. Eda Lou Walton, writing in the Nation, remarked:

> Hopkins not only saw and felt with unusual sensitivity; he deliberately attempted to draw into himself every impression taken by his senses so that each in its turn might be registered indelibly on his inner mind. . . . He was not content merely to describe beauty, he must transmit it to the reader. Therefore his need of new technique, a new syntax, was constant. This process of drawing sensuous impressions inward he calls "inscape." The effects of it in his poetry are easily pointed out. Hopkins, for example, records not a description of a lark's song, but the way it affects his own ear. . . .[59]

The lines Miss Walton had in mind are from the sonnet, "Spring," but they describe the effect of the song of a thrush, not a lark:

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[58] Hopkins, Poems, p. 59.

[59] Eda Lou Walton, "Portrait of a Poet," (review of The Letters of G. M. Hopkins to Robert Bridges, and Correspondence of G. M. Hopkins and R. W. Dixon), Nation, CLXI, 3655 (July 24, 1935), pp. 109-11. (p. 110).

Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and ring
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing.[60]

Certainly Hopkins attempted to record his impressions faithfully, attempted to "see through, not with, the eye," and this desire to capture cleanly what he saw, felt, and heard, in its impact upon his mind, led him toward new ways of expression, almost to a new poetic language. Since Hopkins's approach to the world was intensely individual, it was natural that he should approach poetry in the same manner. When he described a thrush's song in terms of its physical effects upon ear and mind, he described it as personal experience, foregoing that objectivism which removes the beheld from the beholder, that negates the impression, or at best, reduces it to a generality. The result of Hopkins's effort, though it may not have been a conscious objective, has been that the reader is allowed to partake of the poet's inner mind, to share his deepest emotions, and ultimately, not without effort, to arrive at an understanding of the poet's personality.

Always in Hopkins is the recurrent theme of spiritual struggle, and with it the terms that illuminate the personality of the man.

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

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[60] Hopkins, Poems, p. 27.

Thirst's all-in-all in all a world of wet.[61]

Again from sonnet 50:

> . . . 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.[62]

or:

> Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast
> on thee;
> Not untwist,--slack they may be--these last strands
> of man
> In me or, most weary, cry I can no more.[63]

or again in sonnet 41:

> O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
> Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
> May who ne'er hung there.[64]

Hopkins's poetry is tactile to such a degree that it is amazing that the man could have found so many shadings of the sense of touch. He wrote of silence that "beat upon my whorled ear," and "O feel-of-primrose hands, O feet / That want the yield of plushy sward."[65] Ash-boughs were "clammy-ish lashtender combs" that "touch heaven, tabour on it," whose "talons sweep / The smouldering enormous winter welkin!"[66] He celebrated the violence of wind, saying: "Delightfully the bright wind boisterous ropes, wrestles, beats earth bare / Of

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[61] Hopkins, Poems, p. 66.

[62] Ibid., p. 68.

[63] Ibid., p. 61.

[64] Ibid., p. 62.

[65] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[66] Ibid., p. 73.

yestertempest's creases."[67] In "Carrion Comfort" he cried out:

> But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me
> Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lionlimb against me? scan
> With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones? and fan,
> O in turns of tempest, me heaped there . . .[68]

"Harry Ploughman," quoted in its entirety some pages back, might well be the most sensuous poetic portrait ever written. In this sonnet, Hopkins handled his words as if he were a sculptor. With sharp, incisive terms he phrased "the rack of ribs; the scooped flank; lend / Rope-over thigh; knee-nave; and barrelled shank--." The picture Hopkins painted is not simply that of an English yeoman plowing; it is the classic Greek ideal of the human body in motion.

Hopkins's odd syntax has attracted the attention of every critic who has been interested in his metrical practices. The weight of opinion of these critics has been that Hopkins's word order was justified many times by his objective, but that the reader has been put into the difficult position of having to steep himself in Hopkins's work in order to understand it. In his notes to Hopkins's poems, Robert Bridges commented on Hopkins's syntax:

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[67] Hopkins, Poems, p. 67.

[68] Ibid., p. 61.

> Writers who carelessly rely on their elliptical speech-forms to govern the elaborate sentences of their literary composition little know what a conscious effort of interpretation they often impose on their readers. But it was not carelessness in Gerard Hopkins: he had full skill and practice and scholarship in conventional forms, and it is easy to see that he banished these purely conventional syllables from his verse because they took up room which he thought he could not afford them: he needed in his scheme all his space for his poetical words, and he wished those to crowd out every merely grammatical colourless or toneless element; and so when he had got into the habit of doing without these relative pronouns--though he must, I suppose, have supplied them in his thought,--he abused the licence beyond precedent, as when he writes . . .'O Hero savest!' for 'O Hero that savest!'[69]

Bridges also pointed out the omission of the relative in the following lines:

> . . . Here! creep,
> Wretch, under a comfort [that] serves in a whirlwind.[70]
>
> After-comers cannot guess the beauty [that has] been.[71]
>
> Squander the hell-rook ranks [that] sally to molest him.[72]

Occasionally Hopkins used words as imperatives when ordinarily they would have been considered auxiliaries, as when "Have you!" means "Have at you!" and "Do you!" means "Do you that!" Father Lahey noted the use of the imperative in "Have fair fallen" from Hopkins's poem on Henry Purcell.[74]

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[69] Hopkins, Poems, "Preface to Notes," p. 97.

[70] Ibid., p. 62

[71] Ibid., p. 39.

[72] Ibid., p. 43.

[73] Ibid., p. 17.

[74] Lahey, op. cit., p. 100.

The omission of words was not restricted by Hopkins to the relative only; other words were omitted when Hopkins felt they would have cluttered up his verse, or when he meant to achieve a particular metrical effect. At times it was a pronoun, as in "Hold them cheap / May who ne'er hung there,"[75] when the pronoun, "they," is discarded; or an adjective as in the line, "Veins violets and tall trees makes more and more [tall]."[76] The verb is omitted in "I [am] steady as a water in a well,"[77] a connective in "Some candle clear burns somewhere [as] I come by";[78] and relatives in "Deals out that being [which] indoors each one dwells,"[79] and "Thy plea with him who dealt, nay [who] does now deal."[80]

Another peculiarity of Hopkins's syntax is the inversion of ordinary word order, nothing new in English poetry, but which Hopkins fashioned after his own end for a definite effect, and not merely to meet the metrical requirements of verse. For "Your roaming round me end, and be under my boughs," Hopkins wrote, "Your round me roaming end, and under be my boughs."[81] "To my own heart," he wrote as "To own my heart."[82]

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[75] Hopkins, Poems, p. 62.

[76] Ibid., p. 68.

[77] Ibid., p. 12.

[78] Ibid., p. 46.

[79] Ibid., p. 53.

[80] Ibid., p. 53.

[81] Ibid., p. 42.

[82] Ibid., p. 42.

Other examples are:

> Those sweet hopes quell whose least me quickenings lift . . .[83]
> [Those sweet hopes quell whose least quickenings lift me]

> With not her either beauty's equal or
> Her injury's . . .[84]
> [With not either her beauty's equal or
> Her injury's]

> Mend first and vital candle in close heart's vault.[85]
> [Mend first and close the vital candle in heart's vault]

> My own heart let me more have pity on . . .[86]
> [Let me have more pity on my own heart]

> Brim, in a flash, full;[87]
> [Brimful in a flash]

> See his wind- lilylocks -laced . . .[88]
> [See his wind-laced lilylocks]

The manner in which Hopkins sometimes contracted words to create a term specific to his need, or lopped off what he considered an unnecessary syllable has been partly responsible for his reputation as an obscure poet. This method of lopping off a syllable as in "Tongue true, vaunt- and tauntless,"[89]

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[83] Hopkins, Poems, p. 44.

[84] Ibid., p. 46.

[85] Loc. cit.

[86] Ibid., p. 66.

[87] Ibid., p. 14.

[88] Ibid., p. 64.

[89] Ibid., p. 43.

and "sheathe- and shelterless,"[90] or contracting two words into one as in "throughther"[91] for "throughout her," presents an obstacle to any new reader of Hopkins's work. A certain amount of mental interpolation must be supplied to read "shivelights"[92] as "shivers light," or to ravel out "shadowtackle"[93] into a figure presenting the shadows of an elm as tackle, in the sense of weapons, that "in long lashes lace, lance, and pair."

Greater than ellipsis, contraction, or inverted word order in Hopkins's work, is the difficulty presented to the reading public by his suspended sentence structure, in which term upon term is piled up to qualify the central idea. A public unused to intricate sentence structure is not prepared to follow the thought of lines like:

> How to keep--is there any any, is there none such,
> nowhere known some, bow or brooch or braid or
> brace, lace, latch or catch or key to keep
> Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, . . .
> from vanishing away?[94]

The ordinary reader has been conditioned to expect prose or verse to develop progressively even while it may present

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[90] Hopkins, Poems, p. 51.

[91] Loc. cit.

[92] Ibid., p. 67.

[93] Loc. cit.

[94] Ibid., p. 54.

certain difficulties of immediate interpretation, but he is bewildered by a verse in which the main clause is static while nuance after nuance is stated in a qualifying clause. For example, the main clause of one section of "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" reads: "Come then, your ways and airs . . . Resign them . . . and deliver Them," but Hopkins, availing himself of every delineation of the idea, wrote:

> Come then, your ways and airs and looks, locks,
> maiden gear, gallantry and gaiety and grace,
> Winning ways, airs innocent, maiden manners, sweet
> looks, loose locks, longlocks, lovelocks, gay-
> gear, going gallant, girlgrace--
> Resign them, sign them, seal them, send them, motion
> them with breath,
> And with sighs soaring, soaring sighs deliver
> Them . . .[95]

In "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves," the two opening lines contain seven adjectives modifying the subject, and five adjective modifiers of the complement of the infinitive "to be."

> Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable, vaulty, volum-
> inous, . .stupendous
> Evening strains to be time's vast, womb-of-all, home-
> of-all, hearse-of-all night.[96]

Another instance, from "The Soldier," offers the lines:

> . . . the heart
> Since, proud, it calls the calling manly, gives a
> guess
> That, hopes that, makesbelieve, the men must be no
> less;

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[95] Hopkins, Poems, p. 55.

[96] Ibid., p. 51.

> It fancies, deigns, deems, dears the artist after his art.[97]

In this selection, the clause, "since, proud, it calls the calling manly," is parenthetical and has no grammatical importance, and the subject, "heart," has three verbs. The first verb is "gives," its direct object is "guess," and the appositive of "guess" is the noun clause, "that the men must be no less." With the verbs "hopes" and "makesbelieve," however, the same noun clause serves as a direct object. In "It fancies . . . the artist after his art," the pronoun "it," whose antecedent is "heart," has four parallel verbs, each contributing to the subtlety of the meaning.

The great number of verbs and parenthetical insertions, and the intricate way Hopkins shifted the use of clauses has caused his work to be called unreadable, but it is not unreadable, and it offers much to the patient mind that is willing to do part of the work itself and not leave the burden of communication entirely with the poet.

In eight instances Hopkins indulged himself in a licence which Father Lahey termed "quasi-apocope,"[98] or syllabication of a word so that part of the word served as an end-rime, and the rest of the word carried over to begin a new line.

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[97] Hopkins, Poems, p. 61.

[98] Lahey, op. cit., p. 98.

(1) I caught this morning morning's minion King-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn
Falcon, in his riding . . .[99]

(2) . . . her earliest stars, earl-stars, stárs principal
overbend us,
Fíre-feáturing heaven. For earth her being has un-
bound, her dapple is at an end, as-
tray or aswarm . . .[100]

(3) To what serves mortal beauty --dangerous; does set danc-
ing blood--the O-seal-that-so feature, flung prouder
form
Than Purcell tune lets tread to? See: it does this:
keeps warm
Men's wits to the things that are; what good means--
where a glance . . .[101]

(4) Those lovely lads once, wet-fresh windfalls of war's
storm,
How then should Gregory, a father, have gleanèd else
from swarm-
ed Rome?[102]

(5) Woe, then world-sorrow; on an age-old anvil wince and
sing--
Then lull, then leave off. Fury had shrieked 'No
ling-
ering!'[103]

(6) To my creating thought, would neither hear
Me, were I pleading, plead nor do I: I wear-
y of idle a being . . .[104]

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[99] Hopkins, Poems, p. 29.

[100] Ibid., p. 51.

[101] Ibid., p. 60.

[102] Loc. cit.

[103] Ibid., p. 62.

[104] Ibid., p. 65. [Notice that the rime is really . . hear / Me . . . and . . .wear / y].

(7) Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows flaunt
forth, then chevy on an air-
built thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers, in gay-gangs
they throng; they glitter in marches.
Down roughcast, down dazzling whitewash, wherever an
elm arches,
Shivelights and shadowtackle in long lashes lace,
lance, and pair.[105]

(8) Some asleep unawakened, all un-
warned, eleven fathoms fallen . . .[106]

It is possible that Hopkins split words for the exigency of rime, but it is an interesting consideration to note that five of the seven poems from which the examples are taken were written in sprung rhythm, and the riving of lines was specifically mentioned by Hopkins in his comments on sprung rhythm. The other two poems were written in mixed rhythms, partially sprung and partially standard.

The matter of Hopkins's rimes was a sore point with Bridges, and Father Lahey has criticized Hopkins for the use of rimes like: England . . . mingle and; behaviour . . . gave you a; and he particularly scored the rime of: Irish . . . Sire he shares.[107] Hopkins's rimes are intriguing; some of them are, as he said, "unassailable," but others deserve the criticism they have received. A listing of Hopkins's unusual rimes provides:

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[105] Hopkins, Poems, p. 67.

[106] Ibid., p. 32.

[107] Lahey, op. cit., p. 98.

. . . women
them in . . .[108]

. . . leeward
. . . drew her
she endured . . .[109]

. . . survey
topsy-turvy . . .[110]

. . . fully, on
bullion . . .[111]

. . . wrecked her? he
deadly electric . . .[112]

. . . portholes
mortals . . .[113]

. . . coast or
snowstorm . . .[114]

. . . suit! he
beauty . . .[115]

. . . busy to
unvisited . . .[116]

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[108] Hopkins, Poems, p. 15.

[109] Ibid., p. 16. [drew her / Dead . . . endured].

[110] Ibid., p. 24.

[111] Ibid., p. 33.

[112] Loc. cit.

[113] Ibid., p. 34.

[114] Ibid., p. 35. [The rime here is really: coast or / Mark . . . snowstorm. This trick of completing the rime by carrying it to the initial letter of a following line Hopkins used several times: of them . . . of the / Maiden; Providence . . . of it, and / Startle; door / Drowned . . . Reward. These rimes appear in the Poems, pp. 21 to 23].

[115] Loc. cit.

[116] Ibid., p. 36. [busy to / Dress . . . unvisited].

. . . burn all
eternal . . .[117]

. . . boon he on
communion . . .[118]

. . . handsome
. . . and some
began some . . .[119]

. . .stupendous
. . . overbend us
end as-
stray . . .[120]

. . . mark you this
prejedice . . .[121]

. . . lordly head
. . . no way sped
garlanded . . .[122]

. . . I am and
diamond . . .[123]

Despite Hopkins's poor opinion of Anglo-Saxon poetry, a great part of his poetic technique was related to that of early English verse-writing; that of alliteration in particular. Alliteration is a common device of poetry and was used extensively in Hopkins's time, but where a poet like Swinburne used alliteration to achieve liquid effects, Hopkins

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[117] Hopkins, Poems, p. 37.

[118] Ibid., p. 43.

[119] Ibid., p. 48.

[120] Ibid., p. 51.

[121] Ibid., p. 59.

[122] Ibid., p. 63.

[123] Ibid., p. 67.

used it to accentuate the metrical beat, or to knit lines more closely together. I. A. Richards, for instance, wrote: "I cannot refrain from pointing to the marvellous third and fourth lines [of 'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves']. They seem to me to anticipate the descriptions we hope our younger contemporary poets will soon write."[124] The lines Richards had in mind are:

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

The first line has eight beats, divided by a caesura into 4:4; the first half-line has two alliterative stresses: "wound" and "west," and the last half-line has three alliterative stresses: "hoarlight, hung," and "height." Hopkins was very close to the pattern of Beowulf.

Some of the metaphors used by Hopkins are much like the familiar "kennings" of Anglo-Saxon poetry. God he termed "world's strand"[125] and "sway of the sea";[126] the human body was a "bone-house";[127] hail was "Heaven gravel";[128] snow was

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[124] I. A. Richards, "Gerard Hopkins" (a consideration of his work), Dial, LXXXI, (Sept., 1926), pp. 195-203. (pp. 200-201).

[125] Hopkins, Poems, p. 11.

[126] Loc. cit.

[127] Ibid., p. 31.

[128] Ibid., p. 33.

"wofsnow";[129] and Christ, or perhaps an angel, was an "angel-warder."[130]

Of the fifty-one poems which comprise Hopkins's work, excluding youthful compositions, unfinished pieces, and fragments, thirty-four are sonnets. The sonnet was particularly suited to Hopkins's need. As a strict form, the sonnet imposed the discipline that Hopkins felt was necessary to the proper crystallization and fusion of emotion and idea, but he took certain liberties with the sonnet that almost controvert his remarks on form. Besides sonnets written in the Italian form, Hopkins composed what he called "Curtal-Sonnets," and "caudated sonnets."

In the preface to his poems, Hopkins explained the principle of the curtal-sonnet, saying that "they are constructed in proportions resembling that of the sonnet proper, namely 6+4 instead of 8+6, with however a half line tailpiece (so that the equation is rather $\frac{12}{2}+\frac{19}{2}=\frac{21}{2}=10\frac{1}{2}$)."[131] Hopkins's explanation, however, is not quite clear until the problem is stated in the form of a proportion. The Italian sonnet consists of an octet and a sestet. If the octet is reduced to six lines, then the sestet, proportionately, must be reduced to four and one-half lines: $8:6::6:x$; $8x=36$; $x=4\frac{1}{2}$.

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[129] Hopkins, Poems, p. 33.

[130] Ibid., p. 43.

[131] Ibid., "Author's Preface," p. 6.

It is then clear that the curtal-sonnet is in perfect proportion to the sonnet proper. If Hopkins had been entirely strict in his handling of the curtal-sonnet, he would have constructed the half-line tailpiece so that it contained two and one-half metrical feet. This he did not do. Of the two curtal-sonnets, the tailpiece of one is composed of one metrical foot, and that of the other comprises three metrical feet.

Unlike the curtal-sonnet, the caudated sonnet was not original with Hopkins, who found the precedent for the caudated form in Milton's "On the New Forcers of Conscience Under the Long Parliament." The framework of the caudated sonnet is the same as that of the Italian sonnet, with, however, the addition of several codas, or tailpieces. The rime scheme of Milton's caudated sonnet is abba, abba, cde, dec, cff, fgg; the last two tercets comprise the caudated section of the poem. The first of Hopkins's caudated sonnets, "Tom's Garland," has a rime scheme of abba, abba, ccd, ccd, dee, eff. Excepting the difference of the rime scheme of the caudated tercets, Hopkins's sonnet is a counterpart of Milton's. The second and final of Hopkins's caudated sonnets, "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection," is an extension of the form Hopkins found in Milton. Instead of two additional tercets the poem has three, with the addition of a half-line tailpiece, so that the rime scheme is abba, abba,

cdc, dcd, dff, eff, g'gh, hh. Applying the same mathematical reasoning to the caudated sonnet that Hopkins used in creating the curtal-sonnet, the proportion becomes:

$$8:6::14:x;\ 8x=84;\ x=10\tfrac{1}{2}.$$

The proportions of Hopkins's last caudated sonnet are $8+6+9\frac{1}{2}$, or $14+9\frac{1}{2}$. That Hopkins missed a perfect proportional extension of the common sonnet by one line suggests that he probably did not consider the problem of the caudated sonnet mathematically.

It has been pointed out that the greater part of Hopkins's sonnets were written in the Italian form. The octet of these sonnets is always rigid--abba, abba; but there are two variations of the sestet: cd, cd, cd; and ccd, ccd. At least one poem, "Harry Ploughman," considered by both Hopkins and Bridges to be a sonnet,[132] fails to qualify as one, and cannot be justified even on the questionable grounds of extension or contraction of form. The rime scheme is abbba, abbbaa, cdcc, dcdd. By striking out the five half-line tailpieces--abb~~b~~a, ab~~b~~ba~~a~~, cdc~~c~~, dcd~~d~~--the sonnet form is achieved, but since the tailpieces are integral parts of the composition, they cannot be discounted and the conclusion must be that "Harry Ploughman" is not a sonnet.

Equally questionable as to form are Hopkins's sprung

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[132] Hopkins, Poems, "Notes," p. 116.

rhythm sonnets and those in logaoedic, or mixed, rhythms. In his sprung rhythm sonnets, the stress pattern varies from five to eight stresses to the line; in logaoedic poems, the rhythm varies between sprung and standard rhythms.[133]

As a form, the stanzas of "The Wreck of the Deutschland" are comparable in interest to the framework of the curtal and caudated sonnets. The "Deutschland" stanza is composed of eight uneven lines which vary in length according to the stress pattern. The rime scheme is ab, ab, cb, ca; and the final line, with one exception, contains six stresses and serves the same purpose as the Alexandrine of the Spenserian stanza: it rounds and closes the thought. Like the Spenserian stanza, the "Deutschland" stanza is a leisurely narrative medium, presenting the story in a series of connected scenes.

Sprung rhythm was of far more lasting importance to Hopkins's work than counterpointed rhythm. There are instances of counterpointed lines throughout the body of his poetry, but it was his interest in sprung rhythm that led him to that syntactical complication that is the mark of his genius. The use of an indefinite number of unaccented syllables made it possible for Hopkins to expand the form of poetry, and to escape the restrictions ordinary form puts on syntax.

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[133] In "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves," the stress pattern varies, despite Hopkins, from seven to eight stresses to the line. The octet of "The Soldier" has six stresses in the first three lines and the eighth; the intervening four lines have six accents, but are written in common iambic rhythm with spondaic and trochaic substitutions.

In "springing" the rhythm of his lines, Hopkins was able to intensify the thought of the poem. Into the work of his immediate predecessors and some of his contemporaries, Tennyson, Swinburne, Arnold, and perhaps even Browning, there had crept a kind of discursiveness in style which betrays a certain lack of poetically conceived and intense ideas. In other words, the traditional matter and manner of lyrical poetry had gone about as far as they could go. The assonance, alliteration, and smooth rime which Tennyson and Swinburne used so easily may have been the result, as James Stephens suggests, of a fundamental uncertainty.[134] Ease of composition and a felicity of phrasing tended to become, in those poets, mere ornamentation of commonplace conceptions. The aim of Hopkins was to lead poetry away from grandiloquence, which is the spinning of feeble thought and feeble emotion out into a rhythmically agreeable but progressively mechanical line, toward a re-vitalization of subject-matter. The subject-matter of Hopkins is narrow, to be sure, but that his poetry is intense cannot be denied.

His desire to give intensity to his poetry led Hopkins to a re-discovery of the values of cacophony, off-rime, stress

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[134] James Stephens, "The Poets and Poetry of the Nineteenth Century," in English Romantic Poets, edited by Stephens, Beck, and Snow, (New York: American Book Co., 1933), pp. xix-xlii. (pp. xxxv-vi).

regardless of accompanying unaccented syllables, and harsh combinations of consonantal sound which give vigor to the line. Even his word order was a result of the demand to intensify. His ability to achieve cumulative effect, the rough battering of his alliterative lines, and the surprises of his syntactical constructions, all contribute to the final intensity of his poetry, and comprise his important gift to later poets.

CHAPTER IV

THE PLACE OF HOPKINS IN THE TRADITION OF ENGLISH POETRY

The most immediate association a reader of Hopkins's work makes is to link him with that body of English poets--Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, Traherne, and others--who drew upon Christian dogma and mystic experience for the themes of their poetry. At first this comparison seems obvious and just. But there are essential differences between the way Hopkins approached religious experience and the attitudes of the poets with whom he has been classed. It would be impossible not to class Hopkins as a "difficult" poet along with Donne and Herbert or with Francis Thompson, Edith Sitwell, and E. E. Cummings. But Hopkins is not difficult in the same sense as the poets of the metaphysical school, nor does he present the same difficulty to be found in modern poets.

Some likeness between Donne and Hopkins is to be expected: both were clerics; both wrote at length on divine subjects. But there is a kind of cleverness in Donne not present in Hopkins. Donne's conceits are hyperboles which were born of wit. Those conceits in Hopkins most comparable to metaphysical figures are never clever. They are serious efforts on the part of Hopkins to integrate his conception of the

universe into the structure of his art. With Donne there was no attempt to illuminate philosophy through the harmony of conceit and concept. When Donne wrote

> Sleep sleep old Sun, thou canst not have repast
> As yet, the wound thou took'st on friday last;
> Sleepe then, and rest; The world may beare thy stay,
> A better Sun rose before thee to day,
> Who, not content to'enlighten all that dwell
> On the earths face, as thou, enlightened hell,
> And made the darke fires languish in that vale,
> As, at thy presence here, our fires grow pale.
> Whose body having walk'd on earth, and now
> Hasting to Heaven, would, that he might allow
> Himselfe unto all stations, and fill all,
> For these three daies become a minerall;
> Hee was all gold when he lay downe, but rose
> All tincture, and doth not alone dispose
> Leaden and iron wills to good, but is
> Of power to make even sinfull flesh like his.
> Had one of those, whose credulous pietie
> Thought, that a Soule one might discerne and see
> Goe from a body, 'at this sepulcher been,
> And, issuing from the sheet, this body seen,
> He would have justly thought this body a soule,
> If not of any man, yet of the whole.[1]

he was not trying to explain that Christ and the sun were the same thing; he was using an illustrative technique to prepare the way for the main idea to be developed in the poem. Hopkins would have contended that the sun was an inscape of Christ, part of the complete pattern of the Divine. The last two lines of the selection from Donne declare a conception of Christ common in theology. It is not the same conception Hopkins set down in "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire," that man <u>is</u> Christ.

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[1] John Donne, <u>Complete Poetry and Selected Prose</u>, edited by John Hayward, (New York: Random House Inc., 1936), p. 290.

Some of Donne's "Holy Sonnets" may be likened to certain of Hopkins's sonnets. The ninth of Donne's "Holy Sonnets," reads:

> If poysonous mineralls, and if that tree,
> Whose fruit threw death on else imortall us,
> If lecherous goats, if serpents envious
> Cannot be damn'd; Alas; why should I bee?
> Why should intent or reason, borne in mee,
> Make sinnes, else equall, in mee more heinous?
> And mercy being easie, and glorious
> To God; in his sterne wrath, why threatens hee?[2]

This poem strikes much the same note as Hopkins's

> Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
> With thee . . .[3]

Another of Donne's--

> Batter my heart, three person'd God; for, you
> As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend;
> That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow mee, 'and bend
> Your force, to breake, blowe, burn and make me new.[4]

is like Hopkins's "Carrion Comfort."[5] These poems of Donne resemble Hopkins's work in the problem they present: that of resignation to Divine Will.

The similarity between Hopkins and other metaphysical poets--Crashaw, Herbert, Vaughan, and Traherne--is in subject-matter only. There is a slight comparison to be drawn between

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[2] Donne, op. cit., p. 283.

[3] Gerard Manley Hopkins, Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited with notes by Robert Bridges, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 68.

[4] Donne, op. cit., p. 285.

[5] Hopkins, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

Herbert's "The Collar" and Hopkins's "Carrion Comfort." Both poems have the subject of spiritual struggle, but where Herbert writes:

> ". . . Away! take heed!
> I will abroad.
> Call in thy death's-head there, tie up thy fears:
> He that forbears
> To suit and serve his need
> Deserves his load."
> But as I raved, and grew more fierce and wild
> At every word,
> Methought I heard one calling, "Child!"
> And I replied, "My Lord!"[6]

Hopkins says:

> . . . why wouldst thou rude on me
> Thy wring-world right foot rock? . . .
> . . . . . .
> Why? That my chaff might fly; my grain
> lie, sheer and clear.[7]

Unlike Herbert, Hopkins states clearly that the reason for the spiritual torment he is forced to suffer lies in the necessity of the ordering of his soul. What reason Herbert may have had, other than that of restiveness under religious restraint, is not stated.

Hopkins has been compared, in another section of this study, to Collins, Gray, and Housman.[8] Collins and Gray belonged to the transition period between the Neo-Classical and Romantic eras of English literature. The greatest literary

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[6] George Herbert, "The Collar," lines 26-36.

[7] Hopkins, Poems, pp. 61-62.

[8] See above, pp. 31-34.

figure of the Romantic period was, of course, William Wordsworth. Miss Elsie Phare, in her book on Hopkins, has attempted to compare Hopkins and Wordsworth, emphasizing the nature content of the poetry of the two men.[9] Miss Phare, however, seems to misunderstand the philosophical concepts back of the work of the two poets. Wordsworth's pantheism was in debt to Spinoza's Ethics; so too, at first glance, was the philosophy of Hopkins. Hopkins's idea of inscapes, his conception of Christ as all things, might be compared to Spinoza's God-as-substance theory; that is, that all natural phenomena are modifications of divine substance. Wordsworth's conception of God was much more vague than that of Hopkins. Wordsworth, going out into the fields or woods, was somehow mysteriously aware of a vague Presence which filled him with awe and reverence.

> And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime,
> Of something far more deeply interfused, . . .[10]

Wordsworth, at times, felt at one with trees, birds, and flowers, and felt that way because of the diluted Spinozistic conception he had that each object in the world was of the Substance, contained God. Hopkins, on the other hand, while

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[9] Elsie Elizabeth Phare, The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1933), pp. 41-80.

[10] William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," lines 93-96.

sensing the omnipresence of divinity, owed much less to Spinoza than to Duns Scotus. Where, in Spinoza and in philosophers before him, individuality is an accidental quality, in Duns Scotus the principle of individuation is within the form itself. This principle of individuation stems from the idea of the being of God as univocal with the being of his creations; and since God and his creations are a unity, the intelligent parts of these creations, because of the infinite internal modifications of which they are capable, and the unintelligent parts, in all their formal changes, point to the essential divinity of being. In regard to Dun Scotus's view of the soul, D. E. Sharp writes:

> . . . Scotus naturally upholds the theory of the plurality of forms in man, since he is interested in proclaiming the separability and independence of the rational soul and the body. The soul is created by God and is immortal, though its immortality for Scotus, contrary to the general Scholastic opinion, cannot be positively proved but only supported by possible persuasions. . . . The faculties of intellect, will and memory through which the soul acts, are for him, neither really distinct from the soul's essence, for that would imply their separability, nor only logically distinct, for then they would exist potentialiter rather than actualiter; they are formally distinct, which is to say, they are inseparably founded in the essence ex natura rei and yet cannot be included in the same definition.[11]

Duns Scotus discounted pantheism on the grounds that realization of being in God is not necessarily concommitant with created being. The Scotian view of pantheism is extremely important to an understanding of Hopkins's work, and at the

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[11] Dorothea E. Sharp, "John Duns Scotus," Encyclopedia Brittanica, 14th edition, VII, 744-45.

same time, resolves Hopkins's likeness to Wordsworth in respect to philosophy. If realization of the immanence of God is not an immediate intelligent quality in created being, then the spiritual duty of an intelligent being is to attempt to realize the divine. It is this Scotian view of the spiritual duty of man that accounts for the nature of Hopkins's "terrible" sonnets.

Following the teaching of Duns Scotus, Hopkins felt the utter importance of exercising his intellect toward the end of conscious recognition of God. As a Scotist, Hopkins believed he could achieve cognizance of divine will, and it was Hopkins's conviction that he was failing to employ fully all of his faculties toward that cognizance which accounts for the tone and content of his sonnets. The idea of the being of God as univocal with the being of his creations is helpful in clarifying the sonnet, "Carrion Comfort."

> Nay in all that toil, that coil, since (seems) I kissed the rod,
> Hand rather, my heart lo! lapped strength, stole joy, would laugh, cheer.
> Cheer whom though? the hero whose heaven-handling flung me, foot trod
> 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.

When the struggle Hopkins has had brings him to a sense of power and of joy, he asks whether he should cheer Christ or himself, and is moved to put that question because as part of divine being he, too, is responsible in part for the joy that has come to him.

Not all of Hopkins's sonnets, nor all of his work, can be fully explained in relation to the philosophy of Duns Scotus, but some of the seemingly inexplicable in Hopkins can be clarified by remembering the effect Scotian teaching had on Hopkins's mind. The terms, inscape and instress, discussed in Chapter II of this work, can be explained further in the light of Scotian philosophy.[12] Since the being of God is present in unintelligent being, it was natural that Hopkins should have found joy in grasping the inscapes of Christ; each time he saw inscape, and each time he felt instress, Hopkins was closer to the recognition of divine being. As a consequence he delighted, perhaps felt it a spiritual duty, to "down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour."

A comparison of Wordsworth's sonnet, "The World is Too Much With Us," and Hopkins's "God's Grandeur" shows the conceptual differences of the philosophies of the two poets.

> The world is too much with us: late and soon,
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
> Little we see in Nature that is ours;
> We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
> This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
> The winds that will be howling at all hours,
> And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
> For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
> It moves us not.--Great God! I'd rather be
> A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

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12 See above, pp. 25-28.

"God's Grandeur" reads:

> 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.

"God's Grandeur" seems the stronger sonnet because of the conviction, implicit in the poem, Hopkins had that the being of God is present in all natural phenomena. Wordsworth voices a melancholy dissatisfaction with his own inability to sense the presence of divinity in the natural world: "For this, for everything, we are out of tune." The weakness of Wordsworth's statement in the poem lies in the pantheistic doctrine that awareness of God is one with physical existence. The strength of Hopkins's sonnet, on the other hand, is in Hopkins's faith that the presence of the being of God is an actuality to be apprehended by intellectual effort. Where Wordsworth waits for realization passively, Hopkins strives for it; and it might further be said, that where Wordsworth hopes, Hopkins firmly believes. If the twentieth century reader prefers "The World

Is Too Much With Us" to "God's Grandeur," it is not because Hopkins had less of a message, but that the non-formal, non-theological, "natural" spirituality of Wordsworth is closer to whatever religious ideas the twentieth century may have than is Hopkins's formal, positive theology.

Miss Phare, in her comparison of Wordsworth and Hopkins, claims that Wordsworth was much bolder in his demands on Nature than Hopkins dared to be. "If Wordsworth suddenly finds that he has no spiritual joy in Nature he takes it for granted that the fault is his own; given that his eye is clear and his mind is open, then certainly the sense of oneness will come. Hopkins on the other hand is conscious that he must await the divine pleasure; that he cannot merely by his own efforts obtain the assurance which he wants."[13] Miss Phare then quotes a stanza from "The Wreck of the Deutschland."

> I kiss my hand
> To the stars, lovely-asunder
> Starlight, wafting him out of it; and
> Glow, glory in thunder;
> Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson-west:
> Since, though he is under the world's splendour and wonder,
> His mystery must be instressed, stressed;
> For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I
> understand.

Miss Phare's assertion would be supportable if one stanza made a poem. The refutation of Miss Phare's contention that Hopkins awaited "divine pleasure" appears in the stanza

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[13] Phare, op. cit., p. 45.

following the one quoted.

> Not out of his bliss
> Springs the stress felt
> Nor first from heaven (and few know this)
> Swings the stroke dealt--
> Stroke and a stress that stars and storms deliver,
> That guilt is hushed by, hearts are flushed by and melt--
> But it rides time like riding a river
> (And here the faithful waver, the faithless fable and miss).[14]

In this stanza, Hopkins states that awareness of the being of God does not first come from divine bliss or first from heaven; the knowledge (the stroke and stress) of God is manifest in stars and storms, and where the faithful waver, where the faithless lie to themselves, is in their not realizing that individual effort is the first requisite of knowledge of God. Recognizing that man has only a posteriori evidence of God, a clear eye and open mind was not enough for Hopkins. He could not wait passively for the sense of oneness to come.

Since grammar is part of logic, and logic part of philosophical speculation, it is possible to examine Hopkins's syntactical constructions in relation to his philosophy. The forms of certain of Hopkins's poems reveal the Scotian principle of individuation employed as a literary device. The whole of "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" demonstrates Hopkins's artistic utilization of the individuation principle. For example:

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[14] Hopkins, Poems, p. 13.

How to kéep--is there ány any, is there none such,
nowhere known some, bow or brooch or braid or brace,
láce, latch or catch or key to keep
Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, . . .
from vanishing away?
Ó is there no frowning of these wrinkles, rankèd
wrinkles deep,
Dówn? no waving off of these most mournful messengers,
still messengers, sad and stealing messengers of
gray?
No there's none, there's none, O no there's none,
Nor can you long be, what you now are, called fair,
Do what you may do, what, do what you may,
And wisdom is early to despair:
Be beginning; since, no, nothing can be done
To keep at bay
Age and age's evils, hoar hair,
Ruck and wrinkle, drooping, dying, death's worst,
winding sheets, tombs and worms and tumbling to
decay. . . .
. . . . . .
There ís one, yes I have one (Hush there!)
Only not within the singeing of the strong sun,
Tall sun's tingeing, or treacherous the tainting of
the earth's air,
Somewhere elsewhere there is ah well where! one,
One. Yes I can tell such a key, I do know such a place,
Where whatever's prized and passes of us, everything
that's fresh and fast flying of us, seems to us
sweet of us and swiftly away with, done sway with,
undone,
Undone, done with, soon done with, and yet dearly and
dangerously sweet
Of us, the wimpled-water-dimpled, not-by-morning-
matchèd face,
Never fleets móre, . . .

In this poem the central conception is a simple abstraction arrived at by deduction: that all beauty is a quality of the being of God. But Hopkins, instead of merely cataloguing the details that are ordered under this deduction, turns and goes through the process of arriving at the original principle by inductive step-by-step individuation of those beauties

which are God. With Hopkins no abstraction is sound until more than a sufficiency of detail has been given to support it. It is Bacon's method applied to Scotus's insight. Consequently, Hopkins's highly extreme individuation of his ideas fulfilled a philosophic need, and is not merely a surplus of assertiveness.

Hopkins's disregard of conventional syntax has caused his name to be linked with that of Robert Browning. Miss Phare has pointed out the resemblance of

> But how shall I . . . make me room there:
> Reach me a . . . Fancy, come faster--
> Strike you the sight of it? look at it loom there,
> Thing that she . . . there then! The Master
> Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head:
> He was to cure the extremity where he had cast her.

from "The Wreck of the Deutschland" to Browning's syntactical mannerisms.[15] In a sense, many of Hopkins's poems are dramatic monologues. Several of the sonnets are divided into two sections by the natural divisions of the sonnet: the octet is expository in nature, and the sestet contains a didactic exhortation to the reader. The octet of "The Starlight Night," for example, is devoted to a description of a star-filled night, with the terminal exclamation: "Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize."[16] The first line of the sestet reads:

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[15] Phare, op. cit., p. 2.

[16] Hopkins, Poems, pp. 26-27.

> Buy then! bid then!--What?--Prayer, patience, alms, vows.

Hopkins exhorts the reader to buy and bid since all the beauty of night is for sale, and asked "what price?" replies: "with prayer, patience, with alms and with vows."

For all his obscurity, Browning is often less complicated than Hopkins. In "Tom's Garland," Hopkins changes his point-of-view three times. The first eight lines are a description of Tom and his station in life; Tom's character as a member of the laboring class is delineated. The next three and one-half lines, as Hopkins wrote, contain "a violent but effective hyperbolation or suspension, in which the action of the mind mimics that of the labourer--surveys his lot, low but free from care; then by a sudden strong act throws it over the shoulder or tosses it away as a light matter."[17] The rest of the poem is Hopkins's didactical assertion that all men should share in the commonwealth, and that lack of equality, lack of common understanding breeds misery, suspicion and hate.

"The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" is the most highly wrought of Hopkins's dramatic poems. The Leaden Echo asks if there is any way in which mortal beauty may be saved from decay. The Golden Echo, catching up the word "despair," cries

> Spare!
> There is one, yes I have one (Hush there!)

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[17] Hopkins, Poems, "Notes," p. 115.

and explains that beauty must be given back to God, "beauty's self and beauty's giver." Toward the end of the poem, The Golden Echo remarks that beauty is kept

> Far with fonder a care (and we, we should have lost it) finer, fonder
> A care kept.--Where kept? [asks Man] Do but tell us where kept, where.--

The Golden Echo replies:

> Yonder.

And Man cries out:

> What high as that! We follow, now we follow.--
> Yonder, yes yonder, yonder,
> Yonder.

There is a superficial likeness between Hopkins and Francis Thompson. Here again the comparison must be based on the religious and mystical content of the work of the poets. Thompson's "The Hound of Heaven" is somewhat of the nature of Hopkins's soul-searching sonnets, but the difference between the work of the two men lies in the separateness of their religious attitudes. Thompson was closer to Donne and Herbert in his manner of expressing religious experience. The lines:

> Halts by me that footfall:
> Is my gloom, after all,
> Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
> "Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
> I am He Whom thou seekest!
> Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."[18]

are closer to Herbert's "The Collar" than to anything in Hopkins.

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[18] Francis Thompson, "The Hound of Heaven," lines 177-82.

Before 1918 Hopkins's influence on poetry had been negligible and was restricted to those poets who knew him personally through correspondence. Upon the publication of his poems in 1918, Hopkins was immediately accepted in literary circles. Isidor Schneider, speaking of the publication of Hopkins's work, writes:

> In the twelve years since their publication the 250 small books have been searched out and become scarce. . . .Among poets the possessors' names were exchanged and the copies were borrowed oftener perhaps than those of any book in recent years. With the publication of the forthcoming new edition of the poems [in 1930] it will probably be observed that in some recent poetry influences attributed to other poets are in reality Hopkins's. The Poet Laureate's [Bridges] work owns it, and Hart Crane's "The Bridge," unquestionably a great poem and one of the few of our generation, shows the present benefits of Hopkins's liberating and enriching experiments.[18]

Another critic has written:

> . . .the admirers of Hopkins's work have grown steadily in number, despite the difficulty (soon to be remedied) of procuring his work, and he is today a stronger force than ever, exerting his influence on such men as Bridges himself, James Joyce, Hart Crane, and E. E. Cummings. In truth I know of no young poet of talent in this country today whose face is not turned to him, tho it will be many generations before a popular audience will even know his name.[19]

Investigation of Hopkins's influence upon modern poetry

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[18]Isidor Schneider, "A Great Poet" (reviews of "A Vision of the Mermaids," and Gerard Manley Hopkins by Lahey), Nation, CXXX, 3380 (April 16, 1930), pp. 456-58. (p. 456).

[19] _____, "Dilly Tante Observes" (review of a review of G. F. Lahey's Gerard Manley Hopkins), Wilson Bulletin, V, 1 Sept., 1930), p. 61.

reveals that it is his experiments in sprung rhythm which have proved most valuable to modern poets. Sprung rhythm has afforded poets the liberty of expanding form, and has made it possible for them to introduce into the material of poetry the singularly unpoetic word-coinings of modern civilization. Where poets have attempted to utilize the possibilities of Hopkins's peculiar syntax they have generally weakened their verse.

Without exhaustive research it is impossible to prove conclusively the influence of Hopkins upon any living poet, but some significant comparisons and suggestions may be made. One modern poet, Edith Sitwell, seems to have employed sprung rhythm in her work.

> Jáne, Jáne
> Tall as a cráne
> The morning light creaks down again.
>
> Cómb your cóckscomb-rágged háir;
> Jáne, Jáne, come down the stáir.
>
> Each dúll blúnt wóoden stalactite
> Of rain créaks, hardened by the light
>
> Sounding like an óverture
> From some lonely world unknown
>
> But the créaking empty light
> Will never harden into sight,
>
> Will never penetrate your brain
> With overtones like the blunt rain.
>
> The light would shew (if it could harden)
> Eternities of kitchen garden,
>
> Cóckscomb flowers that none will plúck
> And wóoden flowers that 'gin to clúck.

In the kitchen you must light
Flames as starry, red and white

As carrots or as turnips, shining
Where the cold dawn light lies whining.

Cockscomb hair on the cold wind
Hangs limp, turns the milk's weak mind. . . .

Jane, Jane
Tall as a crane
The morning light creaks down again.[20]

Save for the 2-2-4 stress pattern of the introductory and terminal tercets, the number of accented syllables in each line of Miss Sitwell's poem is four. The number of unaccented syllables varies from two to five. It may also be noted that the poem has the general tone pattern of a nursery rime, and misses being a jingle mainly by the virtue of diction. It was from nursery rimes and weather saws that Hopkins found precedence in the use of sprung rhythm.

Concerning the influence of Hopkins upon literature, W. B. Yeats wrote:

> I read Gerard Hopkins with great difficulty, I cannot keep my attention fixed for more than a few minutes; I suspect a bias born when I began to think. He is typical of his generation where most opposed to mine. His meaning is like some faint sound that strains the ear, comes out of words, passes to and fro between them, goes back into words, his manner a last development of poetical diction. My generation began that search for hard positive subject-matter, still a predominate purpose. Yet the publication of his work

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[20] Edith Sitwell, "Aubade," in Modern British Poetry, edited by Louis Untermeyer, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1930), pp. 620-21. [marked accents not in original].

> in 1918 made "sprung verse" the fashion, and now his influence has replaced that of Hardy and Bridges.[21]

Yeats further pointed out the influence of Hopkins upon the poetry of Herbert Read, whose use of sprung rhythm may be found in such lines as

> I die, but death was destined. My life was given
> my death ordained when first my hand
> held naked weapons in this war. The rest
> has been a waiting for this final hour.
> In such a glory I could not live.[22]

Read used a five-stress line in "The End of a War," and rove the lines over so that it is necessary to mark the sections throughout in order to determine where the stress will fall. As Yeats remarked, it is difficult at first reading to determine the stress-scansion of Read's work.[23]

Wystan Hugh Auden, the young British poet, has used sprung rhythm in somewhat the same manner as Edith Sitwell.

> It's no use raising a shout.
> No, Honey, you can cut that right out
> I don't want any more hugs;
> Make me some fresh tea, fetch me some rugs.
> Here am I, here are you:
> But what does it mean? What are we going to do?
>
> A long time ago I told my mother
> I was leaving home to find another:
> I never answered her letter
> But I never found a better
> Here am I, etc. . . .

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[21] W. B. Yeats, editor, The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936), "Introduction," p. xxxix.

[22] Herbert Read, "The End of a War," in The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, edited by Yeats, p. 349.

[23] Yeats, op. cit., "Introduction," p. xl.

It wásn't álways líke thís?
Perháps it wásn't, bút it is.
Pút the cár awáy; when lífe fails,
Wht's the góod of góing to Wáles?
. . . . . .
A bird used to visit this shore:
It isn't góing to cóme any móre,
I've cóme a véry long way to prove
No land, no wáter, and no lóve.
Here am I, etc. . . .[24]

Auden's short lines, the slightness of subject-matter, and the use of a refrain gives his verse, in this poem, a pedestrian tone, and suggests that the easiest, surest employment of sprung rhythm is in light verse. A second example of Auden's use of sprung rhythm is:

This lúnar beáuty
Has no hístory
Is complete and early;
If beáuty láter
Bear any feáture
It had a lóver
And is another.[25]

The lines of this poem contain two stresses, and the number of unaccented syllables varies between three and four.

Another young English poet, Stephen Spender, has used sprung rhythm extensively in his poetry, and has employed it with better success than most of his contemporaries.

After the first powerful plain manifésto
The black statement of pistons, without more fuss
But gliding like a queen, she leaves the station.

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[24] Wystan Hugh Auden, "It's No Use Raising a Shout," in The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, edited by Yeats, pp. 427-28.

[25] Ibid., "This Lunar Beauty," p. 429.

Without bowing and with restrained unconcern
She passes the houses which humbly crowd outside,
The gasworks and at last the heavy page
Of death, printed by gravestones in the cemetery.
Where, gathering speed, she acquires mystery,
The luminous self-possession of ships on ocean.
It is now she begins to sing--at first quite low
Then loud, and at last with a jazzy madness--[26]

The number of unaccented syllables in Spender's piece is from five to eight; the number of stresses is set at five. Spender's work shows the integration of ordinarily unpoetic words--"manifesto," "pistons," "gasworks," and "jazzy"--into poetic language through the use of sprung rhythm.

When poets, enthusiastic over the possibilities of Hopkins's verse, attempt to write poetry with the same spiritual impact as that of Hopkins, they invariably become precious and even silly. Hopkins's diction is his own: his odd syntax may indicate the manner in which poetic language may be liberated from ordinary word order, but mere mimicry of Hopkins's style without the attendant genius, the same spiritual conviction, is to pervert the means of poetic expression. Some writers have meant to achieve a Hopkins-like tone in their verse by a copying of Hopkins's style. How badly they have succeeded in their efforts may be shown in the following examples:

The spirit and the shining mind, all sense,

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[26] Stephen Spender, "The Express," in A New Anthology of Modern Poetry, edited by Selden Rodman, (New York: The Literary Guild of America, Inc., 1938), p. 352.

are never stasis in you; O, they find
the one commotion which is the world, immense
and mournful, and by the perfect fact so signed
all matter's made dimensionless. How loud
in what glad gown you go! in piety, bold,
not sorrowing. O, often on a cloud
you ride, sometimes on a pool, who told
me Mary has a hand in spring, that breath
exhaled of her is all we breathe, that motion
is the body of God. By you dread death
becomes hope's hero risen, the mind an ocean,
last leaf, least blade of grass, least, dingy bird,
immortal movement whose sounding shapes the Word.[27]

The statement "How loud / in what glad gown you go!" is acceptable in its attempt to utilize alliteration, but as a simple exclamation of wonder, it is nothing short of ridiculous. Equally inane is the figure of Hopkins sometimes riding on a cloud, and "sometimes on a pool."

The second example is:

I give you day, our day, any day, for entering
Man's time on the earth, his world, for cutting aslant
through his track.
At the crossroads here, bearing his heave-ho aback,
At the point where his damned-to-perdition sin and his
sheltering
Spirit join his throat-throbbing, bird-singing
Joy--here, stubble-wise and tool-handed, into the day
comes Jack,
Jack Plumber, Jack Plowman, Jack Scrivner, dowered with
much or the lack
Of it, man-willed, washed up as beach drift out of
protean weltering.

His friends, then, with him, one to pull, take, haul,
fetch and carry,
Come with himself, no less in the reckoning--Bob, Dick
and Harry.
Or woman-formed, dainty in dalliance or strong in her
childings,

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[27] C. A. Millspaugh, "To Gerard Manley Hopkins," Commonweal, XXV, 3 (Nov. 13, 1936), p. 68.

Kate, Mug or Prue. They, all, giving God praise, sown
thus as wildings
Spread free of the bony house toward heaven, their joy,
his or hers, say
What you will--dead Friday and born again already on
Thursday.[28]

The author here has borrowed the six-stress scheme of Hopkins's sprung rhythm sonnets, and has borrowed, as well, Hopkins's method of phrasing. "Jack Plumber, Jack Plowman, Jack Scrivner" is in obvious debt to "Tom's Garland" where Hopkins wrote "Tom Heart-at-ease, Tom Navvy." "Bony house" owes something to Hopkins's "bone-house." The entire sonnet attempts to capture Hopkins's tone and his attitude toward the essential divinity of man. Where it most fails is that a reader familiar with Hopkins finds his mind echoing Hopkins's phrasing, and this division of attention naturally does a disservice to whatever excellence Miss Roberts' poem may have.

Reconsidering the likenesses of Hopkins to other English poets and the influence of Hopkins upon modern poetry, the problem becomes that of placing him properly in the tradition of English poetry. Because of his mysticism and the emphasis in his poetry upon religious experience, Hopkins's audience will probably be limited to those minds who can find pleasure and satisfaction in philosophical speculation, or perhaps to those individuals who can delight emotionally in

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[28] Elizabeth Madox Roberts, "Sonnet of Jack," The New Republic, CI, 1302 (Nov. 15, 1939), p. 111.

the pure lyricism, without investigating the thought, of Hopkins's best work. A great obstacle to the creation of a popular audience for Hopkins's work is the assumption of the validity of Christian dogma necessary to the understanding of his poetry. With the lessening vigor of Christian dogma, modern and future readers of Hopkins's poetry will perhaps find his concepts, as such, less and less intellectually acceptable.

The influence of Hopkins upon metrics and syntax is likely to increase. Modern poetry has tended toward a freedom of expression almost to the collapse of structural form. It may be that Hopkins has contributed to the formal breakdown of poetry, but it is certainly possible that poets will discover for themselves that individual discipline which Hopkins felt was productive of the highest artistic achiements of poetry. Hopkins may always remain a "poet's poet" along with Spenser and Blake, and his niche in the field of poetry is likely to be as secure.

Whatever Hopkins's ultimate place in English literature may be, his intuitive grasp of the essential virtue of man and his insistence that before man can reach God, or any imagined heaven, he must look to himself, are statements valid beyond sects and schisms.

> There is your world within.
> There rid the dragons, root our there the sin.
> Your will is law in that small commonweal. . . .[29]

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[29] Hopkins, Poems, p. 81.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The question of whether the priest killed the poet in Hopkins, or that the poet was lessened by the priest can never be settled definitely. It is one of those interesting problems that will attract critical speculation more and more in years to come. Had Hopkins lived longer there might be no need for the question. Perhaps his genius would have languished; perhaps it would have flourished. From all the evidence that can be gathered from Hopkins's life and from his work, his was a nature that demanded restraint. He needed direction and the Jesuit Order supplied it. If he had not entered the priesthood, Hopkins, conceivably, might have arrived at artistic excellence through the discipline exercised on his emotions and mind by literary form. But priesthood gave Hopkins at least one thing, the lack of which would have altered the nature of his poetry. In his Catholic studies, Hopkins learned the philosophy of John Duns Scotus, and it is the Scotian philosophy that permeates all of Hopkins's poems. Scotian teaching gave Hopkins a firm conviction, a belief in the essential divinity of things in a world of changing appearances. Without knowledge of the importance of Duns Scotus to Hopkins's thinking, it is difficult to account for the nature

of many of Hopkins's poems. Indeed, without Duns Scotus it seems doubtful that Hopkins's best poetry would have been written.

It may be argued that Hopkins's entry into priesthood signified his inability to cope with reality and his desire to escape the problems of a difficult world in which old ideals had fallen. This argument will seem a little unfair when it is remembered that Hopkins expressed his awareness of the state of Victorian society in his poetry.

> The times are nightfall, look, their light grows less;
> The times are winter, watch, a world undone:
> They waste, they wither worse; they as they run
> Or bring more and more blazon man's distress.
> And I not help.[1]

Hopkins wanted to help man's distress and envisioned a commonwealth in which, while classes would exist, poverty and moral degradation would not.[2] Removed from the world as Hopkins was, he could very well have slipped into a spiritual sanctuary and forgotten mankind; or he could have viewed society as Housman did and written the poetry of futility. But Hopkins did neither. He had found what he believed to be the answer to the complications of existence and he earnestly

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[1] Gerard Manley Hopkins, Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited with notes by Robert Bridges, (London: The Oxford University Press, 1930), p. 81.

[2] See above, p. 17, for an excerpt from Hopkins's "Communistic" letter. An expression of Hopkins's desire for a better commonwealth may be found in the Poems, "Tom's Garland," p. 63.

desired to impart his vision. Probably Hopkins's understanding of socio-economic problems was limited. He was no William Morris, fighting muscularly for the cause of Socialism. He did not understand the needs of the people he wanted most to help, and he could not foresee that a commonwealth patterned after the spiritual commonwealth of the Catholic Church was to become impossible of realization within forty years after his death. Still, it would not be just to label Hopkins an unworldly cleric whatever the weakness of his political ideals. He was sincere, and he was able to offer something he believed to be positive.

The problem of evaluating Hopkins as an artist has been almost as difficult as that of delineating his personality. The two most striking features of Hopkins's practice of poetry were those of sprung and counterpointed rhythm. He had found precedence for sprung rhythm in jingles, weather saws, and in isolated instances in the work of other poets. What Hopkins did was to systematize the use of sprung rhythm, and he attempted to include it as a part of formal poetic practice. The value of sprung rhythm to poetry has not been as a rigid principle, but rather that of a liberating device which has enlarged the possibilities of poetic expression. It has served two purposes in modern verse: for one thing, it has contributed to the qualities of modern lyricism, as in the poems of Auden; and for another, it has been a factor in the

creation of vigorous, positive expression such as may be found in the poems of Stephen Spender.

Counterpointed rhythm, which Hopkins also tried to formulate into a principle of verse-writing, has not been of as much value as sprung rhythm. Variation of caesura, which makes rhythmic contrast possible within the line, was not a new thing when Hopkins began to study it. It had been used with success before Hopkins's time. The reason that counterpointed rhythm has not been used to any great extent by modern poets probably lies in the difficulty of handling it successfully. To counterpoint successive lines of poetry calls for more technical discipline than most artists care to impose upon themselves. The counterpointing of successive lines is not always a good thing. Unless the thought of the poem demands such closely ordered contrast, there is no reason why counterpointed rhythm should be used.

Hopkins was often criticized by Bridges for the oddness of his rimes. Some of them are undeniably bad; others, and most of them, it may be said, do not strike the twentieth century reader as particularly bizarre. The modern reader, who is not often well-acquainted with Hopkins's work, has been conditioned to outlandish riming by the poetry of men like E. E. Cummings. The tendency in modern poetry has been away from end-rimes, or at least to assonantal rime. When the tendency reverts again to end-rime, it is likely that the

influence of Hopkins will be seen in the manner of riming. A trick Hopkins used, that of roving over the rime from the end of one line to the beginning of the next, may well be used to advantage in the new poetry.

> But his eye no cliff, no coast or
> [M]ark makes in the rivelling snowstorm.[3]

End-rime has fallen into disfavor because of a general de-vitalization of words that has affected the whole of the English language. Hopkins's unorthodox rimes and his syntactical constructions were an effort to re-energize the language and to recapture vigorous expression.

There is no way of knowing how permanent Hopkins's influence upon modern poetry will be. His effect upon present day verse has been considerable, and an entire, separate investigation could be made of Hopkins's particular influences upon individual poets. W. H. Auden, Wyndham Lewis, and perhaps even T. S. Eliot owe something to Hopkins.[4]

In opposition to the charges often made against Hopkins--that his poetic gift was limited, that his vocation strangled his genius--is the conclusion that while many poets have written more, perhaps even better poetry, few literary

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[3] Hopkins, Poems, p. 35.

[4] Some suggestions as to Hopkins's effect upon modern poets appear in Elizabeth Drew, Directions in Modern Poetry, (New York: W. W. Norton Co., 1940), pp. 260-61.

figures have produced such a volume of consistently excellent work. Even the fragments and unfinished poems are literary gems. The spirit of Hopkins, that of a man cleaving to his convictions in the face of great internal distress, a spirit certain of the ultimate truth behind the disorganized pattern of human existence, is particularly attractive today, when the disorganization of the world seems so complete.

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