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GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS FOR ORAL
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AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED POEMS OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

FOR ORAL INTERPRETATION AND A

STUDY OF HIS POETIC THEORIES

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AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED POEMS OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS
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STUDY OF HIS POETIC THEORIES

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AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED POEMS OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Gerard Manley Hopkins is widely recognized as a poet of significance. Although the period of his life (1844-1889) places him within the Victorian era, his work is, in many respects, as modern as that of any contemporary poet and it deserves as much attention. Commenting on the importance of Hopkins' contribution to English poetry, F.R. Leavis says:

He was one of the most remarkable technical inventors who ever wrote, and he was a major poet. Had he received the attention that was his due the history of English poetry from the 'nineties onward would have been very different.¹

Further evidence that Hopkins has steadily gained recognition may be seen by consulting the indexes in the anthologies of poetry which

¹F.R. Leavis, New Bearings in English Poetry (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1960), p. 159.

have been published since the appearance of Hopkins' works in 1918. Although he attracted little attention at first, interest in his poetry has steadily increased. In any modern collection of poetry in the English language, one is almost certain to find one or more poems by Gerard Manley Hopkins. A substantial number of books, numerous periodical articles and some thirteen doctoral dissertations offer further indication that he is a poet worthy of study.

Herbert Read maintains that "no poet of recent times is likely to exercise such a potent influence as Hopkins."¹ Read further states that after having studied Hopkins' letters he has come to the conclusion that "Hopkins understood the technique of English poetry as no poet since Dryden had understood it."² The degree of influence which Hopkins is expected to have on English verse is, in Read's eyes, immense. He stresses his belief that Robert Bridges, the editor of Hopkins' posthumously published poetry, did not realize the importance of Hopkins' experiments and innovations in sprung rhythm, then goes on to predict that influence:

The possibility that through Hopkins a renaissance of English poetry would come about would have seemed fantastic to him [Bridges] ; but now that possibility

¹Herbert Read, A Coat of Many Colours (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1946), p. 160.

²
Ibid.

is being realized, and before another generation has passed I doubt if any other measure but sprung rhythm will be in use.¹

Hopkins' influence on other writers, of which Read speaks, is evident in the work of several contemporary poets. It is readily apparent in many of the poems of Dylan Thomas and, as Iyengar points out, Hopkins' influence has touched other modern poets:

The influence of Hopkins on contemporary poets is considerable. Eliot and Auden, Spender and Cecil Day Lewis, and the later Yeats have all, in one way or another, been responsive to Hopkins' poetical achievements.²

The purpose of this dissertation is to approach the study of Hopkins' poetry in a manner which is felt to be unique. As has been pointed out, about thirteen doctoral dissertations dealing with Hopkins have been completed. None of these studies, however, has been approached from the point of view of the oral interpretation of literature. It is felt, therefore, that a study of this kind could contribute substantially to an understanding of Hopkins and his work. Certainly the student of oral interpretation must have an understanding of criticism, poetic theory, prosody, and an appreciation of literature in order to properly approach the study of any poet, but a study of Hopkins' work through the particular approach of oral interpretation seems most appropriate since Hopkins himself

¹Ibid., p. 161.

²K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Man and the Poet (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 184.

advocated that his work would be best understood and appreciated when read orally.

At first encounter, Hopkins' work may seem obscure and confusing. A cursory reading of his poetry leaves the reader with little understanding of meaning. But a closer examination reveals a special kind of beauty which can scarcely be found elsewhere in the English language. This should not imply that it is essential to carefully study Hopkins before any appreciation can be had. Indeed, it is possible for a listener, hearing Hopkins' poetry for the first time, to see some of its beauty. It is necessary, however, for the interpreter to have studied Hopkins' work before he can hope to arrive at an acceptable interpretation and to convey the meaning and beauty of the poetry to his listeners.

If the oral interpreter should find himself in a quandary upon first encountering Hopkins, it should be encouraging to realize that Hopkins himself felt that his poetry must be presented orally. Discussing his poem, "The Loss of the Eurydice," he says:

You must not slovenly read it with the eyes but with your ears, as if the paper were declaiming it at you. For instance the lines "she had come from a cruise training seamen" read without stress and declaim is mere Lloyd's Shipping Intelligence; properly read it is quite a different thing. Stress is the life of it.¹

¹Claude Collier Abbott (ed.), The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 51-52. Hereafter referred to as Letters I.

On another occasion, discussing the same poem, he again emphasizes this point:

When on somebody returning me the Eurydice, I opened and read some lines, reading, as one commonly reads whether prose or verse, with the eyes, so to say, only, it struck me aghast with a kind of raw nakedness and unmitigated violence I was unprepared for: but take a breath and read it with the ears, as I always wish to be read, and my verse becomes all right.¹

On still another occasion, discussing his poetry in general, Hopkins insists that it must be read orally:

. . . it is, as living art should be, made for performance, . . . not reading with the eye but aloud, leisurely, poetical (not rhetorical) recitation, with long rests, long dwells on the rhyme and other marked syllables, and so on.²

Because a knowledge of poetical theory, and an analysis of a work for oral interpretation are felt to be of equal importance, this study is designed to have a dual purpose. The two-fold problem to be dealt with is (1) an attempt to compile a poetic theory of Hopkins, and (2) an analysis of his poetry for oral interpretation. Hopkins has written a great deal in the area of literary theory and criticism, but never in a concise manner. It is hoped that his concepts are here pulled together from his various letters, journal entries, notes, and sermons into a unified statement of his theory of poetry with particular emphasis on the concepts of sprung rhythm and inscape which represent his most original

¹Ibid., p. 79.

²Ibid., p. 246.

thought and which are so often associated with him. A grasp of these concepts is essential to an understanding of his work. Having established to some degree his notions concerning the theory of poetry, the second phase of the problem is to study it and his poetry for the purpose of oral presentation. Since he insists that it must be read orally to be appreciated, it seems apparent that an analysis for oral presentation by a student of oral interpretation, whom it is assumed is suitably equipped to make such an analysis, would be appropriate.

In order to accomplish either of these goals, it will first be necessary to investigate the circumstances of the poet's life and the individuals who were influential in shaping Hopkins' attitudes and opinions.

A specific pattern of organization which will best accomplish the above plan of study is necessary. Following is a resume of the organization which is followed.

Chapter II is a biography of Hopkins. It is especially important that considerable attention be given to the life of Hopkins. It is generally agreed that the student of any prominent literary figure should have a thorough knowledge of the author's background in order to fully understand the man's work. If this be true of all poets, it is doubly true of Hopkins. His life and background had an enormous influence on his work. The single fact that he was converted to the Roman Catholic Church and subsequently became a priest and a member of a very strict religious order has great significance in the study of his work. But there were also other

factors of influence. It is therefore essential that one must have a thorough knowledge of the life of Hopkins in order to study his work.

The concept of inscape is original with Hopkins and forms the nucleus of most of his thought. It is therefore necessary to devote considerable space and attention to the concept. This will be the subject of the third chapter. It is significant to note that Hopkins uses the term almost fifty times in his correspondence with Robert Bridges, but at no place does he attempt to define the word. The related concept of instress will also be discussed in conjunction with inscape.

Although sprung rhythm is not an original concept with Hopkins, it was reintroduced by him into English prosody and is today so closely associated with his name as to be sometimes thought of as his own contribution. Because it is basic to the understanding of Hopkins' work and to his own theory of poetry, it too deserves much attention. The fourth chapter deals with the discussion of sprung rhythm.

Having treated in detail the major concepts which make up the core of Hopkins' ideas on poetry, his other ideas will be discussed and from the varied and scattered sources which are available to the researcher, an organized statement of Hopkins' poetic theory will be presented in Chapter V.

The sixth chapter, an analysis of selected works of Hopkins for oral interpretation, will form the bulk of this study. Having previously considered the background of the author and the influences of his life

upon his work, it seems appropriate to proceed to a more detailed analysis of the poet's work for the purpose of oral interpretation. Several factors which are regarded as pertinent are included in the analyses. In addition to a statement concerning the literary forms employed by the author, a discussion of the poem's meanings, both surface and depth meanings, as well as attitude and intention are included. In addition, rhythm and appeals to imagery are considered. The tonal qualities of onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance and consonance are emphasized where they are appropriate to the analysis. Universality, individuality and any other extrinsic qualities of art which are manifested by the works are also included in the discussion. Lastly, any significant problems which the individual works present for the interpreter are considered as well as an indication of the manner in which they may be overcome.

The primary objective of this study is to discover all relevant information which will be helpful to the oral interpreter in presenting the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins in the most effective manner possible. It is sincerely hoped that the reader of the study will gain a greater understanding and appreciation of a truly important body of English poetry. It is further hoped that through a study of this work an oral reader may more effectively present that poetry to his audience.

CHAPTER II

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The marriage of Catherine Smith to Manley Hopkins in 1843 brought together two persons possessed of keen intelligence, good education, and artistic talent. It would seem almost inevitable that any children produced by this union should be gifted with unusual talent and ability. Gerard Manley Hopkins and the eight other children born to this couple did, in fact, inherit the most admirable traits of their parents and were brought up in an environment which stimulated active inquiry and encouraged learning. Eight of the nine Hopkins children lived to maturity and each one distinguished himself in his chosen field of interest.

The father, Manley Hopkins, was the son of Martin Edward Hopkins and Anne Manley. Upon his marriage, he settled in the town of Stratford, Essex where his first son, Gerard, was born on July 28, 1844. Shortly thereafter he moved his family to Hampstead, just outside of London. This became the family home and the place where Gerard and his brothers and sisters grew up.

Manley was not a wealthy man, but he provided very well for his family. He was the head of a firm of Average Adjusters and was a

successful business man. He was also appointed the consul general of the Hawaiian Islands to Great Britain. He was a man of many interests, fascinated by the obscure. Small details received his enthusiastic attention. Ruggles points out these interests in this passage:

He was a man of cultivation and sensitiveness. Odd facts interested him. He loved especial aspects, unique angles. He carried his mind, as some men carry their heads, a little on one side, and gazed as if through a mind's eye half shut upon the oblique exceptional facets of persons and things.¹

Manley published seven books during his lifetime, and his interest in "especial aspects" of things is clearly discernible from the titles of these volumes. A glance at his publications also demonstrates his wide and varied interests. He published two volumes of poetry. The Philosopher's Stone was published in 1843, the year of his marriage and was written entirely during his younger years as a single man. His second collection of verse was published in 1892 and was entitled Spicilegium Poeticum. In the preface to this book, Manley indicates that it represents fifty years of verse making.

His experiences as a successful business man produced A Handbook of Averages in 1857 and The Cardinal Numbers in 1887. As consul general of the Hawaiian Islands he wrote Hawaii: an Historical Account of the Sandwich Islands (1866). He also had an interest in shipping laws and

¹Eleanor Ruggles, Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Life (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1944), p. 15.

nautical affairs in general. This special business interest is reflected in two other publications, A Manual of Marine Insurance (1867) and The Port of Refuge, or advice and instructions to the Master-Marine in situations of doubt, difficulty, and danger. The latter was published in 1873 and was in its third edition in 1888.

Gardner suggests that perhaps Manley had too many interests and divided his energies to such a degree that he was unable to realize his full potential in any one vocation.¹ Be that as it may, he was a man of ability and his natural tendency for inquiry and investigation led him to a lifetime of study and reading. He also shared his family's interest in art, music and poetry; or perhaps it was he who instilled these interests in the entire family.

Catherine, the poet's mother, was an extremely well educated woman for her time. She was the daughter of a successful London surgeon, Dr. John Simm Smith and Marie Hodges. Of his maternal grandfather, Hopkins once wrote, "My grandfather was a surgeon, a fellow-student of Keats', and once conveyed a body through Plymouth at the risk of his own."² Catherine shared her husband's thirst for knowledge and read extensively in German philosophy and had an active interest in history

¹W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889): A Study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy in Relation to Poetic Tradition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), Vol. II, p. 7.

²Letters I, p. 51.

and politics. She had come from a home much like the one she would make for her own children --- a home in which there was a lively interest in the arts and literature. Several of her brothers and sisters were accomplished artists. One of her brothers left the practice of law to devote full time to landscape painting.

It is not surprising that these two people created an atmosphere which lent itself to the free expression of the talents inherited by their children. All of the Hopkins children shared their parents' interests. Cyril, the second child, became a member of his father's firm, but he wrote verse and could draw well. Arthur was a painter. He received a gold medal while attending the Royal Academy and was on the staff of Graphic for twenty-five years. He also contributed illustrations to Punch. In 1901 he published his Sketches and Skits. The youngest son, Everard, was also a professional painter. He contributed to Woman's World which was edited by Oscar Wilde, as well as to Punch and the Illustrated London News. He also published a novel, Lydia in 1910 and the following year he illustrated Tennyson's The Princess. Lionel became interested in archeology and in early Chinese writing. The latter interest led him to a career as vice-consul at Shanghai, consul at Chefoo, and eventually to the position of consul general at Tientsin. The only other son, Felix Edward, died at the age of ten months.

The daughters of Manley and Catherine also led interesting lives. The oldest, Milicent, became an Anglican nun. Kate was very skilled in

drawing and Grace had a good musical education. Hopkins respected her musical ability and in later years sent his own melodies to her to be harmonized. He describes her as "musical beyond the common."¹

Not only did this family maintain an atmosphere of learning and academic pursuit but the parents must have also given due attention to religious training for their children. Several incidents would indicate that the Hopkins gave serious attention to a proper education in the Anglican religion. The fact that Millicent became a religious would indicate a more than average devotion to the Church. The religious training of the children is also seen in the fact that Gerard, while a boarding school student, kept a promise made to his mother and read from his testament each night. He maintained this practice even in the face of ridicule from his fellow students.² The Anglican tradition of the family is also evident when one realizes that Gerard's conversion to the Roman Catholic faith brought distress to his parents.³

It was in such a home environment that Gerard Manley Hopkins' early education began. His first instruction came from an aunt, Manley's

¹Ibid., p. 29.

²Humphry House (ed.), The Note-books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 438. Hereafter referred to as Note-books.

³Claude Collier Abbott (ed.), Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins including his Correspondence with Coventry Patmore (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 19. Hereafter referred to as Letters III.

sister, who lived in the Hopkins' home during Gerard's boyhood. An accomplished musician and portrait painter, she instructed him in art and music. He was a precocious child and learned quickly. Lahey comments on Hopkins' early promise in this statement:

The precocity of the young boy must have been great, because his elders were more than a little alarmed at his youthful accomplishments. This alarm was not in the least dissipated by his own talk, since the originality in thought and word, which so distinguished him in later life, was very much in evidence even in his childhood.¹

Hopkins was also entranced with the sound and meaning of words. His note-books and diaries are filled with comments concerning the etymology and possible usage of various words. His fondness for experimenting with words must have begun at an early age for it is particularly evident in a passage describing one of his school mates. Hopkins describes his friend as a "kaleidoscopic, parti-coloured, harlequinnesque, thaumatropic being."² Not only does this contrived description illustrate his love for words, but it stands as evidence of his precocity when one considers that it was written by a boy of twelve.

In 1854, Hopkins entered Sir Robert Cholmondley's Grammar School at Highgate as a boarding student. He continued his education there until 1863 when he left for Oxford. Highgate has been associated with

¹ G. F. Lahey, S. J., Gerard Manley Hopkins (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), pp. 2-3.

² Ibid., p. 4.

such names as Lamb, Keats, Coleridge, and DeQuincey.¹ Hopkins undoubtedly received a sound education at Highgate, but not without its trying moments. Almost from the beginning Hopkins was in dispute with the head master, Dr. John Bradley Dyne. On at least two occasions there was direct conflict between the teacher and his pupil which demonstrates the mutual dislike they must have had for each other.

On one occasion the students had been discussing the hardships endured by seamen, and Hopkins agreed to go for a specified period of time without taking any sort of liquid in order to test the strength of his own body to suffer such physical trials. Wagers were made among the boys and the contest began. Hopkins collapsed on the playing field sometime toward the end of the period of abstinence but not before the wagers were won. Dr. Dyne arrived at the scene and was outraged when he heard the story. He demanded that the money won from the wagers be returned, in spite of the verbal objections from Hopkins.²

The second incident is recounted in detail by Hopkins himself in a letter written to one of his friends and a former student at Highgate. He describes a long, running conflict between himself and Dyne over his room assignment. Hopkins had requested a quieter room which would be more suitable for study. He was at that time preparing for his examinations

¹Ibid., p. 3.

²Note-book, p. 439.

to enter Oxford. Apparently the disagreement was prolonged for some-time. Hopkins relates that at the height of one of their arguments, Dyne "blazed into me with his riding-whip."¹

His days at Highgate were undoubtedly tense because of the constant battle against Dyne and were, therefore, not particularly happy. Hopkins nevertheless distinguished himself as an exceptional student and demonstrated his unusual command of language acquired, at least in part, from his home training. This talent, on two occasions, won for him the school Poetry Prize. The first prize came in 1860 when Hopkins was sixteen for his poem, The Escorial. He won the prize a second time in his last year at Highgate, 1862, for A Vision of the Mermaids.

Considering his difficulties with Dyne and his obvious application to his studies, one might be inclined to think of Hopkins, the school boy, as a scholarly eccentric who was unable to successfully adjust to his environment at Highgate. However, evidence seems to indicate that he was well liked by his peers. In a letter written to Hopkins' brother, Arthur, a year after the poet's death, one of Hopkins' closest friends at Highgate recalls him in the following manner:

. . . your brother even at that time was both popular and respected. Tenacious when duty was concerned, he was full of fun, rippling over with jokes, and chaff, facile with pencil and pen, with rhyming jibe or cartoon; good for his size at games and taking his part, but not

¹Ibid., p. 426.

as we did placing them first. 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 . . . your brother, as we understood him, was a quiet, gentle upright boy, whom we loved for his consistency, his goodness & great ability . . . there was no fight in him, unless he was unjustly used or attacked, and in that he was godlike, for it sprang from his love of justice, and truth.¹

While at Highgate, Hopkins had several friends who are noteworthy.

Some of them made distinguished careers for themselves in various capacities. Among his friends, the one who appears to have been closest to Hopkins is Charles Noble Luxmoore. Luxmoore later became a well known house-master at Eton. He also is one of the best authorities on Hopkins' Highgate years. He is the only acquaintance with whom Hopkins maintained a correspondence after they both left Highgate.²

Among his other friends were Philip Stanhope Worsley who later became an Oxford Scholar and is best known for his translation of the Odyssey and part of the Iliad into Spenserian stanzas.³

Hopkins also knew Ernest Hartley Coleridge, grandson of Samuel Coleridge. Hopkins knew the young Coleridge well enough to visit in his

¹Note-books, pp. 438-440.

²See Note-books, pp. 435-440; Letters III, pp. 1-5, pp. 247-249.

³Claude Collier Abbott (ed.), The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 5-6 n. 3. Hereafter referred to as Letters II.

home where he met his parents and his sister, Christabel, who later became a celebrated novelist.¹ Another of his close friends at Highgate was Marcus Andrew Hislop Clarke, who became the secretary of the Public Library at Melbourne and an Australian man of letters.²

From the beginning of his training at home and through his days at Highgate, Hopkins was already exhibiting the traits which are characteristic of his personality throughout life. The two-fold character of Hopkins is explained by Warren:

From childhood on, his pattern seems consistent. He is an aesthete and an ascetic, --- always more or less, and increasingly, aware that the latter must curb and stiffen and tighten the former.³

Two more appropriate adjectives could not be applied to Hopkins. The aesthete manifested itself early. Under the tutorship of his aunt, Hopkins developed through the study of music and art, a keen sense of beauty. This awareness of the aesthetic quality of things was an important part of him all of his life.

Lahey observes that "An inherent delicacy, which was far from fastidiousness, made him at all times oversensitive to moral disorder

¹ Lahey, p. 3.

² Iyengar, p. 6.

³ Austin Warren, "Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)," Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. The Kenyon Critics (Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions Books, 1945), p. 1.

and physical ugliness."¹ He goes on to comment on Hopkins' life long delight in, and faithful recording of, what he saw in natural phenomena."²

Hopkins' sensitivity is also seen in a boyhood incident which is often repeated. He once burst into tears at the sight of his younger brother who was afflicted with measles or mumps, because of the brother's ugliness.³ His preoccupation with beauty is recorded in his long Platonic dialogue, On the Origin of Beauty.⁴

The other side of Hopkins' nature --- the ascetic, is also seen in his early years. The most obvious example is his entrance into a religious order. The austere life of abstinence and self-denial so characteristic of religious orders could be attractive only to a person who, by his very nature, finds reward or personal satisfaction through a rigid self discipline. But this ascetic trait can be detected long before he becomes a religious.

Bridges says that as a student Hopkins "enjoyed loitering over the difficulties,"⁵ a characteristic which remained with Hopkins and which can be observed in many incidents in his early life.

¹Lahey, p. 3.

²Ibid.

³Warren, "Gerard Manley Hopkins," p. 2.

⁴Note-books, pp. 54-91.

⁵Lahey, p. 18.

The occasion on which Hopkins denied himself water for an extended period of time has been previously discussed. There are other similar accounts of rigorous self-denial. Lahey says that, having decided that most people eat too much salt, Hopkins once went completely without salt for a week.¹ In one of his early diaries there is a notation which again shows his constant asceticism:

For Lent. No pudding on Sundays. No tea except if to keep me awake and then without sugar. Meat only once a day. No verses in Passion Week or on Fridays. Not to sit in armchair except can work in no other way. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday bread and water.²

By the time Hopkins was ready to leave Highgate School, his basic character was formed. He had become a brilliant student, a gifted writer and had gained an abundant appreciation for art, music and literature. He was a person who could be described as possessing an oversensitive awareness of beauty, but who also felt that the pleasure found in natural beauty must be counterbalanced with a strict self discipline.

Hopkins' study at Highgate school came to a close when he won an exhibition to Oxford. He became an undergraduate at Balliol College, Oxford, at the Christmas term, 1863.

The Oxford Movement, which originated in 1833, continued to be very much in evidence when Hopkins entered the university thirty years

¹Ibid., p. 7.

²Note-books, p. 53.

later. Many of the early leaders of the movement were still lecturing and the conflict over the practice of religion was still being waged between the Rationalists and the Ritualists, as they had come to be called.

The movement began with a sermon by John Keble at St. Mary's, Oxford, in July, 1833. Following the sermon, came the publication of a series of pamphlets, Tracts for the Times, which maintained that the Church of England was drifting away from its position as a member of the Church Catholic in favor of Rationalism. These publications also maintained that the Church must reaffirm its faith in the apostolic succession, as well as to reinstate stricter ritualistic practices in all aspects of belief and practice. Prominent among the leaders of the movement were Henry Parry Liddon, Walter Pater, John Henry Newman, and Edward Bouverie Pusey. The publication of the tracts ended in 1841 with the famous Tract No. 90 written by Newman. This publication was met with bitter protests by those who felt that Newman's arguments were too "Roman."

Newman, who was later to have a great influence on Hopkins, joined many other supporters of the Oxford Movement who were eventually converted to Roman Catholicism. Newman later became a Catholic Priest and, in 1879, was created Cardinal by Pope Leo XIII. Pusey, Liddon and others maintained their Ritualistic point of view, but refused to submit to the authority of the Pope and discouraged their many followers from becoming Catholic.

By the time Hopkins entered Oxford, Newman had long since departed. But Pusey, Liddon, and Pater were all lecturing and they commanded the admiration and respect of a large body of undergraduates, not the least of whom was Hopkins. All of these scholars were tutors to Hopkins, as were James Riddell, Edwin Palmer and others. It was to Liddon that Hopkins made his first confession in March, 1865. From this point onward, Hopkins' reading in religious matters increases and his drift toward Romanism begins.

Although Hopkins was in ready agreement with the basic tenets of the Ritualists, he also found it possible to admire one of the leading opponents of the movement, Benjamin Jowett.

Jowett was, at this time, a Fellow of Balliol. He later distinguished himself as a Greek scholar and became Master of Balliol. He had already found himself the center of a heated controversy when, in 1855, he published a translation of the Epistles of St. Paul. The notes which accompanied this translation cast doubt on certain accepted Christian doctrines and resulted in Jowett's being charged with heresy. Pusey became his opponent by charging that Jowett emphasized intellectual training. Jowett was acquitted of his liberal religious views by the chancellor's court of Oxford in 1860. The persecution of Jowett only stimulated the admiration of the undergraduates for him. He eventually became one of Hopkins tutors as did one of Jowett's followers, Rowland Williams.

The admiration between Jowett and Hopkins must have been mutual.

Jowett undoubtedly knew Hopkins very well for during the time when Hopkins was at Oxford, Jowett was seeing every Balliol undergraduate ever week.¹ Speaking of Hopkins in later years, Jowett called him the Star of Balliol and one of the finest of its Greek scholars.²

The religious furor created by these influential professors had a profound effect upon the minds of the Oxford students of that day. While Hopkins and his friends undoubtedly pursued their academic studies with appropriate diligence, they were also vitally interested in matters of religion. The eventual effect of the prevailing religious atmosphere is best observed by directing one's attention to the careers of those young men who made up Hopkins' coterie.

Hopkins and William Addis both became Roman Catholic clergymen, though Addis returned to the Anglican Church later in life. W. A. Comyn MacFarlane and Edward William Urquhart became Anglican clergymen; Edmund Martin Geldart a Unitarian clergyman. Vincent Coles remained a staunch Anglo-Catholic and eventually became Warden of Pusey House at Oxford. Digby Macworth Dolben entered the Anglican order of St. Benedict and had expressed his intention of becoming Catholic, but he died before he was actually received into the Church. Alfred William Garrett also became a Roman Catholic. Robert Bridges and A. W. M.

¹Lahey, p. 15.

²Warren, "Gerard Manley Hopkins," p. 4.

Baillie apparently were unable to resolve the controversy in their own minds and eventually lost their religions altogether.

The tremendous amount of attention devoted to religion at Oxford in the 1860's is a significant factor, for it changed the course of Hopkins' life. The university faculty was divided into obvious factions, the air was charged with a religious fervor and the minds of the students were acutely aware of religious matters. These factors all combined to influence Hopkins' decision to become a Roman Catholic, a decision which profoundly affected his life and his poetry.

Among Hopkins' Oxford companions, several are noteworthy. In commenting on the friends who were most influential in Hopkins' life, most writers include the name of Digby Macworth Dolben. Dolben made a deep impression on Hopkins, but the relationship between the two poets seems to be exaggerated.

Dolben had been a classmate of Robert Bridges at Eton and in February, 1865 he came to Oxford to visit Bridges. It was on this occasion that Hopkins and Dolben met. Although Hopkins refers to Dolben often, he never had occasion to see him again.¹ Bridges says that Hopkins "must have been a great deal with him, for Gerard conceived a high admiration for him, and always spoke of him afterwards with great affection."²

¹Letters I, p. 1 n. 5.

²Ibid.

The impact of this single meeting must have been great but the affection and admiration shown by Hopkins apparently was not reciprocated. Six months after their meeting, Hopkins writes to Bridges, "I have written without end to the latter [Dolben] without a whiff of answer."¹ His interest in Dolben was also a lasting one, for in August, 1866 --- a year and a half after their only meeting --- Hopkins eagerly accepts Bridges' invitation to visit in the home of the latter especially since there is "the possibility of Dolben being there."²

In June of 1867 Dolben, while swimming in the river Welland, was drowned. He was eighteen years old. Hopkins did not learn of his death until some weeks later. He comments on the incident in a letter to Bridges:

I looked forward to meeting Dolben and his being a Catholic more than to anything . . . You know there can very seldom have happened a loss of so much beauty (in body and mind and life) and of the promise of still more as there has been in his case --- seldom I mean, in the whole world, for the conditions wd. not easily come together.³

Hopkins was, without doubt, very much infatuated with Dolben. But in view of the fact that they met only once and since Dolben apparently did not share Hopkins' enthusiastic interest in maintaining a correspondence, the influence of Dolben upon Hopkins was probably less than one might

¹ Ibid., p. 1.

² Ibid., p. 3.

³ Ibid., pp. 16-17.

be led to believe. Besides, by the time Hopkins learned of Dolben's death, he was preparing to take his first position as a lecturer and his attention was no doubt centered on this new assignment.

The person who was probably most closely associated with Hopkins at Oxford was William Edward Addis. Addis, an ardent Ritualist, shared Hopkins' enthusiastic appreciation of nature. They took many long walks together and on one occasion they made an extended walking tour which lasted a week.¹ Addis, reminiscing about his college years, says of Hopkins, ". . . I knew him in his undergraduate days far better than any one else did, and the feeling of intimacy on his side never declined, until in 1888 I left the communion of the Roman Church . . ."²

Addis was a year ahead of Hopkins at Oxford and he was very close to Liddon, whom Hopkins greatly respected. Addis was an excellent student. His keen mind, his Ritualistic tendencies, his association with Liddon made him a person whom Hopkins could easily admire, and they very shortly became fast friends. Even upon leaving school they shared their lodgings for a time. It is unfortunate that none of the many letters exchanged by these friends throughout their later years have survived. Letters to such an intimate friend as Addis would probably provide much additional valuable insight into Hopkins' nature.

¹Ibid., p. 2.

²Lahey, pp. 18-19.

Alexander William Mowbray Baillie is also worth mention.

Baillie was a life long friend and their correspondence, beginning in Hopkins' first year at Oxford, continued until Hopkins' death.¹ Baillie, unlike most of Hopkins' friends could accept neither the Anglican nor the Roman doctrines. Hopkins tried to convince him to embrace the Catholic faith, but Baillie could not reconcile his rational tendencies with orthodox religious dogma. Baillie drifted further away from religion and eventually became atheistic. He once commented that one of his greatest regrets in no longer believing in a second life was that he wanted so badly "somewhere, somehow, to meet Gerard Hopkins again."² The letters to Baillie are especially important because they contain much of Hopkins' theory on poetry which will be discussed in a later chapter.

Hopkins' most important, though not his most intimate friend, was Robert Bridges --- who later became poet laureate of England. There is no doubt that Hopkins and Bridges were on friendly terms while they were at Oxford, but Bridges was probably a much less intimate companion than many of his other friends. Their correspondence does not begin until the end of their Oxford days. Hopkins' first letter to Bridges expresses his appreciation for the opportunity of meeting Digby Dolben. Had Hopkins not been so impressed with Dolben, he might never have initiated the correspondence. A polite exchange of letters continues until

¹See Letters III, pp. 52-146 for Hopkins' letters to Baillie.

²Ibid., p. 288.

August 2, 1871, when Hopkins wrote a letter expressing a frankly communistic bent.¹ Apparently Bridges was either offended or disgusted by this letter and he did not answer.

In 1873 Bridges' first volume of poems was published. Hopkins read a review of the book and took advantage of the opportunity to resume the correspondence. From this point, their exchange of letters continues throughout the remainder of Hopkins' life. These letters must have been extremely valuable to both poets, for they are filled with detailed criticism of each others poetry.

The letter of January 22, 1874² not only marks the resumption of the correspondence between Bridges and Hopkins, but it serves as further evidence that they were only casual acquaintances at Oxford. Hopkins clearly indicates in this letter that he was unaware of Bridges' inclination as a poet until he read the review of his first collection. Had they been close friends in college, it is almost certain that they would have found occasion to discuss poetry and perhaps to read each others verses.

Whether Hopkins and Bridges were close friends at Oxford is relatively unimportant. The significance of their relationship lies in the fact that they acted as critics for each other. But of even more importance

¹Letters I, pp. 27-28.

²Ibid., pp. 28-30.

is Bridges' role as the posthumous editor of Hopkins' poetry. Throughout the years, Bridges carefully preserved and catalogued the poems which Hopkins sent him. In 1918, twenty-nine years after Hopkins' death, Bridges presented Hopkins' poetry to the public for the first time.¹

Hopkins' undergraduate days at Oxford ended in June, 1867 when he left Balliol with a Double First in Greats. He did not leave, however, before experiencing a major turning point in his life.

The religious activity which was affecting all the undergraduates, acted also upon Hopkins. During the Lenten season, 1866 Hopkins found himself confused about his own religion. He had been attracted to and identified with the Ritualists and was steadily being drawn closer and closer towards Rome.

Addis tells of an incident which occurred on their walking tour in the summer of 1865. This incident illustrates the fact that Hopkins' religious doubt had begun at least as early as that summer and it also shows the attraction both Addis and Hopkins felt for the Roman Church. Commenting on their walking tour, Addis makes this statement:

When at Hereford we walked out to the Benedictine Monastery at Belmont and had a long conversation with Canon Raynal, afterwards abbot. I think he made a great impression on both of us and I believe that from that time our faith in Anglicanism was really gone.²

¹Gerard Manley Hopkins, Poems (London: H. Milford, 1918).

²Lahey, p. 21.

Hopkins' attraction to Dolben may have also helped to persuade him to enter the Roman Church. Hopkins' admiration for the young Dolben could very well have been strong enough to cause him to want to emulate his manner. Dolben made no effort to conceal his Ritualistic inclination. Hopkins makes reference to Dolben's habit of going about the streets of Birmingham, barefooted and clad in the habit of his religious order.¹

On August 28, Hopkins wrote to Bridges accepting an invitation to visit in the home of the latter at Rochdale. He indicates in the letter that he plans to go by way of Birmingham "where I have some business . . ."² On the same day Hopkins wrote another letter which explains his business in Birmingham. It was to the Reverend Dr. John H. Newman. In this letter Hopkins indicates his intention to join the Roman Catholic Church:

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 had long foreseen where the only consistent position wd. lie) coming upon me suddenly has put me into painful confusion of mind about my immediate duty in my circumstances.³

Newman, a former leader of the Oxford Movement, had, in 1845, been converted to the Catholic Church. He was ordained a priest in 1846

¹Letters I, p. 7.

²Ibid., p. 4.

³Letters III, p. 11.

and in 1847 he established the Congregation of the Oratory in Birmingham. It was with this scholar and Catholic leader that Hopkins wished to discuss his conversion. Newman, however, was out of the country at the time and was unable to see Hopkins as had been proposed. The letter was answered, however, as soon as Newman returned.

Hopkins became more and more anxious to join the Catholic Church without further delay. His urgency was due in part to the unfavorable reaction from home. When he told his parents of his intention to become a Catholic, they were extremely displeased. He wrote to Newman about their objections:

I have been at Oxford just long enough to have heard fr. 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.¹

His parents begged Hopkins to delay his entry into the church at least until he finished at Oxford, but any further delay was intolerable. As his anxiety mounted, Newman invited him to come to Birmingham to be received into the church. He responded without hesitation and became a Catholic in October, 1866.

Almost immediately upon entering the Church, Hopkins began planning for a religious vocation. Newman advised him to be patient:

¹Ibid., p. 19.

²Ibid., pp. 257-258.

. . . your first duty is to make a good class. Show your friends at home that your becoming a Catholic has not unsettled you in the plain duty that lies before you. And, independently of this, it seems to me a better thing not to hurry decision on your vocation. Suffer yourself to be led on by the Grace of God step by step.¹

Hopkins' religious devotion was so intense, that it was apparent that he would not be content to merely be a member of the Church. It was inevitable that he would choose some sort of religious vocation. In January 1867, Hopkins made a retreat and spent a great deal of time with Newman at the Oratory in Birmingham. While he was there, Newman offered him a position at the Oratory School. In September of 1867, he went to Birmingham and became a Master at the school. However, he did not complete a full term as Master. In January, 1868 he wrote to Bridges indicating his unsettled state of mind:

The year you will be away I have no doubt will make a great difference in my position though I cannot know exactly what. But the uncertainty I am in about the future is so very unpleasant and so breaks my power of applying to anything that I am resolved to end it, which I shall do by going into a retreat at Easter at the latest and deciding whether I have a vocation to the priesthood.²

Hopkins considered both the Benedictine Order and the Society of Jesus. How seriously he considered becoming a Benedictine is not known, nor is there any indication as to why he finally decided upon the Society

¹Ibid., pp. 257-258.

²Letters I, p. 22.

of Jesus. In May, Newman sent his congratulations:

I am both surprised and glad at your news. . . .
I think it is the very thing for you. You are quite out
in thinking that when I offered you a home here, I
dreamed of your having a vocation for us. This I
clearly saw you had not, from the moment you came
to us. Don't call 'the Jesuit discipline' hard; it
will bring you to heaven. The Benedictines would
not have suited you.

We all congratulate you.¹

In September, 1868, Hopkins entered the Jesuit Novitiate at
Manresa House, Roehampton, just outside of London to begin his years
of training. Before entering the order, Hopkins burned all of the poetry
which he had written up to that time. The Society of Jesus made no such
demands on Hopkins, but he chose voluntarily to destroy his poems be-
cause, "I saw they wd. interfere with my state and vocation."²

Very little is known of Hopkins' novitiate. Upon entering Manresa
House as a novice, he ceased writing poetry and very few letters came
from him. The primary source of information concerning these first
two years of his Jesuit life is to be found in his journal. These entries,
however, are almost entirely brief notations on nature. While they are
interesting, and illustrate Hopkins' keen observation of natural phenomena,
they give the reader little insight into his life and activities while serving
his noviceship.

¹ Letters III, p. 261.

² Letters I, p. 24.

To understand the influence of the next several years upon Hopkins' life and work, it is necessary to see what constitutes the discipline and training of a Jesuit.¹

Before a young man is accepted for training in the Society of Jesus, he is carefully examined by three priests. He is interviewed personally if he is not already known to the priests to determine his apparent acceptability, and his family background is closely studied. He must be adjudged to be both physically and mentally suited to the strict training which lies ahead. This examination is a very careful screening process the purpose of which is to select only those potential candidates who appear to possess the qualifications and sincerity of purpose necessary to train them as Jesuits.

When a young man has been accepted, he enters the novitiate, or the first phase of his training. The novitiate lasts for two years. The purpose of this period is to help the youth adjust to the life of a religious. During this first phase of his training, the novice practices the Spiritual Exercises as prescribed by St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society. The Exercises require thirty days to perform. The entire novitiate is a period of concentration upon spiritual growth. The novice

¹The information beginning on this page and continuing on the following pages concerning the Society of Jesus is based upon conversation with the Reverend Harold A. Gaudin, S. J. Father Gaudin is the Director of Montserrat, Jesuit Retreat House located at Lake Dallas, Texas.

focuses attention upon himself and makes a careful self examination. He learns obedience, humility and cooperation with his fellow novices. It is a period of concentrated spiritual exercise, meditation, contemplation and examination of conscience. The purpose is to enable the novice to conquer himself and to order his life. The training is almost exclusively religious in nature. The only secular education conducted is that which is necessary for the novice to retain the knowledge previously acquired. He is not given instruction in any new secular material. There may be occasional classes in English and Latin, but only as a means of keeping alive and fresh in the mind, the knowledge already possessed.

As a novice, a young religious rises at five o'clock, visits the Blessed Sacraments, spends an hour in private meditation, and attends the Mass --- all before breakfast. About forty-five minutes at mid-morning are devoted to manualia, a period of house cleaning and the performance of necessary chores in which all novices share. Shortly before noon he attends a lecture by the Master of Novices. At twelve noon he makes his Examination of Conscience, a ritual which is performed twice daily for the rest of his life. The noon meal follows at 12:15. It is not until the hour of recreation, just after lunch, that the novice is allowed to speak. He has maintained absolute silence since waking at five o'clock. From his entrance into the novitiate until his death a Jesuit follows a strict daily routine which includes an hour of meditation, daily mass and the Examination of Conscience twice each day.

At the end of his two-year novitiate, the Jesuit takes his first vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. These vows are for life and upon taking them, he is considered a member of the order and may sign the letters, "S. J. " after his name.

Following his novitiate, the Jesuit enters the second phase of his training --- the Juniorate. This is another two year period and consists of basic college study. Most novices enter the order before they have had any college training and this period constitutes the beginning of their advanced secular education. Of course, due attention is still given to spiritual training and the student continues to live an ordered and routine daily life. When Hopkins entered the Society, he was an Oxford graduate, and as such, was exempt from this phase of study.

Upon successful completion of the Juniorate, the Jesuit goes on to more advanced academic work in his three year period of philosophical studies. This period includes, as the name implies, a thorough study of all aspects of philosophy, but it also includes some study in the sciences and in cosmology. When these three years of study are completed, the Jesuit is awarded a degree and embarks on the next period of his training.

Although Jesuits are well known for their accomplishments in the field of education, not all Jesuits are active educators. However, each of them is usually expected to devote some time to teaching. Therefore, upon the completion of his philosophical studies, a Jesuit is ordinarily assigned as a teacher for a period of two years. He serves in this capacity

regardless of whether he will be a teacher in his future career. Hopkins had also had some previous experience as a teacher and therefore only served one year teaching when he arrived at this stage of his training.

After completing his two-year teaching assignment, the Jesuit then re-enters the classroom as a student. He engages in three years of theological studies. This period of study ends in his ordination as priest. Following this last phase of his formal education, the priest may serve in a variety of capacities. He may again teach, he may serve as a parish priest, or in any other work to which he is suited and to which his superiors assign him.

By the time a Jesuit has reached his ordination, he has normally spent a total of twelve years in training. Even then it is not complete. After serving the Society in whatever capacity to which he is assigned, he then enters the final stage of his training, the tertianship. The tertianship is for a period of one year and may be regarded as a third year of the novitiate. It is a renewal of spiritual concentration. It is assumed that in the years which have intervened since the novitiate there has been a tendency for one to give primary attention to secular studies and worldly affairs. The purpose of the tertianship is to allow the Jesuit to once again focus his undivided attention upon himself, to closely examine himself again, and to renew his spiritual interest. During thirty days of this period, he again performs the Spiritual Exercises. Upon completion of the tertianship the Jesuit takes his final vows. He may then pursue whatever

occupation is assigned by his superiors.

As all Jesuits must do, Hopkins too went through this long and arduous period of training. He was a novice from 1868 to 1870. On September 8, 1870 he took his first vows.

Since he was a university graduate, he was allowed to skip the next period of training consisting of general secular studies. Upon taking his first vow, he left almost immediately for the seminary at St. Mary's Hall, at Stonyhurst to begin three years of philosophical study.

Although Hopkins continued his self imposed abstinence from writing poetry, his journal entries become much more numerous after his departure from Manresa House. The entries made during the period at Stonyhurst are not only more abundant, but they are more personal, more detailed and much richer. They constitute the raw material of poetry and were undoubtedly used by him when he finally resumed his poetry writing.

The three years at Stonyhurst were less strenuous than the previous two years had been. Hopkins was again a student and, as such, found himself in a routine which was more like his pre-Jesuit days had been. Nevertheless he was still subjected to a rigid routine of confessions, communions, yearly retreats, and examinations of conscience. Although he was a Jesuit in a real sense, he was still in a probationary period and the strict disciplinary training continued.

During the latter part of his stay at Stonyhurst, Hopkins experienced an extended illness. He at first came down with a chill and high fevers. This illness was the result of his weakened condition brought about by recurring trouble with hemorrhoids. The hemorrhaging and resulting weakness made it necessary for him to be sent home for a period of time. While at his parents' house, he underwent necessary surgery and spent several weeks there while convalescing. While at home he was visited by several of his old friends including Addis and Baillie.¹ In August, 1873 Hopkins' philosophical studies at Stonyhurst ended when he received notice that he was to return to Manresa House where he would be an instructor in classics.

Ruggles maintains that this year spent teaching at Manresa House contributed a great deal to Hopkins' later poetic techniques:

It was during this year, in the preparation of his lectures on the metrical systems and devices of the classical poets, that Hopkins first formulated the theories on prosody which were seen to give his own poetry its idiom.²

Although it was perhaps a profitable year, it was not an enjoyable one. Hopkins apparently suffered from the strain of teaching and at the close of the school term he made the following entry into his journal:

Although perhaps my heart has never been so burdened and cast down as this year. The tax on my strength has

¹Ruggles, p. 128.

²Ibid., p. 132.

been greater than I have felt before: . . . I feel my self weak and can do little. But in all this our Lord goes His own way.¹

Hopkins' position as teacher at Manresa House ended after only one term. If it had been a hard and depressing year, some compensation can be found in the assignment which lay ahead.

In August of 1874 he was sent to St. Beuno's College in Northern Wales to begin his theological studies. These next three years in Wales must be counted among the happiest of his life. Hopkins was greatly impressed with the natural beauty of Wales and although he was not yet writing poetry, he filled the pages of his journal with notations about the country, its people and their language.

As always, Hopkins took great pleasure in experimenting with words. Although his superior at first objected to his studying Welsh, he was eventually able to study the language as an avocation. It was his study of the language which acquainted him with that characteristic of Welsh poetry known as cynghenedd or what Hopkins defines as "consonant-chime."² This was a device which he successfully introduced into English poetry and which is so characteristic of his own verse. The influence of Welsh poetry upon Hopkins' writing will be discussed more fully in a later chapter.

¹Note-books, p. 199.

²Letters I, p. 163.

The most significant feature of Hopkins' stay at St. Beuno's was his return to poetry. When he entered the Society of Jesus in 1868, Hopkins burned all of his poetry and vowed that he would write no more unless he was instructed to do so by his superiors. The ensuing seven years of silence was broken when certain events of December, 1875 culminated in the composition of Hopkins' longest poem.

On December 7, a German ship, The Deutschland, was approaching England when it was caught in a sudden storm and sank. On board were five Franciscan nuns who had been exiled from Germany. All five of them perished. The rector at St. Beuno's College, Father James Jones, was deeply moved by an account of the incident and it was apparently he who observed that someone should write a poem commemorating the tragedy.¹ Casual as the Father's remark may have been, it was the only encouragement Hopkins needed. He set about immediately composing The Wreck of the Deutschland.

The study of versification in connection with his experience as a lecturer, his acquaintanceship with Welsh poetry and the eagerness to write again after seven years of silence, all joined to produce a unique and powerful kind of poetry. The composition of this poem marks the beginning of Hopkins' important career as a poet. The terse phrases, compound words, obscure images and new rhythmic innovations which

¹Ruggles, p. 145.

Hopkins later perfected are all evident in this first attempt to put into actual practice the theoretical convictions which had been formulating themselves in Hopkins' mind.

Further experimentation followed. The last years at St. Beuno's were among Hopkins most productive years. During the period of elected silence the ideas for poetry had been suppressed. With the silence finally broken, a flood of poems came from him. Perhaps the most significant of the poems from the Welsh period of Hopkins' life is the well known sonnet, The Windhover. Hopkins himself regarded this poem as the best thing he ever wrote,¹ and it is regarded by many critics as his masterpiece.

The three year period of study in Wales was climaxed with Hopkins' ordination. The long years of apprenticeship were ended and Hopkins was at last elevated to the full status of Jesuit and priest.

For the next four years, Hopkins fulfilled various assignments as parish priest, clerk and preacher. Upon leaving St. Beuno's, he was sent to Mount St. Mary's College in Chesterfield where he was assistant to the minister --- a position which was almost entirely clerical in nature. Little is known of his months in Chesterfield. He remained there only until the following Spring, when he left for Stonyhurst.

After his termination of duties at Chesterfield and before his next

¹Letters I, p. 85.

assignment a few months later, Hopkins stayed at Stonyhurst. It was during this interim period that he began another correspondence which proved to be valuable. While at Stonyhurst he came upon a copy of a periodical called Athenaeum which contained an article by the Anglican priest, Canon Richard Watson Dixon. Once, when Hopkins was still a boy at Highgate School, Dixon had come there for a few weeks as an instructor. Canon Dixon had published two volumes of poems¹ which had received very little attention. Hopkins, however had read both volumes and was impressed with Dixon's efforts. Upon reading the newly published article, Hopkins made up his mind to write to the poet. In his first letter he reminds Dixon that they had met at Highgate and upon the departure of Dixon from the school, he had given Hopkins a copy of his first collection of poems. Dixon responded immediately.

Shortly before the initiation of this correspondence, Hopkins had sent his Wreck of the Deutschland and The Loss of the Eurydice to a Jesuit periodical, The Month. Both had been returned.²

The dissatisfaction which Hopkins suffered by the rejection of his poems gave him some understanding of the feeling which Dixon must have known when his poetry was not well received. Hopkins shared with Dixon the consolation which he found in the knowledge that their works

¹Christ's Company was published in 1861; and Historical Odes appeared in 1864.

²Ruggles, p. 164.

were acceptable in the eyes of Christ. This notion was communicated to Dixon in one of Hopkins' very early letters to him:

. . . fame whether won or lost is a thing which lies in the award of a random, reckless, incompetent, and unjust judge, the public, the multitude. The only just judge, the only just literary critic, is Christ, who prizes, is proud of, and admires, more than any man, more than the receiver himself can, the gifts of his own making.¹

This idea appealed to Dixon and he, too, found consolation in it.

Perhaps it was the lack of recognition experienced by both poets which formed a common bond between them. At any rate, their correspondence continued for the next ten years. They freely offered to each other criticism and reassurance. The letters which were exchanged were, without doubt, sources of encouragement to both poets.²

Hopkins' next assignment came in July. He was sent as preacher to the fashionable Mayfair district of London. In only five short months he was again moved, this time he went as assistant to the priest of the Jesuit mission in Oxford. He arrived in December, 1878. Soon after his arrival the mission priest suffered a series of illnesses which meant that Hopkins, of necessity, assumed all the duties of the parish. The added strain took its toll on Hopkins' health and he suffered severely from

¹Letters II, p. 8.

²The correspondence between Hopkins and Canon Dixon forms the content of the second volume of letters edited by Abbott, referred to here as Letters II.

dysentery --- a chronic ailment which seemed to remain with him following his operation. When he left Oxford in October, 1879 it was with few regrets. From Oxford he was sent for a short time to Manchester and then to Liverpool.

From Liverpool he wrote to Baillie, "I do not think I can be long here; I have been long nowhere yet."¹ It was apparent to Hopkins that the too-frequent transfers were an indication that the Society had been unable to find a suitable assignment for him. In spite of the diligence with which he attacked each assigned task, Hopkins was not a particularly accomplished priest and preacher. Pick describes him in this way:

He did not have more than mediocre success as a preacher, though his superiors tried hard to find a congenial post for him . . . Wherever he was, he found the endless routine of parish duties trying.²

Liverpool, in 1879, was thronged with immigrants. Poverty enveloped the city. The climate was depressing and there was a fatal typhus or cholera epidemic. Perhaps it was these conditions, coupled with his lack of success as a priest which brought about a feeling of despondency in Hopkins. A great deal has been written about the unhappiness and desolation of Hopkins' last years. If those years were in fact characterized by a despondency, that feeling had its beginning in Liverpool. In the letters written from there, one can see traces of melancholy and

¹ Letters III, p. 99.

² John Pick, Gerard Manley Hopkins: Priest and Poet (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), p. 73.

cynicism growing in Hopkins. His poetry no longer came with the ease which he had experienced in Wales.

There still lay ahead of him his tertianship, or the third year as a novice. In view of the unpleasant experiences at Liverpool, it was perhaps with a sense of relief that he left the city and re-entered the quiet seclusion of Manresa House in 1881.

At the end of his tertianship, the period in which the mature priest again undergoes a close examination of conscience and prepared himself for his final vows, Hopkins again entered the class room. He was appointed instructor of Latin and Greek at Stonyhurst, a position which he held until 1884.

One event stands out in the two years at Stonyhurst. The end of the school term at Stonyhurst was climaxed in August with Speechday. This was a day set aside for announcements of faculty appointments for the next term and for bestowing of awards. Speechday, 1883 was attended by a well known poet of that day, Coventry Patmore. During his visit, Patmore was placed in Hopkins' care. The two poets took an immediate liking to each other and they spent a great deal of time together during the few days that Patmore was at Stonyhurst.

Patmore had for some time been anticipating issuing a revised edition of his poetry. He was anxious, however, to first submit them to a competent critic for evaluation. Impressed with Hopkins' knowledge and critical ability, Patmore asked him to act as his critic. Upon his

return home, Patmore sent Hopkins his collected poems. This was the beginning of another correspondence between poets. Like the correspondences which had previously been initiated with Bridges and Dixon, the resulting exchange of letters between Hopkins and Patmore is filled with critical comment and evaluation of each others poetry.¹

Hopkins was reappointed for his second term at Stonyhurst but early in 1884 he received notification that he was to be transferred still another time. Upon completion of his second term at Stonyhurst, he was moved to Ireland to occupy the Chair of Classics at University College, Dublin. He held this position until his death in 1889.

The last five years of Hopkins' life, spent in Dublin, are generally regarded as unhappy years. Most of the poetry produced during this period has been called the sonnets of "desolation" or the "terrible" sonnets.

Several factors contributed to his unhappiness. The recurring illness from which Hopkins suffered continued to have its effect. He was not well when he went to Dublin and his health never improved. His duties at the university involved not only lecturing, but he was also responsible for preparing the grading examinations for the degrees given by the Royal University. He tells Bridges that there were 750 candidates the year before his arrival² and sometime later he says that he received

¹See Letters III, pp. 147-245 for the correspondence between Hopkins and Coventry Patmore.

²Letters I, p. 190.

"331 examination papers to-night, . . . and more will come."¹ The task of grading examination papers was sheer drugery for Hopkins. He frequently complains of it in the letters to his friends. Upon his appointment to the new position, Hopkins realized that the job would be demanding and he foresaw the possibility that his poor health would be a hinderance to him:

It is an honour and an opening and has many bright sides, but at present it has also some dark ones and this in particular that I am not at all strong, not strong enough for the requirements, and do not see at all how I am to become so.²

Besides the state of his health and the burden of too much work, which undoubtedly contributed to his desolation, Hopkins was also displeased with Ireland:

I have been warmly welcomed and most kindly treated. But Dublin itself is a joyless place and I think in my heart as smoky as London is: I had fancied it quite different.³

In the 1880's Ireland was at the height of a rebellious nationalist movement. Hopkins, a loyal Englishman, was out of place. The political situation was just one more source of annoyance to him. Ruggles describes the situation in these words:

¹Ibid., p. 229.

²Ibid., p. 190.

³Ibid.

. . . the unsympathetic atmosphere of Hopkins' classroom was to be heightened by his consciousness that most of his pupils were nationalists. So, for that matter, were most of his colleagues on the faculty. Dublin in the 1880's was the center of the country's nationalist movement. Citizens were constantly approached from behind by street boys who would thrust bootleg copies of Suppressed United Ireland into their hands and then run.¹

The desolation of the Dublin years and the sources of Hopkins' unhappiness are most accurately and succinctly summarized in the following paragraph by Pick:

In Dublin his ill health, with the mental fatigue, depression, and tedium which accompanied it, the routine of heavy duties amidst uncongenial surrounding, the strenuous effort to fulfil, at a time of great trial, the Ignatian ideals of perfection and sanctity --- all these interacted and combined to make his "winter world."²

Toward the end of April, 1889, Hopkins began to suffer the symptoms of typhoid. His strength steadily weakened as the disease grew. By early June he had become so seriously ill that his parents were notified. They arrived a few days before his death on June 8.

If the years in Dublin had been agonizing ones, they had not destroyed the source of comfort which he found in the Society of Jesus. In spite of the many hardships he had experienced, he was still able to utter, as his last words, "I am so happy, I am so happy, I am so happy."³

¹Ruggles, p. 243.

²Pick, Priest and Poet, p. 122.

³Ibid., p. 155.

Hopkins' conversion to Roman Catholicism and his subsequent submission to the Jesuit order are viewed by many of his critics as a detriment to Hopkins, the poet. These writers feel that his poetry would have been more abundant and more powerful had he been free of the restrictions of his religious order. Others feel that the discipline and asceticism of the Society were the very sources of his inspiration. It is useless to pursue the argument. But it cannot be denied that this aspect of Hopkins' life bears the most significant influence upon his poetry. This relationship must be recognized for it is impossible to separate Hopkins the priest from Hopkins the poet. Pick describes the influence of the Society of Jesus in this manner:

For twenty-one years Hopkins dedicated himself to the Society of Jesus; for twenty-one years he studied, meditated, and practised the Spiritual Exercises. They became a part of his life and attitude. They gave direction to all he experienced, thought, and wrote. They influenced his most exuberant and joyous poems; they were part of his sufferings and desolation . . . His attitude toward poetry and fame was shaped by them. They moulded his native temperament and sensibility to an ideal of perfection. Without knowing something of them we can hardly know the priest-poet.¹

¹Ibid., pp. 25-26.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPTS OF INSCAPE AND INSTRESS

One of the major steps toward a thorough understanding of Hopkins' poetry and his poetic theory can be taken by gaining an awareness of three terms which are closely associated with him. Two of these terms are related and can be treated together. They are the concepts of "inscape" and "instress." These words were coined by Hopkins and have a special meaning for him. The third term is "sprung rhythm," a metrical system which was revived by Hopkins and which is so closely associated with him that it is often thought to be an original innovation. Much of Hopkins' fame is due to his use of sprung rhythm.

Of the three concepts, sprung rhythm is perhaps the one most frequently associated with Hopkins. However, the concept which he calls inscape is the concept upon which he justifies the use of sprung rhythm. Inscape and its related idea, instress, permeate all of his thinking. His views on nature, poetry, painting and all the arts are governed by these concepts. Therefore, for the sake of clarity, it seems appropriate to discuss inscape and instress first. With an understanding of these concepts, one should be more fully equipped to apply the principles to the

idea of sprung rhythm.

It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss the meaning and application of inscape and instress. The concepts will then be utilized in the explanation of sprung rhythm, which is to be discussed in the next chapter following this.

Inscape becomes important through its usage by Hopkins. It appears frequently in his note-books and in his letters to friends. Some critics give little attention to the term. But it cannot be overlooked. One has only to turn to Hopkins' prose writings to discover the importance attached to the concept. Hopkins uses the word in such a manner as to clearly indicate that in his eyes, it is of central importance in poetry as well as in the other arts. In a letter to Dixon he discusses the artist, Whistler. In this context he says that inscape is "the very soul of art."¹ In another letter he clearly indicates that it is the most important aspect of his own poetry:

No doubt my poetry errs on the side of oddness. I hope in time to have a more balanced and Miltonic style. But as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern or what I am in the habit of calling 'inscape' is what I above all aim at in poetry.²

To Hopkins, inscape is not only the most important aspect of poetry, but it is the only feature which makes that poetry lasting.

¹Letters III, p. 135.

²Letters I, p. 66.

Discussing the poet, Samuel Ferguson, he notes that in spite of many desirable qualities in his poetry, the most important feature --- inscape --- is lacking:

. . . he was a poet as the Irish are --- to judge by the little of his I have seen --- full of feeling, high thoughts, flow of verse, point, often fine imagery and other virtues, but the essential and only lasting thing left out --- what I call inscape.¹

Although the concept of inscape is obviously of primary importance to Hopkins, one can only arrive at an understanding of its meaning by observing the contexts in which he uses the word. Nowhere does he offer a definition.

Both "inscape" and "instress" appear in a short set of notes entitled Parmedides.² This work, probably written in 1868, marks the earliest use of the terms in any of his extant writings. Hereafter, however, they occur with great frequency and in various contexts --- both in his journals and in letters to his friends. The word "inscape" occurs nearly fifty times in his journal kept between 1868 and 1875.³ Hopkins sees inscape in everything. He says, "all the world is full of inscape."⁴ And because it is common in his sight, and important to him, he refers to it often.

¹Letters III, p. 225.

²Note-books, pp. 98-102.

³Pick, Priest and Poet, p. 32.

⁴Note-books, p. 173.

Many writers have attempted to define inscape, but there is only general agreement. The definitions which have been advanced can be grouped under several broad categories. Virtually all of these definitions agree with one or more of the four kinds of inscape identified by Schoder.¹ Schoder arrives at his four-fold definition of inscape by first defining the suffix, "-scape." The term is derived from the Old English "-schap" from which also comes the word "-ship" as in "friendship," etc. The suffix, "ship" may be defined as a condition, or state of being. "-scape," when used in combination as in "landscape" or "seascape" means "view, vista; sketch, outline, design." Inscape is then seen as being formed on the suffix, "-scape," meaning pattern. The prefix, "in-" gives emphasis to the intrinsic values or individual qualities of an object. By this means, Schoder arrives at the conclusion that the word "stresses the internal scaping or design in things, their very soul is beautiful."²

From this basic definition, Schoder then arrives at four distinct meanings of inscape. These various meanings can be determined only by examining the contexts in which they are used. The four divisions are: (1) the intrinsic form of the object; (2) the intrinsic beauty of the object;

¹Raymond V. Schoder, S.J. Appendix to "An Interpretive Glossary of Difficult Words in the Poems," Immortal Diamond: Studies in Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. Norman Weyand, S.J. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1949), pp. 216-219.

²Ibid., p. 217.

(3) the outer accidental form of the object; and (4) a subjectively imposed Gestalt which may be discovered upon close scrutiny.¹

The first of these kinds of inscape is that inner element which gives a particular object its "distinctive individual existence outside the mind," the "soul" of the object. This can be found in natural objects or in works of art created by man. In the latter case, it is "the essential unifying form or design worked into the material by the artist to produce a new thing."²

A passage from Hopkins, previously quoted, tends to substantiate this particular concept of the word. He once referred to inscape as "the very soul of art."³ He again seems to be using the word in this sense when, referring to the oddness of his own poetry, he observes that "it is the virtue of design, pattern, or inscape to be distinctive, and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped."⁴

Inscape as an inner force is also seen when Hopkins says, "Unless you refresh the mind from time to time you cannot always remember or believe how deep the inscape in things is."⁵

¹Ibid., pp. 217-219.

²Ibid., p. 218.

³Letters III, p. 135.

⁴Letters I, p. 66.

⁵Note-books, p. 140.

The second interpretation of the word is considered by Schoder to be the most common meaning. Intrinsic beauty refers to the outward, visible evidence of the inner beauty or design. Schoder makes this observation when explaining this concept:

For the true experience of beauty arises only from penetrating, by the mediation of the outer form which is its sensible revelation, to the inner form, the inscape, of the object and drinking in its radiant and abundant reality or truth.¹

Hopkins' agreement with the notion that outward beauty is governed by an inner force can be seen in one of his letters to Patmore:

It is certain that in nature outward beauty is the proof of inward beauty, outward good of inward good. Fineness, proportion, of feature comes from a moulding force which succeeds in asserting itself over the resistance of cumbersome or restraining matter; the bloom of health comes from the abundance of life, the great vitality within. The moulding force, the life, is the form in the philosophic sense, and in man this is the soul.²

The interpretation of inscape as the outer form of an object is also seen in some of Hopkins' passages. By the use of the term, "outer form," Schoder is referring to the accidental form of the object, the random shape which objects take. It differs from the first meaning, intrinsic form, in that the inner nature of the object is not involved. Attention is to be directed toward the accidental, or random shape or design of things. Through accident, harmonious and pleasing design can

¹Schoder, "Glossary," p. 218.

²Letters III, pp. 158-159.

be, and frequently is, achieved in nature. Nature, when undisturbed takes on a pattern or design. It is in this sense that Hopkins uses the word, "inscape," when he writes the following:

All the world is full of inscape and chance left free to
act falls into an order as well as purpose: looking out
of my window I caught it in the random clods and broken
heaps of snow made by the cast of a broom. The same
of the path trenched by footsteps in ankledeep snow
across the fields leading to Hodder wood through which
we went to see the river.¹

The fourth meaning of inscape is defined by Schoder as a subjectively imposed Gestalt. This refers to the pattern or design which close observation can sometimes reveal in a group of otherwise unrelated lines. Hopkins sees this kind of inscape in the scene which he describes as follows:

Another night from the gallery window I saw a
brindled heaven, the moon just marked by a blue spot
pushing its way through the darker cloud, underneath
and on the skirts of the rack bold long flakes whitened
and swaled like feathers, below/the garden with the
heads of trees and shrubs furry grey: I read a broad
careless inscape flowing throughout.²

To this four-fold definition of inscape must be added another interpretation as defined by Peters. It is with Peters that most writers seem to agree. He defines inscape as follows:

. . . 'inscape' is the unified complex of those sensible
qualities of the object of perception that strike us as

¹Note-books, pp. 173-174.

²Ibid., p. 158.

inseparably belonging to and most typical of it, so that through the knowledge of this unified complex of sense-data we may gain an insight into the individual essence of the object.¹

This definition is not in disagreement with Schoder's. Schoder also interprets inscape to include that element which gives an object its "distinctive individual" quality. Peters and Schoder also agree in their methods of arriving at a definition. Like Schoder, Peters begins with a definition of "scape" as a unifying principle. As it is used in "landscape" it refers to the principle which allows one to look at a part of a countryside as a whole. One recognizes that the part which is viewed possesses qualities which are typical of the undivided whole and thus can view the part as a unit. With this interpretation of the suffix, "-scape," Peters then sees inscape as the "outward reflection of the inner nature of a thing . . ."²

The interpretation of inscape in this manner can be justified by a single quotation from Hopkins. When referring to the "essential and only lasting thing" in poetry, he calls it "inscape, that is species or individual-distinctive beauty of style. . ."³

Although Peters' very detailed and thorough explanation is in basic agreement with the four meanings described by Schoder, his

¹W.A.M. Peters, S.J. Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Critical Essay towards the Understanding of his Poetry (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 2.

³Letters III, p. 225.

interpretation of the term may be considered to be another separate meaning which, when added to Schoder's divisions, constitutes a fifth meaning of the word. Its distinctiveness lies in the emphasis placed upon the individuating quality of inscape, that force which makes an object unique, distinctive, and individual.

These five basic interpretations of the word represent a sort of summary of definitions, for the majority of writers seem to agree in principle with one or more of them.

Ruggles recognizes the fact that Hopkins uses the word with some variation. She points out that he sometimes uses it to mean simply the external design of things. However, she also sees its use as an internal force. Ruggles is more explicit in defining this internal characteristic to which other writers only allude. She says, "Occasionally he uses 'inscape' to refer directly to the principle of God in the object, of the Creator in His Creation."¹ The most common usage of the word, according to Ruggles, refers not to that principle, however, but to the action of that principle. That is to say, ". . . the utterance by the object of a selfhood which it has from and in God, and which is its spiritual motive for life."²

That Hopkins clearly saw the presence of God in natural objects is evident in this quotation:

¹Ruggles, p. 139.

²Ibid.

I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our Lord by it. It [s inscape]¹ is [mixed of] strength and grace, like an ash [tree].¹

He also sees God in the beauty of the stars:

As we drove home the stars came out thick: I leant back to look at them and my heart opening more than usual praised our Lord to and in whom all that beauty comes home.²

On another occasion Hopkins witnessed a display of the Northern Lights. He describes the color and formation and concludes with this observation:

This busy working of nature wholly independent of the earth and seeming to be on in a strain of time not reckoned by our reckoning of days and years but simpler and as if correcting the preoccupation of the world by being pre-occupied with and appealing to and dated to the day of judgment was like a new witness to God and filled me with delightful fear.³

Gardner also adheres to the belief that inscape can be defined in Hopkins' words, "individually-distinctive beauty." He also explains the necessity which Hopkins felt for coining the term:

Those descriptions of landscape and cloudscape jotted down during a tour of Switzerland in 1868, just before he joined the Jesuits, proclaim a lusty, almost hedonistic sensibility. The observation is direct, the expression spontaneous and individual . . . he glances from heaven to earth, noting the varied forms and changing moods of

¹Note-books, pp. 133-134. The brackets are Hopkins'.

²Ibid., p. 205.

³Ibid., p. 135.

nature and recording every significant detail . . . In the vagaries of shape and colour presented by hills, clouds, glaciers and trees he discerns a recondite pattern . . . for which he coins the name "inscape" . . .¹

Grigson accepts Peters' definition of inscape as most satisfactory.

He views it as more than merely design or pattern, it includes also "the distinctiveness of objects."² Phare describes the term as "the pattern which makes every fragment of creation . . . individual and unique."³

Hartman defines inscape as "the poet's technical term describing the individual form of resilience as the quality or effect of a particular thing."⁴

As the quotations above indicate, most writers seem to agree that inscape refers to an "individual-distinctive beauty." However, there are those authorities who focus attention elsewhere. Both Warren and Reeves seem to emphasize what Schoder calls the outer form or the natural design in objects. Warren defines inscape as follows:

Suggested presumably by "landscape": an "inscape" is any kind of formed or focussed (sic) view, any pattern discerned in the natural world.⁵

¹W. H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889): A Study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy in Relation to Poetic Tradition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), Vol. I, p. 11. Hereafter referred to as Gardner, Vol. I.

²Geoffrey Grigson, Gerard Manley Hopkins (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1955), p. 22.

³Elsie Elizabeth Phare, The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), p. 81.

⁴Geoffrey H. Hartman, The Unmediated Vision (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 56.

⁵Austin Warren, "Instress of Inscape," Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. The Kenyon Critics (Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions Books, 1945), pp. 76-77.

He goes on to point out the varied meanings which Hopkins apparently attaches to the word, noting that because it is so central a word to Hopkins that it includes a range of meanings from "sense-perceived pattern to inner form."¹

Reeves conceives inscape to mean merely the natural pattern of things. He offers this definition:

By 'inscape' Hopkins meant simply the outer form of all things, animate and inanimate, as it expressed their inner soul. He did not simply see things, he saw into them, and penetrated into their inmost character or being. To express his discoveries he used the utmost resources of language and imagery.²

Heuser recognizes the common definitions of inscape as described above, but he feels that they are inadequate. He feels that they are useful but are not specific enough to give a full understanding. He points to a passage from the Note-books in which Hopkins observes "how fast the inscape holds a thing,"³ and from this derives the idea that inscape "upholds the unity of being in fixed position, in fixed shape."⁴ Heuser refers to the Latin scapus and Greek skapos as the derivation of the word, "scape." These words mean the 'shaft of a column/tongue of a balance/

¹Ibid., p. 77.

²James Reeves, Selected Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1959), p. xxii.

³Note-books, p. 98.

⁴Alan Heuser, The Shaping Vision of Gerard Manley Hopkins (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 24-25.

flower-stalk, stem.¹ With this definition in mind, Heuser finds what he believes to be the accurate meaning of inscape. He points out that in his drawing, Hopkins became acutely aware of the positions of parts in the whole. Then he offers this explanation:

Again, he sketched not one individual form, but the type. This type was fixed or fastened by a string of being, shaft, tongue, stalk, stem; when discovered, the stem-shape gave the key which united and 'locked in' the existential wholeness of a form. It appears, then, that inscape as organic form or naturalistic ideal was a fixed type in the scale of flux, a created structure 'ideal' in living oneness and 'real' in concrete wholeness, held fast to a focus or guiding curve, 'the meet of lines' or the strings of being. The natural form was linked to its essential idea through the fixed type, inscape.¹

In this way Heuser arrives at the belief that inscape refers to the force which holds together the distinctive elements in an object. The object is related to and recognized as belonging to a specific species or group because of the individual unique features which the object possesses. The thing that holds those features together, which makes the object an identifiable species, is inscape. It seems that Heuser is emphasizing not the individual-distinctiveness of the object, as other writers have done, but rather the similar, indistinct features which the object has in common with others of its species. While most interpretations seem to emphasize the distinguishing features of the object, Heuser appears to be giving emphasis to the unifying features of the object. This quality is

¹Ibid., p. 26.

usually thought, by most writers, to be one aspect of instress rather than inscape. The "unifying quality" will be treated later and more fully in the discussion of instress.

The difference in Heuser's interpretation is not so foreign to the other definitions as it might seem. While he sees inscape from a different point of view, he nevertheless recognizes the force as being supernatural, divine in origin. He appears to agree with Ruggles' statement that inscape is the presence of God in nature. He makes this observation concerning the "laws of inscape:"

They not only guided all nature, but also pointed to the steering Idea or Word of one Being and were, therefore, witness to the Providence of God. Increasingly Hopkins was drawn to acknowledge shapes of natural force as vessels of God's finger --- the Holy Ghost sustaining the universe.¹

Regardless of the definition which one attempts to apply to the term "inscape," and in spite of the divergent points of view expressed by various writers, it must be agreed that the term was used by Hopkins to describe some sort of design in things. He always uses the term to describe a kind of beauty which is distinctive and which is characterized by a pattern or form. It is also apparent from the various uses of the word, that he meant more than just the outward, physical form or shape of an object of beauty. Many of his passages clearly indicate that the term must also include a consideration of the inner form, the "soul" of

¹Ibid., p. 36.

the object. Pick aptly summarizes the opinion of most authorities regarding the meaning of inscape with this paragraph:

While the term . . . was used with some flexibility, the variations in its application are largely a matter of emphasis: sometimes he stresses "inscape" as configuration, design, shape, pattern, and contour --- the "outer form" of a thing; sometimes he stresses "inscape" as the ontological secret behind a thing, as the "inner form." But usually he employs the word to indicate the essential individuality and particularity or "self-hood" of a thing working itself out and expressing itself in design and pattern. This he then calls beauty.¹

The second term, "instress," is so closely related to inscape that it can be understood only after one has attained a reasonably clear concept of inscape. Basically, instress can be considered to be the felt effect of inscape. If inscape refers to the individuality of an object, the inner force, the "soul" of the object; then instress may be regarded, in one sense of the word, as the effect of that energy upon the person who recognizes the inscape. It is inscape communicated to the beholder. Instress is "the sensation of inscape (or, indeed, of any vivid mental image)."² Phare offers the following explanation of the term:

"Instress," another of his coinages, describes the particular effect which a thing may have upon a particular person. He speaks, for example of feeling a "charm and instress of Wales" meaning both that he was conscious of the atmosphere of Wales as distinct from all others and that this atmosphere was charged with a special

¹Pick, Priest and Poet, p. 33.

²Gardner, Vol. I, p. 11.

significance for himself. Instress is used at times as though to describe inscape as it is apprehended by senses other than the eye.¹

The last sentence in the above quotation should not be interpreted to mean that instress cannot come through visual perception. Hopkins clearly indicates that one may perceive instress visually:

This is the time to study inscape in the spraying of trees, for swelling buds carry them to a pitch which the eye could not else gather . . . In these sprays at all events there is a new world of inscape.²

But the eye is not the only sense organ through which instress is perceived. One may also hear it, as is indicated when Hopkins says, ". . . with a companion the eye and the ear are for the most part shut and instress cannot come."³

Instress may, in fact, be apprehended through all sensory perceptors. Gardner emphasizes this fact as follows:

. . . it [instress] connotes . . . that impulse from the 'inscape' which acts on the senses and, through them, actualizes the inscape in the mind of the beholder (or rather 'perceiver,') for inscape may be perceived through all the senses at once.⁴

But instress includes more than just the communication of inscape to a person. In his notebook, Hopkins indicates that "all

¹Phare, p. 82.

²Note-books, p. 141.

³Ibid., p. 171.

⁴W.H. Gardner (ed.), Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins (London: Penquin Books, 1960), p. xxi.

things are upheld by instress and are meaningless without it."¹ The use of the word in this sense has caused many interpreters of the term to define it as a sort of unifying, binding force which upholds the inscape of the object. It is to the passage from Hopkins just quoted that Ruggles refers when she defines instress:

Instress Hopkins never decisively defines. The cohesive energy of being (as distinguished from nothing and not-being) by which "all things are upheld," the felt effect of inscape, self or personality on the beholder --- these are approximations of its meaning.²

Gardner also agrees with the interpretation of instress as a unifying force. He expresses the idea in this manner:

. . . for that energy of being by which all things are upheld, for that natural (but ultimately supernatural) stress which determines an inscape and keeps it in being --- for that he coined the name instress.³

In another writing, the same author describes instress as "a supernatural force which binds in, bounds, the finite One. It is in effect, for Hopkins, the hand of God upon His creation . . ."⁴

Downes agrees that instress implies both the effect of inscape upon the beholder as well as the unifying force which upholds the inscape in the object. He believes, however, that the latter concept is the more

¹Note-books, p. 98.

²Ruggles, p. 138.

³Gardner, Poems and Prose, p. xx.

⁴Gardner, Vol. I, p. 11.

important and should be the focus of one's attention:

[instress is] . . . the unifying force of being within the fixed type, which is the communicative force between object and subject as well as the emotive response within the subject. The emphasis should be placed on unity of being.¹

Downes points out that Hopkins uses the term, instress as a substitute for the Scholastic term actus. "It is a principle of being which keeps a thing in existence."² The word is frequently used as a verb and means to bring into being or to "actualize," as is illustrated by this quotation: "And as mere possibility, passive power, is not power proper and has no activity it cannot of itself come to stress, cannot instress itself."³ Actus is the Scholastic rendering of the Greek word, ἐνέχεια and Hopkins identifies the Greek term with the word "stress."⁴ Peters suggests that Hopkins preferred the word "stress" to "act" because the former has a "greater expressiveness" and well marks "the force which keeps a thing in existence and its strain after continued existence."⁵ The prefix, "in-" attached to the term, "stress," serves to emphasize the intrinsic quality of the force within the object. Peters also points out

¹David A. Downes, Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of His Ignatian Spirit (New York: Bookman Associates, 1959), p. 27.

²Ibid., p. 28.

³Note-books, p. 310.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Peters, p. 13.

that the word, "realized," is sometimes the exact sense of the term, "instress," depending upon the manner in which it is used.¹

The relationship between inscape and instress is nowhere more clearly explained than by Peters. Because this explanation serves so well to show the relationship, it is quoted here in full:

Placing 'instress' by the side of 'inscape' we note that the instress will strike the poet as the force that holds the inscape together; it is for him the power that ever actualizes the inscape. Further, we observe that in the act of perception the inscape is known first and in this grasp of the inscape is felt the stress of being behind it, is felt its instress. I speak of 'feeling the instress' and I do so with good reason. Inscape, being a sensitive manifestation of a being's individuality, is perceived by the senses; but instress, though given in the perception of inscape, is not directly perceived by the senses, because it is not a primary sensible quality of the thing. Hence it follows that, while inscape can be described, however imperfectly, in terms of sense-impressions, instress cannot, but must be interpreted in terms of its impression on the soul, in terms, that is, of affects of the soul. We can now understand why and how it is that 'instress' in Hopkins' writings stands for two distinct and separate things, related to each other as cause and effect; as a cause 'instress' refers for Hopkins to that core of being or inherent energy which is the actuality of the object; as effect 'instress' stands for the specifically individual impression the object makes on man.²

One other interesting aspect of instress is observed by Gardner who detects a sort of mystical quality in the concept. He refers to it as ". . . a quasi-mystical illumination, a sudden perception of that deeper

¹Ibid., p. 14.

²Ibid., pp. 14-15.

pattern, order and unity which gives meaning to external forms . . ."¹

Gardner develops this idea a bit more fully in another writing. He sees in some of Hopkins' references to instress the necessity of concentration and solitude. This is particularly evident in the following quotation from Hopkins:

I saw the inscape . . . freshly, as if my eye were still growing, though with a companion the eye and the ear are for the most part shut and instress cannot come.²

From this quotation Gardner justifiably draws the conclusion that deep concentration and absolute solitude must precede the perception of instress. It is as though instress comes through some supersensuous channel as a sudden, mystical illumination. It is "as though the individual beholder becomes mystically one with the whole."³

By way of summary it might be again pointed out that Hopkins nowhere defines either inscape or instress. His extensive use of both terms, however, bears witness to their importance for him. An understanding of the two concepts can be gained only by observing the various contexts in which the words are used.

Through such a study one discovers that both terms have varied meanings depending upon the manner in which they are employed. Inscape is related to pattern, shape, form, contour, or line. In some

¹Gardner, Poems and Prose, p. xxi.

²Note-books, p. 171.

³Gardner, Vol. I, p. 12.

instances it refers to the outer accidental form of an object. More often it seems to refer to the intrinsic form of the object or the inner beauty of that object. In some rare cases it implies a pattern formed by otherwise unrelated lines --- a sort of Gestalt which may be discerned by close observation.

Most authorities seem to agree that the most common use of the word indicates its reference to a combination of qualities which are inherent in an object --- qualities which are recognized as belonging exclusively to that object. These features give the object its "individual-distinctive beauty." Inscape is, in fact, the quality which individuates all things. It is the "soul" of the object, whether that object be animate or inanimate.

Instress may be regarded as the result or effect of inscape. Inscape is the inner force or soul of an object; instress is the sensation made upon the person who recognizes the inscape. Instress may be experienced through any sensory channel. It may be seen, it may be heard, it may be felt. But instress is more than the communication of inscape to the beholder. It is usually regarded as also referring to the unifying, binding force which upholds the inscape in the object. It may be thought of as related to "act" or "actualizing," "energizing," "inner stress," or "realization." It also appears that instress possesses some mystical qualities. It is communicated only to the beholder who is in solitude and who is engaged in deep concentration. It comes through

some supernatural, supersensory pathway.

It is essential that one acquire a basic understanding of these two related terms if he is to fully appreciate Hopkins' poetry. Hopkins' entire poetic theory is based upon inscape. As Downes states it, "Poetry, then, expresses essences in concrete form. Poetic inscape bears the image of the special types of things as well as the creative form of the poet . . ."¹ When Hopkins gives the reader, through his poetry, a statement of the inscape in an object, he provides not only a unique insight into that object, but he also provides an inscape of his own poetic art.

The inscape in a Hopkins poem should not be overlooked. The reader must always keep in mind the poet's own statement as to the importance of the concept:

But as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern or what I am in the habit of calling 'inscape' is what I above all aim at in poetry.²

¹Downes, p. 30.

²Letters I, p. 66.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONCEPT OF SPRUNG RHYTHM

Hopkins' most significant contribution to English verse is the unique metrical system which he discovered, revised, refined and called "Sprung Rhythm." It is this contribution to English prosody for which he is now most famous. The rhythm itself was not new. Indeed, Hopkins frequently points to examples of its use throughout the long history of English verse which preceded him, as well as to examples in classical poetry. This system of manipulating stressed and slack syllables in a line of poetry in order to achieve specific effects was not Hopkins' innovation, although it had not been employed in English verse since the time of the early Elizabethans. Hopkins cites Robert Greene (1558-1592) as the last user of such a rhythm.¹ Although it is not original with Hopkins, it has been so closely associated with his name that he is frequently credited with having invented it. He explains that he did not invent sprung rhythms but rather Sprung Rhythm.² By this is meant that the term which

¹Gerard Manley Hopkins, Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. Robert Bridges (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 6.

²Letters I, p. 45.

he applied to the newly discovered metrical pattern was original. The term was chosen by Hopkins because it connotes the effect of the rhythm. Placing a series of stresses in juxtaposition to each other with no slack syllables intervening produced, for him, the effect of being abrupt or sprung.

The beginning of sprung rhythm is clearly marked by Hopkins in a letter to Dixon. He tells Dixon of his return to poetry writing and says, "I have long had haunting my ear the echo of a new rhythm which now I realised on paper."¹

As has previously been pointed out, Hopkins abstained from poetry writing after his entrance into the Society of Jesus. It was not until 1875, when he wrote The Wreck of The Deutschland, that he resumed writing. This work marks his first effort to employ the "haunting new rhythm," and it is to this poem that Hopkins refers in the above mentioned letter. He goes on to briefly define sprung rhythm for Dixon:

To speak shortly, it 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.²

The best source for an explanation of sprung rhythm, however, is to be found in the "Author's Preface" which was included in the collection

¹ Letters II, p. 14.

² Ibid.

of Hopkins' poems edited by Robert Bridges. This short prose work was written some eight years after Hopkins' experimentation with the new rhythm was begun.¹ It was written in explanation of the verses which followed The Wreck of The Deutschland, and therefore, does not apply to his earlier work.

Hopkins approaches his explanation of sprung rhythm by making certain observations concerning English prosody in general. Ordinary verse rhythm in English, commonly called Running Rhythm, consists of a series of two or three syllables measured in feet. Each foot has one syllable which receives the principal accent. The accented syllable is called the stress; the unaccented syllables are called slack. If the stress comes on the first of two or three syllables, it is called a falling foot. A series of such feet produces falling rhythm. If the stress is on the last syllable of a series, a rising foot results, and the rhythm produced is called rising rhythm. If the stress comes between two accented syllables, rocking feet and rocking rhythm result. Following these basic tenets of prosody, it is possible to produce several different kinds of feet, depending upon the location of the stress, and the number of syllables in the foot.

¹The "Author's Preface" was written for a manuscript book of poems which Bridges had assembled. In a note (Poems, p. 100), Bridges indicates that it "must have been written in '83 or not much later."

Hopkins approached the task, however, in a somewhat simpler fashion. Taking his cue from music, in which the primary stress of a measure falls on the first beat, he scanned a poetic line by always regarding the stress as the first syllable of the foot. Following this method of scansion, there are only two basic feet which can result, the trochee and the dactyl. There are also only three possible resulting rhythms: trochaic, dactylic or a mixture of the two which Hopkins called logaoedic, after Greek verse.

The simplified approach to standard Running Rhythm lays the basis for Hopkins' metrical innovations. He follows this basic approach through to what he considers its inevitable and logical conclusion and the result is sprung rhythm.

Assuming that English verse can be reduced to the three basic metres --- trochaic, dactylic, and logaoedic,¹ Hopkins observes that strict adherence to these patterns would produce poetry which is "same and tame."² Consequently poets have introduced deviations from the rules and have taken licenses for the sake of achieving some variety. The primary license is the introduction of Reversed Feet. Reversed feet is defined by Hopkins as, "putting the stress where, to judge by the rest of the measure, the slack should be and the slack where the stress . . ."³

¹Verse in which dactyls and trochees, or anapests and iambs are combined in the same metrical series. The term is frequently applied to mixed metres generally.

²Poems, p. 2.

³Ibid.

He points out that this is done freely at the beginning of a line and elsewhere in the line after a pause, but almost never on the second or last foot of the line. This practice is so common, he says, that poets have done it from Chaucer on down and it is so characteristic of verse that it passes unnoticed and is not regarded as a formal change in the rhythm. The reversed foot becomes important to Hopkins, however, when it is repeated in two consecutive feet. When this is done it results in the "mounting" of a new rhythm upon the old. If a specific rhythmic pattern has been established, and two consecutive reversed feet are introduced, one hears the new rhythm, but "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."¹ For Hopkins this produces the same effect in verse which is achieved in polyphonic music. Two strains of rhythm running simultaneously produce what he calls Counterpointed Rhythm.² He exemplifies this principle with a line from Paradise Regained³ in which the first two feet are reversed:

Bút to vánquish by Wísdóm héllish wíles.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 3.

²Ibid.

³Milton, Paradise Regained, IV, p. 639.

⁴Letters II, p. 15.

The most successful user of counterpointed rhythm, Hopkins believes, is Milton. Hopkins points especially to the choruses of Samson Agonistes which are written throughout in counter pointed rhythm.

Hopkins was greatly influenced by Milton whose poetry he admired above all others. Not the least of Milton's influences upon Hopkins was the discovery of counterpoint in Samson Agonistes. Milton's influence will be discussed more fully in Chapter V. It is mentioned at this point only because Hopkins' close study of Milton's metrical devices is one of the steps in his progression of thought which eventually led him to sprung rhythm.

The only disadvantage which Hopkins finds in Milton's counterpoint is the fact that Milton does not always clearly establish the standard rhythm before introducing the counterpoint. This is what leads some readers to regard the choruses as simply irregular in structure. If one counterpoints throughout a poem, Hopkins continues, then only one rhythm is heard. The second is either destroyed or is never allowed to come into existence. The result is one rhythm only and it is usually sprung.

Sprung rhythm is scanned by considering the stressed syllable to be the first syllable of the foot. It may have from one to four syllables in the foot. This results in four possible kinds of feet --- monosyllabic, if there is only one syllable in the foot; accentual trochee, if there are two syllables; dactyl, if there are three syllables; and the first Paeon if there are four syllables in the foot. These four kinds of feet may be

alternated within a line of verse at will. They may be mixed in such a manner that any one kind may follow any other. In this manner several stresses may occur one immediately following the other, or they may be separated by one, two, or three slack syllables.

One characteristic of sprung rhythm to which Hopkins calls attention is the tendency for the lines to be "rove over."¹ By this is meant that the beginning of a line follows immediately the pattern with which the previous line ended. If a line has one or more syllables at its end, the next must have so many less at its beginning. The concept is more fully explained by Hopkins in a letter to Bridges. He points out that ". . . because we carry mentally a frame of fours,"² one can comfortably add one or two extra syllables to a three foot line, making four feet, but no more. If more syllables are added, the rhythm is spoiled. He exemplifies the idea with an excerpt from his own poetry as follows:

. . . in my lyrics in sprung rhythm I am strict in over-
reaving the lines when the measure has four feet, so that
if one line has a heavy ending the next must have a sprung
head (or begin with a falling cadence) as ---

Márgaré't, áre you gríeving

Óver Góldengróve

[and not e.g. Concérning Góldengróve] unléaving? ---

¹Poems, p. 4.

²Letters I, p. 120.

when it has only three I take no notice of it, for the heavy ending or falling cadence of one line does not interfere with the rising cadence of the next. . .¹

Because the roving over of lines tends to link the lines together, scansion should run through the entire stanza without regard to line length.

In addition to lines which rove over, two other characteristics of sprung rhythm are noted. The first of these is the use of rests, as in music. Hopkins points out that there are scarcely any examples from his own poetry to illustrate the use of rests, "unless in the Echos, (sic) second line."² This poem opens with these lines:

How to keep---is there any any, is there none such,
nowhere known some, bow or brooch or braid or
braid or brace, lace, latch or catch or key to keep
Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, . . .
from vanishing away?³


It would seem that the "rest" to which Hopkins refers is indicated by the elipses. The sense of the line clearly demands a pause at this point, but the elipses are used to indicate a longer lapse of time than might ordinarily be employed. Such an extended pause would constitute a rest, to which Hopkins refers. This interpretation of Hopkins' reference to the "Echoes" second line is shared also by Iyengar.⁴ However,

¹Ibid.

²Poems, p. 4.

³"The Leaden Echo and The Golden Echo," Poems, p. 54.

⁴Iyengar, p. 165.

Gardner indicates that the rest should occur on the word "lace." He points out that the musical symbol for a rest () was written in above this word by Hopkins in the manuscript which Bridges has labeled Manuscript "A."¹

The second license which Hopkins indicates is natural to sprung rhythm is the use of "outrides" or "hangers." These terms are used synonymously and are defined by Hopkins in the following manner:

. . . one, two, or three slack syllables added to a foot and not counting in the nominal scanning. They are so called because they seem to hang below the line or ride forward or backward from it in another dimension than the line itself . . .²

Elsewhere he explains that an outride "is and is not part of the metre; not part of it, not being counted, but part of it by producing a calculated effect . . ."³ Lahey explains hangers or outrides as "unaccented syllables added to a foot to give hesitancy or swiftness, or airiness, or heaviness . . ." and points to the following example in the second line of The Windhover:

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn-
Falcon, in his riding⁴

¹Gardner, Vol. II, p. 106 n. 3.

²Poems, pp. 4-5.

³Letters I, p. 45.

⁴Lahey, p. 94.

In a "Note on the nature and history of Sprung Rhythm,"¹ Hopkins explains that the rhythm "is the most natural of things." He points to four examples to illustrate this naturalness. First, he says, it is the rhythm of common speech, and if rhythm can be detected in written prose, it is sprung rhythm. Hopkins' desire to use the elements of common language in poetry seems to be the most important reason for employing sprung rhythm. His observation that sprung rhythm is the rhythm of common speech is a reiteration of an earlier statement to Bridges in which he explains why he uses sprung rhythm:

Why do I employ sprung rhythm at all? Because it is the nearest to the rhythm of prose, that is the native and natural rhythm of speech, the least forced, the most rhetorical and emphatic of all possible rhythms, combining, as it seems to me, opposite and, one wd. have thought, incompatible excellences, markedness of rhythm --- that is rhythm's self --- and naturalness of expression.²

In addition to its appearance in common speech, Hopkins points out that sprung rhythm frequently occurs in "all but the most monotonously regular music," in nursery rhymes and weather saws, and in verse which has been counterpointed.³

He explains that in nursery rhymes the rhythm may have once been running rhythm but the endings have been dropped, through language

¹Poems, p. 5.

²Letters I, p. 46.

³Poems, p. 5.

changes, thus placing stresses together. This results in sprung rhythm.

He cites several specific examples:

Díng, dóng, béll/ Pússy's ín the wéll.¹

and also,

Óne, twó, búckle my shóe.²

These examples are not given as rules governing the use of sprung rhythm, but rather to show that it exists in English. Besides finding examples of its acceptance in current usage, he also indicates that sprung rhythm existed in Greek and Latin lyric poetry and also in Old English verse as seen in Piers Ploughman. But in spite of these examples of its usage, Hopkins says that it had not been used, as a primary governing principle, by the English poets since the Elizabethan period.³ Its appearance occurs only for special effects and it was not previously identified as a special rhythmic device. Hopkins' contribution was in his recognition of the rhythm and identifying it as a device which could be successfully employed. It is this contribution which has caused many writers to credit Hopkins with the invention of the rhythm and which accounts for sprung rhythm being so closely identified with his name.

In addition to finding sprung rhythm in common speech and in

¹Letters II, p. 14.

²Ibid.

³Poems, pp. 5-6.

earlier English verse (particularly in Milton's work), Hopkins also recognized its existence in classical poetry. Gardner has made an exhaustive study of the influence of classical literature upon Hopkins' sprung rhythm.¹ He points out that Greek poetry was closely allied with music and since Greek poets were also musicians, nothing was more natural than for them to use musical techniques in their poetry.² Since Hopkins, too, was an amateur musician, and was also well acquainted with classical literature, it is not surprising that he should follow the same practice. Hopkins readily admits that his rhythms are like those of the Greek choruses. In a letter to Bridges, he compares his Echoes to Greek poetry:

. . . what it is like is the rhythm of Greek tragic choruses or of Pindar: which is pure sprung rhythm. And that has the same changes of cadence from point to point as this piece. If you want to try it, read one till you have settled on the true places of the stress, mark these, then read it aloud, and you will see. Without this these choruses are prose bewitched; with it they are sprung rhythm like that piece of mine.³

Although Greek poetry had some influence upon Hopkins' rhythmic innovations, Ong stresses the fact that this influence must not be over-emphasized. He says that Hopkins was not attempting to construct a

¹Gardner, Vol. II, Chapter II.

²Ibid., p. 101.

³Letters I, p. 157.

rhythm based upon Greek theory, but rather "the validity of his work is independent of speculation on Greek metric: Hopkins knew sprung rhythm because he heard it in English."¹ The same author, in fact, attaches little importance to attempting to trace the factors which influenced the development of sprung rhythm:

Whether Hopkins himself could have named all the really proximate sources, we simply do not know. This much is certain: the real sources of a rhythm which makes such a radical claim on a language as that of being the rhythm of the language's prose can hardly be narrowed to one or two authors or to nursery rhymes, though these may provide quite valid instances of the rhythm's appearance.²

The quotation by Ong seems to be, in fact, an important consideration which should be kept in mind when considering the development of sprung rhythm by Hopkins. That is to say, none of these factors should be regarded as influences in the sense that they caused Hopkins to devise his system of sprung rhythm, but rather they are merely instances of its use which Hopkins was able to recognize and describe. Their appearance had passed unnoticed as a governing principle in poetic rhythm until he identified them as such. In his "Author's Preface" Hopkins describes four specific areas where sprung rhythm occurs. These should not be

¹Walter J. Ong, S. J., "Hopkins' Sprung Rhythm and the Life of English Poetry," Immortal Diamond, ed. Norman Weyand, S. J. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1949), p. 104.

²Ibid., p. 100.

regarded as laws which govern the use of the rhythm, but merely as examples of its successful use. He is acting, not as a rule-maker, but simply as a reporter of actual practice. The examples of the use of sprung rhythm which he found, encouraged Hopkins to use it in his own poetry. The most important of these examples are: (1) its use in ordinary speech and rhythmic prose, (2) its use by Milton, whom Hopkins greatly admired, and (3) its use in classical poetry.

Hopkins' rhythmic innovations are a daring departure from the strict rules of versification which preceded him and which were adhered to during his lifetime. He is regarded by some writers to be in the vanguard of a revolt against the poetic restrictions of his time --- the movement which eventually produced, in the early years of the twentieth century, the disciples of free verse.¹ Hopkins' work was, indeed, influenced several modern poets and one of the most obvious instances of that influence is seen in the use of a more flexible rhythmic pattern such as Hopkins advocated with his system of sprung rhythm. In commenting on his contribution to a freer rhythm in English verse, Phare indicates that he opened the way to many innovations:

Hopkins, as far as can be judged, has done posterity a signal service: so far from setting up a Chinese Wall, he has broken down several barriers which no longer served any purpose: and the publication of his poetry

¹David Morris, The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins and T. S. Eliot in the Light of the Donne Tradition (Bern, Switzerland: Arnaud Druck, 1953), p. 42.

in 1918 has left English poetry in a condition which seems to have many new possibilities.¹

It should not be thought, however, that Hopkins advocated complete freedom of verse with no restrictions on its use. He was ever aware of the necessity for discipline in poetry as in every aspect of his life. A completely uninhibited system of verse writing would never have been compatible with the strict asceticism which was so much a part of him. He imposed upon himself very rigid regulations. It was not freedom but more flexibility which he wished to incorporate into his poetry. This point is stressed by Morris in the following manner:

He realized that the mere abandoning of the regular metre would result in the degeneration of poetry into rhythmical prose . . . it was not complete freedom that poetry required, but a more flexible metrical system possessing its own laws. Thus . . . arose Hopkins' technique of Sprung Rhythm.²

Morris goes on to point out that sprung rhythm provided the necessary flexibility, but it also kept the virtues of a "regular" metrical system in that it required a regular number of stresses and also required an equal time value of the metrical feet. The same point of view is expressed by Heuser when he says, "Sprung rhythm derived force and flow, not from haphazard accents, but from high stresses important to 'fetch out' the sense by emphasis."³ His strict adherence to discipline can also be

¹Phare, p. 7.

²Morris, p. 42.

³Heuser, p. 97.

noted when one considers that most of Hopkins' poetry is cast in a very strict poetic form. Deutsch explains, "That the majority of his poems are sonnets . . . is final evidence of the discipline that he accepted along with the freedom that sprung rhythm has to offer."¹ As one reads Hopkins' explanations of sprung rhythm the similarity to free verse becomes apparent. One may wonder about the difference between sprung rhythm and free verse. Deutsch provides a clear answer:

Free verse excepted, sprung rhythm is closer to music than is any other form of verse. In the hands of so conscientious a craftsman as Hopkins, it is more scrupulously timed than free verse. It often exhibits some of the characteristics of metrical verse, such as the predominance in a poem of some specific foot, and the use of an elaborate stanzaic form with a pattern of resonant rhymes. Unlike Whitman, whom the vers librists claimed as an "Ancestor" and whose free cadences Hopkins declared closely akin to his own, he worked consciously with or against the rules of conventional metrics.²

That Hopkins' poetry should take a unique, unorthodox form is not surprising when one recalls his concept of inscape. Inscape, it will be remembered, is that individuating quality which is found in all things and which gives an object its unique and special quality. For Hopkins, inscape is no less evident in poetry than in any other beautiful object. To him, every poem should possess, in every respect, an individual

¹Babette Deutsch, Poetry Handbook (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1960), p. 150.

²Ibid., pp. 149-150.

quality. Sprung rhythm provides one means whereby that quality could be seen in poetry. The relationship between inscape and sprung rhythm is admirably expressed by Peters:

It was not in the first place dissatisfaction with the rhythm of the poetry of his day that drove Hopkins to explore other possibilities: sprung rhythm is a natural result of his theory of inscape as the aim and end of poetry. For just as the ultimate choice of medium did not lie with the poet, so the proper rhythmical form was no question of choice. The medium was thrust upon the poet in the form of current living language; similarly the rhythm was dictated by living individuated speech.¹

Further amplification of the relationship of sprung rhythm to the concept of inscape is provided by Pick. Discussing sprung rhythm, he makes this observation:

That it is just another aspect of inscape becomes apparent when one realizes that if Hopkins holds that poetry must try to inscape reality, then the metrical system itself must be very flexible and capable of distinctive individuation. The rhythm and prosody of each poem will then be unique. This is exactly what Hopkins accomplished by sprung rhythm.²

In summary, it may be said that sprung rhythm is a system of scanning verse by giving attention only to the stressed syllables, permitting up to three slack syllables to intervene between the stresses, or

¹Peters, p. 71.

²John Pick, A Hopkins Reader (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. xx.

allowing stresses to follow one after the other with no intervening slack syllables. Hopkins heard sprung rhythm all around him, particularly in common speech, in Greek and Roman poetry, and in the earlier English verses --- especially in Milton. Having rediscovered the system, he successfully reintroduced it into English verse.

But it should be remembered that sprung rhythm is more than a system of counting metrical feet in a line of poetry. It is an integral part of Hopkins' poetic theories and a natural outgrowth of a philosophy based upon his concept of inscape.

Unlike most poets, he adhered strictly to the percepts which he believed to govern poetry. An understanding of sprung rhythm is important to an appreciation of Hopkins' poetry, for it is the fundamental precept upon which his poetic structure is based. The significance of understanding sprung rhythm is stressed by Whitehall: ". . . his verse conforms to a thesis --- a metrical thesis. Understand the thesis, and you grasp his poetic purpose; grasp his purpose, and you have the key to his poems."¹

While a basic knowledge of sprung rhythm is, therefore, important, it is perhaps also possible to read more into the system than is necessary, or was even intended. Unlike his concept of inscape, which went undefined, sprung rhythm is clearly and succinctly explained by Hopkins. Having

¹Harold Whitehall, "Sprung Rhythm," Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. The Kenyon Critics (Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions Books, 1945), p. 28.

read his explanations and arrived at a basic understanding of the concept, one should use it as a guide in analyzing his poetry for oral presentation; but, at the same time one should avoid giving so much attention to it as to obscure the other vital aspects of Hopkins' poetry. Hopkins' use of alliterations, assonances, word repetitions, internal rhymes, word compounds, and 'consonant chiming,' are so effective as to produce a body of poetry which is among the most original and vivid in the English language. The importance of these features should not be subordinated in an attempt to ferret out the stress pattern of his sprung rhythm. To do so is to attach too much importance to a single aspect of his poetry --- sprung rhythm. It is precisely this kind of over-emphasis which has prompted Ruggles to remark that the theory of sprung rhythm, "passed from critic to critic, has been too learnedly discussed. Hopkins himself puts forth this theory in simple terms."¹

¹ Ruggles, p. 162.

CHAPTER V

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POETIC THEORY

Before an explanation of the poetic theory of Hopkins is attempted, it is perhaps wise to first look at some of the primary influences which worked upon the poet in the formation of those theories. The influence of other writers whom he admired, as well as the events of his life were instrumental in shaping Hopkins' thoughts.

It should be recognized at the outset that much influence came from his study of classical literature. Hopkins was trained in the classics all of his life and it is not surprising that his basic ideas are founded upon a firm classical tradition. The classics had been read in his home and he was subjected to a close study of many of the Greek and Roman writers under the constant supervision of the tyrannical Dr. Dyne during his years at Highgate School. When he entered Oxford, his studies in classical literature continued under the tutorship of such scholars as Jowett, Pusey, Pater, Liddon and others. Bischoff points out that the academic climate at Oxford during Hopkins' years there placed a great deal of emphasis on a study of classical literature:

The Classicism of the 18th Century was past, it is true; but Classicism itself was in the 'sixties far from being a thing of the past. Aristotle's Poetics, Horace's Ars Poetica, and the example of Greek dramas were still cited as reliable authorities.¹

In addition to his direct contact with classical writers, Hopkins read, in his early years, extensively from Shelley, Keats, Tennyson and Arnold --- all of whom had maintained classical themes in their writings.

Among the individuals who bore an important influence upon Hopkins, were Duns Scotus, Milton, Wordsworth and Keats. The influence exerted by these individuals (along with other writers whose influence was somewhat less) upon the poetic theories of Hopkins is the subject of this chapter.

In 1872 Hopkins made a rather significant entry into his diary:

After the examinations we went for our holiday out to Douglas in the Isle of Man Aug. 3. At this time I had first begun to get hold of the copy of Scotus on the Sentences in the Baddely library and was flush with a new stroke of enthusiasm. It may come to nothing or it may be a mercy from God. But just then when I took in any inscape of the sky or sea I thought of Scotus²

The examinations to which he refers were those following his philosophical studies at St. Mary's Hall, the seminary adjoining Stonyhurst College. This was five years after his graduation from Oxford,

¹Dolph Anthony Bischoff, Gerard Manley Hopkins as Literary Critic (unpublished Doctoral dissertation: Yale University, 1952), p. 134.

²Note-books, p. 161.

but it marks his first encounter with the thirteenth century philosopher, teacher and theologian, John Duns Scotus. From this first encounter to the end of his life, Hopkins exhibits a keen interest in Duns Scotus and was greatly influenced by him. The influence was primarily one of religious philosophy, but that influence is frequently seen in the content of Hopkins' poetry.

It may be first seen strange that a Jesuit would be impressed by the writings of Duns Scotus. The Jesuit order follows the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas; Duns Scotus was a critic of Thomas, provoking a long controversy between Scotists and Thomists over their respective views on religious doctrine --- including the principle of individuation. This aspect of the controversy is succinctly explained by Pick in the following passage:

In general the Schoolmen conceived all created things as containing two principles, the principle of matter and the principle of form . . .

St. Thomas held that the form determines the species of a thing, while the matter determines its individuality within the species. For him the form determined the "whatness" of a being, while the matter determined the "thisness" . . .

Scotus, on the other hand . . . almost destroys the unity of the species in order to safeguard the particularity of the individual, for he places the principle of individuation within the form itself.¹

¹ Pick, Priest and Poet, p. 156.

Pick goes on to point out that this emphasis on the "sharp inner form" appealed to Hopkins. He had long since been extremely aware of the inner form, or "inscape" of everything in nature and was an ardent nature lover, an attitude which he may have felt was incompatible with his religious vocation. Scotus provided him evidence that his love of natural beauty was acceptable and thus gave him peace of mind. The reassurance he found in Scotus is discussed by Iyengar:

He had been feeling now and then, rath guiltily perhaps, that his sensuous awareness of Nature's hues and tonal connotations was a piece of foreign matter in his Jesuitical composition: but Scotus reassured him, and convinced him that he could revel in Nature and yet be strictly and wholly a Christian.¹

Hopkins' appreciation for Scotus never lessened, indeed it seemed to grow. There are frequent references to Scotus in his letters and notebooks and in at least two instances, there are direct references to Scotus in his poetry.² As his interest grew, there resulted an intriguing correspondence with Reverend Mandell Creighton concerning the birthplace of Scotus. Only the letters of Creighton survive,³ but they reveal not only Hopkins' ever-inquiring nature, but his growing interest in Duns Scotus and his desire to find all available information concerning him.

¹Iyengar, p. 82.

²In 1879 he wrote "Duns Scotus's Oxford," and in a letter to Bridges dated April 18, 1879 he explains that the 'One' referred to in line 103 of "The Loss of the Eurydice" is Scotus.

³Letters III, pp. 271-276.

Hopkins' careful study of Duns Scotus and ready acceptance of the Subtle Doctor's philosophy, along with the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius helped to "deepen his appreciation of nature as the channel of divine communication, and to sharpen his interest in the particular, individualized aspects of nature through which that communication is realized."¹

While the influence of Scotus was primarily one of religious philosophy, it is important to a study of his poetry because it was through Scotus that Hopkins found the peace of mind which allowed him to write his highly sensuous poetry without a feeling of guilt. Hopkins had been searching for a means of reconciling his religious discipline with his sensitive aesthetic appreciation. Scotus provided the much needed philosophical justification for writing. In this way Scotus was influential in Hopkins' poetry.

The influence of Wordsworth on Hopkins is interesting to observe. Hopkins finds much fault in the poetry of Wordsworth, but he seems to gain a progressively greater appreciation of his work with the passage of time. Several references to Wordsworth in his various letters reveal this changing opinion.

In 1867, shortly after his graduation from Oxford and while he was a lecturer at The Oratory, he wrote to Baillie that he was reading

¹Maurice B. McNamee, "Hopkins: Poet of Nature and of the Supernatural," Immortal Diamond: Studies in Gerard Manley Hopkins, Norman, Weyand, ed. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1949), p. 226.

Wordsworth's long poem, The Excursion and found that "Its faults are immense."¹

Ten years later his attitude toward Wordsworth seems to have altered little. In a letter to Bridges in which he offers criticism of some of Bridges' sonnets, he notes that they are unlike Wordsworth's and he thinks this is good. He finds Wordsworth's sonnets to have "an odious goodness and neckcloth about them which half throttles their beauty."²

In a letter to Dixon, written in October, 1881, Hopkins remarks that most of Wordsworth's sonnets have "a certain stiffness."³ Two months later he discusses the Lake poets with Dixon and observes that they were not masters of style. While they were faithful to nature, he says, they were not rich observers of nature. He exemplifies this idea by pointing to Wordsworth. ". . . when Wordsworth wants to describe a city or a cloudscape which reminds him of a city it is some ordinary rhetorical stage-effect of domes, palaces, and temples."⁴ By this time, however, he is recognizing merit in Wordsworth's writing and refers to him as a great sonneteer and calls his sonnets beautiful.

By 1886, nineteen years after leaving Oxford and just three years

¹Letters III, p. 82.

²Letters I, p. 38.

³Letters II, p. 72.

⁴Ibid., p. 99.

before his death, Hopkins' appreciation for the work of Wordsworth has increased considerably. Several letters were exchanged between Hopkins and Canon Dixon in which they discuss the merits of Wordsworth. Hopkins' letters show a decided reversal in his attitude toward Wordsworth. In one of these letters, written August 7, Hopkins again finds fault with Wordsworth's The Excursion, but he says that "Wordsworth's particular grace, his charisma, as theologians say, has been granted in equal measure to so very few men since times was --- to Plato and who else?"¹ In the same letter he expresses his belief that Wordsworth had a "divine philosophy and a lovely gift of verse."²

A few weeks later Dixon objects to the critics' habit of referring to Wordsworth's Intimations of Immortality as the "Great Ode." He thinks it is not particularly good, much less great.³ Hopkins promptly replies with a remarkably favorable defense of Wordsworth. He thinks it would be no exaggeration to consider this work one of the half dozen finest odes of the world. He then lavishes praise on Wordsworth and indicates that he considers him to have been divinely inspired:

There have been in all history a few, a very few men, whom common repute, even where it did not trust them, has treated as having had something happen to them that does not happen to other men, as having seen something,

¹Letters II, p. 141.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 145.

whatever that really was. Plato is the most famous of these. Or to put it as it seems to me I must somewhere have written to you or to somebody, human nature in these men saw something, got a shock; wavers in opinion, looking back, whether there was anything in it or no; but is in a tremble ever since. Now what Wordsworthians mean is, what would seem to be the growing mind of the English speaking world and may perhaps come to be that of the world at large/is that in Wordsworth when he wrote the ode human nature got another of those shocks, and the tremble from it is spreading. This opinion I do strongly share; I am, ever since I knew the ode, in that tremble.¹

The primary attraction of Wordsworth for Hopkins is best summarized by one of Hopkins' own phrases. He describes Wordsworth as having "a spiritual insight into nature."² An adoration of nature is the common ground on which Hopkins could meet Wordsworth. For both of them, there was a mystical power in nature and they were both awed by the sight of natural beauty. Bischoff says Wordsworth "saw nature as something alive and expressive of beauties outside and beyond itself."³ This quality of nature is very closely allied to Hopkins' concept of inscape and represents a point of view which Hopkins could easily accept and admire.

Throughout his letters, Hopkins makes only scattered references to Milton. But from these statements, it is not difficult to see that he regards Milton's poetry as one of the finest examples in the English

¹Ibid., pp. 147-148.

²Ibid., p. 141.

³Bischoff, p. 209.

language. It is also clear that Hopkins had carefully studied Milton, particularly the rhythmic structure employed by him. In a letter to Dixon, written in 1878, he says "I have paid a good deal of attention to Milton's versification and collected his later rhythms."¹ In the same letter he also indicates that he has often thought of writing on Miltonic rhythms. He had told Bridges a year and a half earlier of his intentions to some day write on the rhythmic pattern in Milton's Samson Agonistes.² Apparently he never accomplished this proposed study, for no formal analysis of Milton exists in Hopkins' known writings. Nevertheless it is worthwhile to note that Hopkins' interest in Milton was so great that he felt the desire to write about him. And his study of Milton was detailed enough to qualify him to attempt such an analysis.

Hopkins' appreciation for the work of Milton was great. He thinks that Milton's verse seems "something necessary and eternal."³ His praise is without reservation for he tells Dixon that "Milton's art is incomparable, not only in English literature but, I shd. think, almost in any; equal, if not more than equal, to the finest of Greek or Roman."⁴ Milton's achievements, he believes, are "quite beyond any other English

¹Letters II, p. 14.

²Letters I, p. 38.

³Letters II, p. 13.

⁴Ibid.

poet's, perhaps any modern poet's."¹ The influence of Milton on Hopkins' poetry was direct. He indicates that in his Andromeda, he was consciously striving for a "more Miltonic plainness and severity" than in his other work.² But an even more direct influence came from Milton's rhythm. Partially through his close study of Milton's verse --- especially the choruses of Samson Agonistes --- Hopkins derived his concept of sprung rhythm, but it certainly was one of the major ones. Hopkins considered Milton to have been "ahead of his own time as well as all aftertimes in verse-structure"³ and the Agonistes to be his "own highwater mark,"⁴ since these verses, he felt, represent Milton's most advanced effects.

In a brief note to Bridges, Hopkins refers to Milton's "mastery of phrase,"⁵ and again, speaking to Dixon, he says, "Milton is the great master of sequence of phrase."⁶ Bischoff observes that this description is a most accurate appraisal of Milton's talent. He says:

. . . Hopkins, in the three words "sequence of phrase," deftly touches on one of Milton's surest achievements, the creation of lines that surge on and on, the lines and

¹Letters I, p. 38.

²Ibid., p. 87.

³Letters II, p. 13.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Letters I, p. 93.

⁶Letters II, p. 8.

phrases seeming to flow from each other naturally and inevitably.¹

This same characteristic feature could be applied equally well to the poetry of Hopkins. The single element in Hopkins' work which makes it most readily recognizable is the manner in which the lines seem to "surge on and on." His use of compound words and compressed phrasing produce the effect of building words upon words to the point it becomes almost overpowering, and yet it goes on.

Bischoff points out another important influence which the work of Milton had upon Hopkins. He attributes to Hopkins the discovery (through his critical analysis) that the choruses in Samson Agonistes are counterpointed.² This, in turn, led Hopkins to the development of his own contribution -- sprung rhythm. Any influence upon the development of this concept must be considered a major influence on Hopkins' work, since his primary contribution to English prosody is the successful use of sprung rhythm. Although his study of Milton cannot be considered the only source of sprung rhythm, certainly Hopkins' discovery of Milton's counterpoint suggested the idea.

The influence which Keats had upon Hopkins is most evident in Hopkins' early poetry. That is not to say, however, that Keat's influence was fleeting. Hopkins' appreciation for Keats lasted throughout his lifetime.

¹Bischoff, p. 183.

²Ibid., pp. 45-46.

His most lengthy defense of Keats is to be found in a letter written to Coventry Patmore only a year before Hopkins' death.¹

In his early years, Hopkins very often wrote poems in the manner of other significant poets whom he had read and liked. The work of Keats which, as a young boy, Hopkins greatly admired, was frequently imitated. His two school prize poems, The Escorial and A Vision of the Mermaids, bear the obvious mark of Keats' influence.

The attraction which Keats had for Hopkins is in Keats' "deep feeling . . . for concrete beauty, wild or natural beauty,"² a feeling enthusiastically shared by Hopkins.

Hopkins also is constantly impressed by the fact that Keats was able to produce such meritorious poetry at such a youthful age. He says, "Keats genius was so astonishing, unequalled at his age and scarcely surpassed at any, that one may surmise whether if he had lived he would not have rivalled Shakspeare."³ And in his lengthy defenses of Keats he bases much of his argument on the fact that Keats' primary faults are those of youth.

Hopkins readily admits that the sensuality of Keats' poetry is its fault, but he goes on to defend the poetry by referring to Shakespeare's

¹Letters III, pp. 237-241.

²Letters I, p. 132.

³Letters II, p. 78.

very early efforts. Hopkins feels that the poetry of Keats compares very favorably to Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis or Lucrece.¹

Although Hopkins finds a great deal of virtue in Keats' work, he does not hesitate to point out what he considers to be major faults. On two occasions he turns to Keats' Cap and Bells as a work so poorly done that he was unable to finish reading it, called it "senselessly planned"² and on another occasion, "a piece of nonsense."³

In spite of the fact that Hopkins finds fault in the over sensuous and immature qualities of Keats' work, his attitude toward Keats is generally favorable. He thinks that Keats "had found his way right in his Odes"⁴ and that if death had not stopped him he would have matured into a powerful writer. He defends Keats in the following manner:

. . . he lived in mythology and fairyland the life of a dreamer. Nevertheless I feel and see in him the beginnings of something opposite to this, of an interest in higher things and of powerful and active thought . . . Reason, thought, what he did not want to live by, would have asserted itself presently and perhaps have been as much more powerful than that of his contemporaries as his sensibility or impressionableness, by which he did want to live, was keener and richer than theirs.⁵

¹Letters III, p. 233.

²Ibid.

³Letters II, p. 78.

⁴Letters III, p. 234.

⁵Ibid.

Among the other poets about whom Hopkins comments, there are scattered remarks on Tennyson. His attitude toward Tennyson, however, is unpredictable. On one occasion he might be full of praise and again he is finding fault. Because he is unsure of his own evaluation of Tennyson, it is impossible to guess what direct influence the poet exerted on Hopkins' writing if, indeed, there was any significant influence.

There are also occasional comments on Browning, but one could not maintain that Browning in any way bore an influence. Hopkins' dislike for the poetry of Browning is obvious in any reference made to him. In criticizing his own poem, The Sea and The Skylark, Hopkins hands it his worst condemnation by comparing it to Browning. He says, ". . . it smells, I fear, of the lamp, of salad oil, and, what is nastier, in one line somewhat of Robert Browning."¹ Bischoff does not feel that Hopkins is entirely fair in his comments on Browning. It is his view that Hopkins had not read Browning widely and is, therefore, making premature judgments on the basis of a limited acquaintanceship with the poet.² If this be true, then Hopkins' limited knowledge, along with his obvious distaste for those works which he had read, are evidence that Hopkins was not influenced in his own writing by the poetry of Robert Browning.

In his discussion of the various influences which acted upon Hopkins,

¹Letters I, p. 164.

²Bischoff, p. 232.

Heywood sees the influence of three contemporary poets: Charles Doughty, William Barnes, and Walt Whitman.¹ In Charles Doughty's "wild shaggy verse in de-latinized archaic English,"² Heywood sees a superficial resemblance to Hopkins. But he goes on to discount Doughty as a major influence, however, when he points out that ". . . Doughty was an extreme romantic, vague, slipshod, fuddled with archaism --- almost beneath our notice."³

Barnes had an influence, Heywood believes, because two of his poems were set to music by Hopkins.⁴ Since Hopkins' admiration for these two works was sufficient to prompt him to write music for them, it may indicate that he was, to some extent, influenced by Barnes, but the evidence is inconclusive to support the claim that his was a major influence.

The third contemporary poet which Heywood feels influenced Hopkins is the most important. The opinion that Whitman was influential is based upon Hopkins' comments in a letter to Bridges dated October 18, 1882:

But first I may as well say what I should not otherwise have said, that I always knew in my heart Walt Whitman's

¹Terence Heywood, "Hopkins' Ancestry," Poetry, Vol. LIV (July, 1939), pp. 209-218.

²Ibid., pp. 212-213.

³Ibid., p. 213.

⁴Ibid.

mind to be more like my own than any other man's living. As he is a very great scoundrel this is not a pleasant confession. And this also makes me the more desirous to read him and the more determined that I will not.¹

In this same letter, Hopkins admits that he was impressed by Whitman's original manner and particularly his rhythm, and recognized the possibility that it might be sufficient to originate another style, or influence another writer.²

Although Hopkins recognizes these merits in Whitman's work, he goes on to point out that his own poetry is very different, and he denies any influence from Whitman. He sees that there is a resemblance between Whitman's poetry and his own, but points out that it is only superficial:

Of course I saw that there was to the eye something in my long lines like his, that the one would remind people of the other. And both are in irregular rhythms. There the likeness ends.³

Hopkins also recognizes that both he and Whitman have a preference for the alexandrine, but he hastens to add, "I came to it by degrees, I did not take it from him."⁴ Hopkins thinks that while it has merit, Whitman's poetry is only "rhythmic prose,"⁵ which he does not believe to be real

¹Letters I, p. 155.

²Ibid., p. 154.

³Ibid., p. 155.

⁴Ibid., p. 157.

⁵Ibid., p. 156.

poetry at all. The text of his long letter is a carefully constructed analysis of Whitman's work made in an effort to show how it differs from his own poetry and to deny any influence from it.

One other influence on Hopkins' poetry which cannot be ignored is his fascination with Welsh poetry. It will be remembered that from 1874 to 1877 Hopkins lived in Wales. While in that country he learned enough of the Welsh language to write simple verses in it. One particular trait of his work, the frequent repetition of consonant sounds, is directly attributable to his acquaintanceship with Welsh poetry.

In 1877 he wrote to Bridges that he had composed two sonnets¹ in which he employs a certain rhythmical experiment. He says of these two poems, "The chiming of consonants I got in part from the Welsh, which is very rich in sound and imagery."²

In another letter, written five years later, he reminds Bridges that The Sea and The Skylark "was written in my Welsh days, in my salad days, when I was fascinated with cynganedd or consonant-chime. . ."³

Heywood comments on Hopkins' use of this device from Welsh poetry in this manner:

¹Although none of the dates of Hopkins' poetry clearly indicates the two works to which he refers, Abbott says that they were probably God's Grandeur and The Starlight Night.

²Letters I, p. 38.

³Ibid., p. 163.

. . . he saw clearly that this correspondence of consonants, so typical of Welsh poetry, could be used to tauten and strengthen English verse to such a degree as to render it almost 'explosive,' whereas mere alliteration may have (and generally does have) a debilitating effect.¹

Heywood goes on to point out that Hopkins discovered still another useful device from Welsh poetry. By the use of compound words such as noun-noun, noun-adjective and adjective-adjective, he was able to meet "the demands of strict correspondence of consonants coupled with internal rhyme."² Hopkins, however, did not stop with these compound words, but "repeatedly used the epithet formed of the verb and the object --- 'lack-lustre,' 'dare-gale,' 'rollrock,' etc. --- a type extremely rare in our literature."³

Hopkins' familiarity with Welsh poetry undoubtedly accounts for the experimentation with similar devices in English. The idea, taken originally from Welsh, was expanded by Hopkins and, as his poetry will verify, he succeeded in introducing a fresh and exciting element into English verse.

In reviewing the influences on Hopkins' poetry, it can be said that the forces which affected him and which influenced the development of his basic theories of poetry are varied. His early training in classical

¹Heywood, p. 215.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

literature which continued through most of the years of his formal education gave him an appreciation of the classical writers as reliable sources. Another factor was the development of his fundamental religious philosophy necessary for his chosen vocation. That philosophy which he found most compatible with his two interests --- religion and poetry --- was founded upon the writings of John Duns Scotus and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. His basic religious beliefs were important to his poetry for they dictated the content of much of his work. The circumstances of his environment placed him in direct contact with Welsh poetry which he learned to appreciate and from which he drew ideas to be incorporated into his own writings. There were several other poets who had a direct influence upon Hopkins' writing. Chief among these was Milton. Keats, Wordsworth and Tennyson were also influential.

With an understanding of the primary influences which worked upon Hopkins providing the background, the next logical step should be to present an explanation of his ideas and beliefs concerning the art of poetry. Hopkins, at no time, sets down a complete and thorough statement of his idea. But it is possible, through his extant letters, lecture notes and journal entries to derive a relatively accurate idea of what he believed.

It should be pointed out that this task is somewhat simplified by the fact that he shows very little change. His thoughts concerning the poetic art are scattered throughout his note-books and letters beginning with his first years at Oxford and continuing the rest of his life. Bischoff

observes that one of his earliest statements concerning poetry --- that made in the letter to Baillie in 1864 --- "might have been made in his last years, as it agrees with his consistent emphasis on intellectual values."¹

Hopkins categorizes the language of all poetry into three major divisions, and adds to these, two other sub-divisions or intermediary divisions. One of his earliest written references to this carefully devised scheme is found in a diary entry of about August, 1864.² A large part of this entry, however, consists only of notes to himself and is not a fully developed plan. It stands as evidence, however, that he had been giving some thought to an organized statement of his own theory of poetry.

In September of that year he wrote a long letter to his friend, Baillie. In it he develops the ideas more fully. This letter provides the first clear statement of Hopkins' poetic theory. In the writings of his later years he employs the same terminology, and uses it in virtually the same manner as it is defined and explained in this early letter.³

According to Hopkins, all poetry falls into one of three divisions which he calls Poetry proper, Parnassian, and Delphic. There are also two other minor divisions which he labels Castalian and Olympian. He

¹Bischoff, p. 161.

²Note-books, pp. 29-30.

³Letters III, pp. 68-76.

does not explain the reason for adopting these classical names nor does he indicate the connotations intended by their use in this context. Parnassian refers to mount Parnassus, the towering peak of Greek mythology which remained uncovered in the flood that virtually destroyed mankind. This mountain was sacred to Apollo and the Muses and so has become a symbol of the arts, especially poetry. The term was not original with Hopkins for it had been previously applied to the mid-nineteenth Century Parnassian school of poetry in France. Leading members of this French school were Théophile Gautier, Théodore de Banville and Paul Verlaine. Theirs was a formal, objective kind of poetry and Hopkins arbitrarily uses the term to refer to any poetry of this description. Delphic refers to Delphi, the location of Apollo's oracle below Parnassus. Since Delphic poetry lies below Parnassian, perhaps this is the association intended by Hopkins. Castalian refers to Castalia, the sacred spring at Delphi; Olympian refers, of course, to mount Olympus. There is no indication as to the reason for the adoption of these names.

The highest form of poetry is Poetry proper. This is poetry written in the language of inspiration. Hopkins is quick to see that inspiration, as he uses the word, must be defined and he offers a detailed explanation. It is "a mood of great, abnormal in fact, mental acuteness."¹ This mental acuteness can be of two kinds: energetic or receptive. It is energetic if

¹Ibid., p. 69.

the thoughts are generated by stress and action of the brain; it is receptive if it strikes into the brain unasked. This mood may arise from various causes. It may be a matter of one's general health, or the state of the air around him, or even the length of time following a meal.

Apparently he is saying that circumstances must be conducive to alert thinking. If conditions are right, then the proper mood may arise producing the "mental acuteness" necessary for writing inspired poetry.

Poetry of this order can be written only in this mood and by poets themselves. The mood may last only for a minute, but it nevertheless produces the proper atmosphere for writing in the language of inspiration.

Every person has similar moods, but it is impossible for everyone to produce poetry, not being poets themselves. Inspiration, according to Hopkins, is the "gift of genius"¹ and it is capable of raising the poet above himself. That is to say, in moments of inspiration, he is able to write a language which he would not ordinarily be capable of producing.

If a piece of writing is truly inspired, every beauty will take the reader by surprise. It is impossible to predict the language by what one already knows about the writer, or has previously read by him. Because one is constantly taken by surprise, inspired writing never palls. Hopkins offers as the best example of inspired poetry, that by Shakespeare, who "is and must be utterly the greatest of poets."²

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 72.

When considering Hopkins' concept of inspiration, perhaps more than at any other place in his writing, one is able to most clearly see the result of the influences previously discussed.

The concept of inspiration is not new. Hopkins' explanation is reminiscent of the Platonic notion of a supernatural, god-given genius found in poets. Plato says that poets do not compose their works because of their wisdom but rather because of their genius and because they are inspired.¹ He also says that the poet, when he sits down to write, is not in his right mind,² and in a discussion of poets, refers to the madness of those possessed by the Muses.³ The most obvious feature of Plato's Ion is the discussion of the concept of inspiration. The Ion also represents Plato's most fully developed statement of this idea. In this work he indicates that the poet's intellect does not produce his poetry, but that the gods themselves are speaking through him.⁴

¹Plato, Apology, 22, trans. Harold North Fowler, Vol. I of The Loeb Classical Library (50 vols; Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1938), p. 85.

²Plato, Laws, IV, 719, trans. R.G. Bury, Vol. IX of The Loeb Classical Library (50 vols; London: William Heinemann, 1926), p. 305.

³Plato, Phaedrus, 245, trans. Harold North Fowler, Vol. I of The Loeb Classical Library (50 vols; Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1938), p. 469.

⁴Plato, Ion, trans. W.R.M. Lamb, Vol. III of The Loeb Classical Library (50 vols; Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1952).

In his Poetics, Aristotle also speaks of the inspiration of poets:

Hence it is that poetry demands a man with a special gift for it, or else one with a touch of madness in him; the former can easily assume the required mood, and the latter may be actually beside himself with emotion.¹

In another writing Aristotle gives further credence to the idea of inspiration when he says that "poetry is a thing inspired."²

Milton, one of the primary influences on Hopkins' work, also thought of poetry as "the inspired gift of God rarely bestowed. . ."³

The influence of these classical writers on Hopkins is clearly recognizable. The primary difference in the classical notion of inspiration as a god-given genius, Hopkins says that it arises from such prosaic things as the state of one's health, the length of time after a meal, or the state of the air around him. However, in his later thinking, Hopkins shifts his opinion in this respect and thinks of poetry as being divinely

¹Aristotle, Poetics, XVII, 1455a34, trans. Ingram Bywater. The Gudeman translation of this passage reads, ". . . poetic art is the affair of the gifted man rather than of the madman, for men of the first kind can adapt themselves well but those of the second are beside themselves." Such a translation, of course, gives an entirely different meaning to the passage and, if accepted, seems to be in direct contradiction to the Platonic idea of inspiration. However, both the traditional translations by S. H. Butcher and Lane Cooper are in agreement with the Bywater translation used in this writing.

²Aristotle, Rhetoric, III, 7, 1408b19, trans. W. Rhys Roberts.

³Milton, The Reason of Church Government, Introduction to Book II, 2. Cited in Allen H. Gilbert, Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden (New York: American Book Company, 1940), p. 590.

inspired. This shift of opinion is most readily seen in his attitude toward Wordsworth's inspiration which has been previously discussed in this writing.¹ This shift is also one of the few alterations in his original concept of poetry. Hopkins' conformity to the classical concept of inspiration as a god-given power represents his more mature thought, for this notion is seen in the writings of the later years of his life.

Another idea concerning the inspired language of poetry is expressed by Hopkins when he says that one does not go on admiring inspired writing more and more. He thinks it is a mistake for one to say that the more one reads of a particular author the more he admires that author's writing. It is Hopkins' opinion that if one carefully reads a great deal of work by a particular author, including some of his best writing, then that author must have been rated equally with his merits no matter how high he is originally rated. In other words, a reader will accurately rate an author if he has withheld his judgement until it is ripe. Having accurately rated him, then further admiration only keeps the original admiration alive, but it does not make it any greater.

The second category of poetical language which Hopkins defines is that which he calls Parnassian. In evaluating Hopkins' writings on poetic theory, Abbott observes that "Some of the critical writing is remarkably mature for so young a man, especially his discussion of that

¹ See discussion of the influence of Wordsworth in this writing, pp. 105-108.

'secondary' poetry which he calls 'Parnassian'.¹ It is obvious that this category was regarded as very important by Hopkins. Not only does it reflect his most mature thought, but it is given a great deal of space by Hopkins. It is also important because, as it is defined by Hopkins, it is very broad in scope and is the most common form of poetry.

Parnassian is not, in the highest sense, regarded as poetry by Hopkins. It does not require the same mood of mind needed for poetry of inspiration. However, it can only be spoken by poets. One of the primary differences in Parnassian and inspired language is that Parnassian is spoken "on and from the level of a poet's mind"² rather than when he has been raised above himself by inspiration. It is a language which genius speaks as fitted to its place among other genius, but it does not "sing . . . in its flight."³

Great poets have their own dialect of Parnassian which they form as they write. As a writer gains more and more experience in writing, he begins to see things in a Parnassian way and describes them in a Parnassian tongue and it is no longer necessary for him to exert the effort of inspiration. It is this development of a particular Parnassian which determines the poets style or manner.

As has been previously pointed out, inspired poetry takes the

¹Letters III, xxii.

²Ibid., p. 69.

³Ibid.

reader by surprise. On the other hand, one of the characteristics of Parnassian is that it lacks this quality. One could conceive of oneself writing it if he were the poet. Even though the reader may feel that he could have written it if he were the poet, Hopkins maintains that if he should try he will discover that he cannot write it. In Parnassian the words may be choice and the description beautiful but it does not touch the reader as inspired poetry does.

According to Hopkins, when a poet palls on the reader, it is because of his Parnassian. As one reads his poetry it seems that his secret has been found. Hopkins maintains that the reason Shakespeare does not pall is because he uses so little Parnassian, but even this "greatest of poets" uses some Parnassian. In his letter to Baillie, Hopkins indicates his feeling that no one palls so much as Wordsworth because he uses so much Parnassian.

As other examples of Parnassian writing, Hopkins points to Tennyson, Pope and Milton. He says that at one time he thought of Tennyson as new and touching, but later saw he used Parnassian. Parnassian is common, he says, in descriptive passages such as the description of the island in Enoch Arden.¹

Pope and all artificial schools are also cited as examples of Parnassian writers. Parnassian is "the real meaning of an artificial

¹Note-books, p. 29.

poet."¹

Hopkins even finds Parnassian in Milton, whom he greatly admired and who bore such a significant influence on Hopkins' own poetry. He says there is much Parnassian in Paradise Lost and in Paradise Regained and points out that nearly all of The Faery Queen is in Parnassian.²

It should be pointed out that Parnassian, as defined by Hopkins, is not to be regarded as completely inferior or mediocre poetry. Most poetry belongs in this category and some of the best poems are written entirely in Parnassian. Even the greatest poets use it to some extent. Hopkins maintains, however, that a great deal of Parnassian will lower a poet's average and his fame. The difference in Parnassian and inspired Poetry proper lies in the fact that the truly inspired poet has the ability to elevate his writing. He explains the difference in this manner:

. . . I think it is the case with genius that it is not when quiescent so very much above mediocrity as the difference between the two might lead us to think, but that it has the power and privilege of rising from that level to a height utterly far from mediocrity: in other words that its greatness is that it can be so great.³

The lowest form of poetic language is called Delphic. Hopkins says far less about this level of poetry than he says about either Poetry proper or Parnassian. He says only that it is the language of the

¹Ibid., p. 30.

²Ibid., p. 29.

³Letters III, p. 69.

"Sacred Plain."¹ It is used by both poet and poetaster alike. Indeed, almost everyone can use this language. But to use it, he says, is no more uttering poetry than striking the keys of a piano is playing a tune.² However, when a tune is played, it is on the keys. Likewise when a poem is uttered, it is in this language. But to speak it is not necessarily to speak poetry.

The remarks on Delphic are brief and appear to be incomplete, but it seems that Hopkins includes in this category the everyday language used in normal oral communication, for he indicates that to speak it is not necessarily to speak poetry. It also appears that when one presents a poem orally he is of necessity using this language as the means of communicating the poem to a listener in an understandable medium. Though the poem may be in the language of inspiration, it is communicated to a listener in a manner which will make it most understandable, that is Delphic.

Hopkins cites no examples of Delphic poetry but it is assumed that he would include most of the popular "inspirational" and over-sentimental verse by such writers as Edgar Guest, James Metcalf and Robert Service.

To these three basic kinds of poetry, Hopkins adds two other categories. Castalian is defined as "a higher sort of Parnassian . . . or it may be thought the lowest kind of inspiration."³ It cannot be regarded

¹Ibid., p. 73.

²Note-books, p. 29.

³Letters III, p. 72.

as a separate category, nor does it belong between Poetry proper and Parnassian. Rather, it possesses certain characteristics of each. It may be thought of as overlaid somewhere along the dividing line between the two highest poetic languages. Like Poetry proper, Castalian is of such a high calibre that the reader can hardly conceive of himself having written it. It has some of that element of surprise which characterizes Poetry proper. But at the same time it is too characteristic of the poet. As Hopkins says, it is "too so-and-so-all-over-ish, to be quite inspiration."¹ Although Hopkins remarks that no poet palls so much as Wordsworth, he also cites passages from Wordsworth as good examples of Castalian. 'Yet despair Touches me not, though pensive as a bird Whose vernal coverts winter hath laid bare,' and 'On roses for the flush of youth . . . ' are both given as good examples.²

ic.

Castalian seems to be a rather artificial distinction and Hopkins himself began to attach less importance to it as a separate kind of poetic language. In a letter to Bridges dated 1882, he uses the terms "Parnassian" and "Castalian" synonymously.³

Very little is said about the final type of poetry, Olympian. It is added by Hopkins almost parenthetically. It is given little attention because

¹Ibid.

²Note-books, p. 30.

³Letters I, p. 159.

it is not regarded as being as important as the other languages of poetry. In fact, Hopkins does not regard it as really being poetry at all. He says it is the language of "strange masculine genius"¹ which more or less forces its way into the realm of poetry. It does not rightfully belong there at all. He also points out that any unusual poetry may, at first, seem to fall into this category. This last statement seems to imply that some poetry which is extremely unusual may be mistakenly dismissed as not being real poetry at all. But upon closer examination the reader will discover that it is, indeed, a higher order of poetry than Olympian. Perhaps the unusual quality of his own poetry prompted this remark. To exemplify Olympian, Hopkins points to the poetry of Milman and to Rosetti's Blessed Damozel.²

Poetry proper and Parnassian are obviously regarded by Hopkins as the most important of the five categories of poetic language which he identifies. To provide a method of easy comparison of these two languages of poetry, a chart has been devised which, it is felt, enables the reader to see the basic differences and similarities of Poetry proper and Parnassian. That chart is shown as Table 1.

¹ Letters III, p. 73.

² Ibid.

TABLE 1

A COMPARISON OF POETRY PROPER AND PARNASSIAN

	Poetry Proper	Parnassian
Language	Language of Inspiration	Not inspired, but can be spoken only by a poet.
Mood	Requires a certain mood of mind arising from good health, state of air, length of time after meal (later viewed as divine inspiration.)	Doesn't require a mood of mind which is needed for poetry of inspiration.
Level of Language	Inspiration is the "gift of genius) capable of raising the poet above the level of himself.	Language spoken on and from the level of a poet's mind rather than as when he has been raised above himself.
Predictability of language	Every beauty takes the reader by surprise; could not be predicted by what has already been read	In a poet's particular Parnassian (which he develops with experience) lies his style, his manner
Uniqueness	Reader cannot conceive of having written inspired poetry himself	Reader can conceive of writing it, if he were the poet (though if he tries, he finds he cannot write it.)
Effect of language	Inspired language <u>touches</u> the reader	Language spoken by genius as fitted to its exaltation, and place among other genius but does not "sing in its flight." Words may be choice; description beautiful, but it does not <u>touch</u> the reader
Lasting quality of language	Inspired poetry does not pall on the reader. Shakespeare does not pall because he uses so little Parnassian (though he uses some).	When a poet palls, it is because of his Parnassian; we seem to have found his secret.

Hopkins always places much emphasis on the intellectual value of poetry. In letters from his friends, he frequently received criticism of his poems because they are difficult to understand. He never apologizes for the obscurity of his or any other poetry, but is quick to counter such criticism. He feels that it is not necessary for the poet to make every thought entirely clear. It is the duty and responsibility of the reader to study the poem closely and, if possible, to ferret out the meaning and mood of the poem for himself. He corrects Bridges for not having followed this line of action while reading The Wreck of The Deutschland:

Granted that it needs study and it obscure, for indeed I was not over-desirous that the meaning of all should be quite clear, at least unmistakable, you might, without the effort that to make it all out would seem to have required, have nevertheless read it so that lines and stanzas should be left in the memory and superficial impressions deepened.¹

If the reader fails to give a poem the full study which is needed for a complete understanding, then he is not in a position to accurately judge that work. He says:

When a new thing, such as my ventures in the Deutschland are, is presented us our first criticisms are not our truest, best, most homefelt, or most lasting but what come easiest on the instant. They are barbarous and like what the ignorant and the ruck say.²

The quotation above is a reiteration of the opinion previously

¹Letters I, p. 50.

²Ibid.

discussed that it is necessary to withhold one's judgement until it is ripe. Doing so, the critic is then in a position to offer a true evaluation of the poem, one which will not have to be altered at a later time.

In another letter, Hopkins again points out the frequent necessity for the reader to read carefully before the meaning of a poem is understood:

One of the two kinds of clearness one shd. have ---
either the meaning to be felt without effort as fast
as one reads or else, if dark at first reading, when
once made out to explode.¹

Hopkins also maintains that it is entirely possible for the reader to enjoy lines of poetry which he cannot understand at all. The reader must try to discover the meaning for himself or, if he cannot, he may still enjoy the lines because of their fine quality and the very sound of the words. He uses the line from Macbeth, 'If it were done when 'tis done'² as a good example of a line which is obscure and disputed but which is thought by everyone to be fine. This, he maintains, is often the case with Shakespeare and other writers, but the obscurity of the line does not, of itself, hinder the enjoyment.³

It is evident then, that Hopkins places the responsibility for the understanding and appreciation of a poem, not upon the poet, but squarely

¹Ibid., p. 90.

²Shakespeare, Macbeth, Act I, Sc VII, line 1.

³Letters I, p. 50.

upon the shoulders of the reader. One might then ask how the reader goes about his task of discovering meaning and gaining an appreciation of the poem. Hopkins is explicit in this matter, also. The only way the full meaning of a poem can be attained, (especially his own poetry), is through an active, oral reading of the work. In a general discussion of poetry which is included in a letter to Bridges, he makes this point quite clear:

. . . it is, as living art should be, made for performance and . . . 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.¹

Using his own poetry as example, he emphasizes the necessity for the kind of oral reading just described. Speaking of his poem, The Loss of the Eurydice, he makes the following observations:

To do the Eurydice any kind of justice you must not slovenly read it with the eyes but with your ears, as if the paper were declaiming it at you.²

Sometime later he again remarks about this same poem and the necessity for reading it aloud in order to get its full impact:

Indeed when, on somebody returning me the Eurydice, I opened and read some lines, reading, as one commonly reads whether prose or verse, with the eyes, so to say, only, it struck me aghast with a kind of raw nakedness and unmitigated violence I was unprepared for; but take

¹Ibid., p. 246.

²Ibid., pp. 51-52.

breath and read it with the ears, as I always wish to be read, and my verse becomes all right.¹

Hopkins' concept of poetry may be briefly summarized as being a form of oral communication couched in a language which comes primarily from one of two sources. It may either be a language born of moments of divine inspiration (poetry proper), or a language growing out of active intellectual thought and planning (Parnassian). Only a true poet can successfully employ either of these languages. They are both the language of genius.

Poetry is also regarded as a form of speech which should either provoke an active mental exercise --- intellectual inquiry, close study; or else it should be a form of speech which, by its very nature and structure, is capable of providing enjoyment for the reader regardless of his understanding of the meaning.

Because poetry is frequently obscure and demands of the reader a careful scrutiny, it is necessary to withhold judgement of a poem until it is closely studied and properly evaluated.

Such a point of view allows Hopkins to define poetry in the following concise manner:

Poetry is speech framed for contemplation of the mind by the way of hearing or speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning.²

¹Ibid., p. 79.

²Note-books, p. 249.

CHAPTER VI

AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED POEMS
FOR ORAL INTERPRETATION

In approaching the analysis of the work of Hopkins' for a study such as this, one of the initial problems which the writer faces is the selection of the poems to be evaluated. It is not the purpose of this study to analyze all of the poetry of Hopkins, nor is it within the scope of a single study to do so. The intention is, rather, to analyze a representative portion of his poetry. It is assumed that a careful evaluation of a selected group of Hopkins' poetry will not only assist the oral reader in presenting those specific works, but it will also lay a sufficient foundation of understanding to enable a reader to evaluate additional selections from the same poet. The analysis of a selected group of Hopkins' poems should indicate the themes, images, symbolism, and other devices which are characteristic of the poet's writing and should, therefore, serve as a basis for a clearer understanding of all his works.

To accomplish this goal, it is felt that certain works from the various periods of his life should be selected. By choosing poems from each period, one should be able to observe the changes in approach and

growth in literary ability of the author. Because Hopkins' life directly and profoundly influenced the theme and mood of his work, it seems necessary to select poems which span the entire course of his creative years. Therefore, two poems have been selected from each of the four major periods of his life. In addition to these eight works, a ninth poem was selected to represent an interim period of his life and the tenth poem in this list is the last poem he produced. It is included as a representation of his most mature work.

Representing his early efforts, before the innovation of sprung rhythm and the influence of Welsh poetry are two of his poems written while he was still at Oxford. They are "Heaven-Haven" and "The Habit of Perfection."

Following his graduation from Oxford came his entrance into the Society of Jesus and seven years abstinence from writing. When he returned to poetry he entered his most prolific period of writing and produced some of his most noteworthy poems. This was the period when he was living in Wales. From the Welsh period have been selected "God's Grandeur" and "The Windhover."

During the years spent as a parish priest, Hopkins produced less poetry, but he nevertheless wrote several outstanding works. Representing this period of his life are "Spring and Fall," and "As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame."

Between the end of his years as parish priest and the beginning of his new duties as professor in Dublin, he spent two years at Stonyhurst College. This is not a major period of his life. Nevertheless, a single poem, "The Leaden Echo and The Golden Echo," has been selected to represent this interim period.

The last years of Hopkins' life were spent in Dublin where he produced the so called "sonnets of desolation." From this body of work the following poems have been chosen for analysis: "Carrison Comfort" and "I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day."

In addition to the poems listed above, one other has been chosen. Because it was written shortly before his death and represents his most mature poetry, "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection" will also be included.

In presenting the analyses which follow, the ten poems will be considered one at a time in the order prescribed above. Although attention will be focused on the specific work under analysis, there will be no hesitation in drawing comparisons between that poem and other works which may aid in understanding. Each poem will be reproduced in its entirety so that the reader may have a convenient reference to the particular work under discussion. The analysis will then follow the text of the poem.

HEAVEN-HAVEN

A nun takes the veil

I have desired to go

Where springs not fail,

To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail

And a few lilies blow.

And I have asked to be

Where no storms come,

Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,

And out of the swing of the sea.

"Heaven-Haven" is a very brief and simple lyric which was written during Hopkins' Oxford days. House indicates that it was written in July or August of 1864.¹ This was more than two years prior to his conversion, but it shows the ascetic nature of Hopkins, and reveals his increasing interest in religion. Gardner suggests that the first version of "Heaven-Haven" indicates that Hopkins "was considering the sanctity of [Sir Thomas] More as a model for his own life."² Whether such a consideration on Hopkins' part is apparent in the poem is a questionable assumption, but certainly Hopkins had shown an interest in the catholic martyr, along with his other general interest in religion helped to establish the proper atmosphere for the poem. Hopkins' eventual decision to become a religious can, in retrospect, be seen in the poem. The idea of a religious vocation had at least been considered at the time of the writing of the poem.

The first version of the poem is to be found in Hopkins' early notebooks under the title, "Rest."⁴ Some lines of the early version are completely different from the poem as it was published and indicate that a considerable amount of rewriting was put into the final version. The original version includes two additional stanzas which were omitted in

¹Note-books, p. xvii.

²Gardner II, p. 17.

³Letters III, p. 52.

⁴Note-books, p. 27.

the final form. These two additional stanzas were intended to show the hardships and rigors of the religious life but were later rejected. Gardner offers a plausible reason for their rejection:

Hopkins may have felt . . . that these images of rigorous manly adventure were hardly congruous with the quiet tenour of a nun's life, no matter how severe her trials and desolations; and rejected the stanzas for that reason.¹

Doyle-Curran feels that the last two stanzas were rejected for aesthetic reasons. She maintains that the two short stanzas of the final version form a complete whole and that the other stanzas seem "tacked on" and break the mood of the poem by introducing another emotional line.²

Although there are several noticeable changes between the two versions, the original poem is an aid to understanding. Some of the substitutions improve the auditory effect of the poem, but the connotation of the new word or phrase can be more easily understood when one refers to the original.

The first two lines are the same in both versions of the poem:

'I have desired to go Where springs not fail.' Water, in various forms, appears frequently in Hopkins' notes and in his poems. The word, 'springs' in this context is a familiar allusion. It connotes the never-failing springs

¹Gardner II, p. 73.

²Mary Doyle-Curran, A Commentary on the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1946), p. 6.

of heaven, the life-giving waters, a symbol of salvation not unlike the water used in the sacrament of baptism. This view of water as a symbol of renewed life is seen in another fragment written shortly before "Heaven-Haven:"

He hath abolished the old drouth,
And rivers run where all was dry,
The field is sopped with merciful dew.¹

The third line was altered from 'To fields where flies not the unbridled hail' to read, 'To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail.' This change gives the line a more regular, conventional rhythm --- a feature which Hopkins probably sought in view of the fact that this was an early work and preceded his sprung rhythm experiments by several years. In addition, it gives the line the quality of alliteration. 'sided' is used to mean 'having many sides, or edges.'

The last line of the stanza is the same in both versions: 'And a few lilies blow.' 'Blow' carries a double connotation. Not only does it infer a gentle blowing motion of growing lilies, but it also carries the meaning derived from the Old English, blowan, meaning 'to bloom.'

The original version of the last stanza reads:

I have desired to be
Where havens are dumb;
Where the green water-heads may never come,
As in the unloved sea.

¹ Note-books, p. 26.

In the final version, 'desired' is changed to 'asked' and the word 'and' is added to the beginning of the line making it a perfect iambic trimeter. An alliterative pattern is established by the introduction of the "s" sound in other substitutions: 'water-heads' is changed to 'swells;' 'storms' is used in the second line; and 'unloved' becomes 'swing.' By making these changes, Hopkins is able to rid the original stanza of its stumbling, irregular combinations of sounds and substitute a series of sounds which flow smoothly together and which more nearly approximate the movement and sound of the sea.

The emotional connotation is also heightened by the use of contrasting images placed in juxtaposition to each other. The rapid change from the image of the sharp, biting hail to the gentle blowing lilies makes an effective transition.

A comparison of both versions of this poem demonstrates two features which are characteristic of Hopkins and his poetry. First, it gives evidence to the fact that he rewrote and reworked his poems until they produced the desired effect. Secondly, the changes clearly demonstrate why Hopkins insisted his poetry be read aloud. Every change can be more easily heard than seen. All of them seem to be born of a desire to improve the sound of the lines.

The author's intended purpose in this poem is made quite clear by the sub-title, "A nun takes the veil." This line sets the mood for the

poem. In the brief span of eight short lines, Hopkins very effectively expresses the universal human desire for peace, safety and security. Whether or not he chooses the extreme sanctuary of the monastery, every man has experienced the desire to find a place or a means whereby he may escape the hardships and rigors of life and move to a quiet and peaceful existence. It is this basic appeal which gives the poem its universality.

In presenting this poem aloud, the interpreter's primary concern should be to establish and sustain the proper mood. Because of its brevity, there is no room for contrast or a wide range of vocal variety. Nor is there a need for it. The poem is a sort of vignette. It makes a brief, simple statement, and leaves a single impression. Mood is its primary quality. It should be read with low volume, at a rather slow rate, and with a relaxed vocal quality. It should, in other words, be understated. The voice must be used to convey the sense of quietness and peacefulness which is intrinsic to the poem.

THE HABIT OF PERFECTION

ELECTED Silence, sing to me
 And beat upon my whorled ear,
 Pipe me to pastures still and be
 The music that I care to hear.

Shape nothing, lips; be lovely-dumb:
 It is the shut, the curfew sent
 From there where all surrenders come
 Which only makes you eloquent.

Be shelled, eyes, with double dark
 And find the uncreated light:
 This ruck and reel which you remark
 Coils, keeps, and teases simple sight.

Palate, the hutch of tasty lust,
 Desire not to be rinsed with wine:
 The can must be so sweet, the crust
 So fresh that come in fasts divine!

Nostrils, your careless breath that spend
 Upon the stir and keep of pride,
 What relish shall the censers send
 Along the sanctuary side!

O feel-of-primrose hands, O feet
 That want the yield of plushy sward,
 But you shall walk the golden street
 And you unhouse and house the Lord.

And, Poverty, be thou the bride
 And now the marriage feast begun,
 And lily-coloured clothes provide
 Your spouse not laboured-at nor spun.

This poem, like "Heaven-Haven" is from Hopkins' Oxford period. Since it precedes his metrical experimentations and his innovation of sprung rhythm by nearly ten years, it is much more orthodox in form and construction than his later poems. "The Habit of Perfection" and "Heaven-Haven" are similar also in that both are declarations of Hopkins' desire to live a life of religious service.

"The Habit of Perfection" was written in January, 1866. His conversion to the Roman Catholic Church came in October, 1866. The poem precedes Hopkins' conversion by nine months and his entrance into the Jesuit order by over two and a half years. This fact makes it clear that the decision to accept the monastic life had been made emotionally long before it had been made rationally.

The author's attitude is one of joy and the poem is a powerful expression of his pleasure in dedicating his entire being to the service of God. As a priest dedicates his life to God when he is ordained, Hopkins, in this poem, makes a spiritual dedication of each of his senses to the glory of God.

The title of the poem is itself charged with meaning. It refers to "The Counsels of Perfection," the technical name applied by the Roman Catholic Church to the monastic way of life. The basis for the counsels is to be found in Christ's words which urge the Christian to obey the commandments, accept poverty and follow him, and be chaste.¹ From these

¹St. Matthew, XIX: 16-29.

words comes the monastic concept of voluntary poverty, chastity and obedience. These rules are basic to most religious orders and constitute the counsels which lead to perfection.

The 'habit' in the title connotes the religious habit or garb of a monk. Thus, the title conveys the idea of being clothed in "The Counsels of Perfection." There is the additional connotation of 'habit' as repeated or learned behavior. Through the strenuous and rigorous observance of the monastic rules, a life of perfection tends to become a fixed habit.

To determine the meaning of any of Hopkins' poetry, it is necessary to consider the special regional use of the words. Hopkins has frequently been credited with having coined many new words, but in reality most of the seemingly new coinages can be found in a standard English dialect dictionary. In many cases Hopkins is merely reintroducing archaic or obsolete words, or he is using them in a special sense peculiar to a particular region.

"The Habit of Perfection" consists of seven four-line stanzas. Each stanza is a dedication of one of the senses. The first stanza deals with hearing. 'Elected' has a double meaning. It means both "chosen" or "voluntary selection," and at the same time it carries the rather obsolete meaning of being "set apart because of some superior quality or condition."¹ The 'elected silence' of the monastery comes voluntarily and

¹Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language, second ed., unabridged (Springfield, Mass: G. and C. Merriam Co., publishers, 1960), p. 825. Hereafter referred to as Webster.

is regarded as the best life which could be chosen.

An obsolete meaning of the word, 'beat' is "to pulsate with continued thought or agitation."¹ It is probably in this sense that it is being used, inferring that the elected silence has been accepted only after a long period of serious thought.

'Whorl' is used in Northumberland to mean "deaf," as in the expression, 'deaf as a whorl.'² 'Whorled ear' means 'deafened ear.' 'Pipe' is from the Anglo-Saxon, pipian and is used in the sense of playing on a pipe or other wind instrument as an enticement to follow.

The second stanza concerns the voice. The 'lovely-dumb' in the first line is a typical compound which Hopkins later developed more fully and which he uses so effectively. It, of course, means that the lips should be lovely in their dumbness or silence. 'Shut' not only means 'closing' but it is actually used in Northern and Western Yorkshire as a noun meaning 'door' or 'lid.'³ 'Curfew' refers to the warning signal at evening. It is 'sent from there where all surrenders come.' That is to say, it comes from the heart, from his voluntary submission to God's service, from his conviction that silence is reverence to God. Therefore, from his heart

¹Ibid., p. 240.

²Joseph Wright, The English Dialect Dictionary (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), Vol. VI, p. 466. Hereafter referred to as Wright.

³Ibid., Vol. V, p. 419.

comes the warning signal to shut the door of his lips and through this silent admission of his love of God he is truly eloquent.

In the third stanza he dedicates his eyes. 'Shelled' means 'covered' as with a shell or outside covering, i. e. the eyelids. 'Double dark' is interpreted by this writer to mean that most men are somewhat blind to God and to cover the eyes makes one only doubly blind to him. But, by closing the eyes and thus shutting out the world, one can, in his darkness, find 'the uncreated light,' or God, the light of the world. 'Un-created' refers to the concept of God as never having been created but as eternal and always existing. 'Ruck' is a favorite word of Hopkins. It appears numerous times throughout his writing. It can mean a rough bundle, or a pile or heap of anything. It also may be used in a disparaging manner to mean the general run of people, "the common herd."¹ It is in this latter sense that it appears in this poem. 'Reel' means "confused or shirling motion." Used figuratively, as in this case, it may also mean "turmoil, mental confusion."² 'Remark,' here addressed to the eyes, is used to mean 'observe' or 'see.' 'Coil' is used to mean "to enfold in a coil, ensnare,"³ and 'keep' means "to take care of, attend to; to watch over."⁴ 'Tease' means "to handle roughly; to tear; to toss about."⁵

¹Ibid., Vol. V, pp. 172-173.

²Ibid., Vol. V, p. 79.

³Ibid., Vol. I, p. 695.

⁴Ibid., Vol. III, p. 410.

⁵Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 49.

The last two lines of the stanza may, therefore, be interpreted to mean that the crowd of ordinary men in a state of mental confusion which may be observed by the eyes, are trying to enfold and hold on to their 'simple sight,' or their view of the world as opposed to the 'double darkness' which reveals the true light. But in their effort, they succeed only in tearing, and tossing about this simple sight.

The fourth stanza is a dedication of the sense of taste. In the opening line he addresses the palate as 'the hutch of tasty lust.' 'Lust' is used in the obsolete sense of "pleasure; liking; that which yields pleasure."¹ The palate is regarded as the coffer or storage place of pleasurable tastes. 'Desire not to be rinsed with wine' is an injunction to the palate not to seek only desirable delicacies. Greater satisfaction may be derived from the bread and water of religious fasting. 'Can' is used to indicate "a drinking cup."² He feels that when one takes only bread and water in a religious fast, that the water must seem sweet and the bread can only seem fresh and is, therefore, more tasty than wine.

The fifth stanza concerns the sense of smell. Again there are several words which need attention because they are used in a special sense. 'Spend' may be interpreted to mean "waste."³ 'Stir,' used here

¹Webster, p. 1469.

²Wright, Vol. I, p. 502.

³Ibid., Vol. V, p. 659.

as a noun, means "a commotion, excitement; tumult."¹ 'Pride' is used in the sense of "fineness, brilliancy; richness."² 'Keep' is used in the same sense as it was employed in the third stanza.

With these definitions in mind, the stanza can be interpreted to mean that the pleasure found in perfumes, spices, and other goods of the world which are pleasing to the olfactory sense --- the exciting finery which is cared for and watched over to satisfy man's pride in himself --- is nothing compared to the incense from the sacred censers of the Church. Incense symbolizes purification and its odor, bringing with it God's purification of the individual, is sweeter to Hopkins than any perfume used for the sake of pride.

The sixth stanza is one of the most sensitive and self-revealing stanzas in the poem. It deals with the sense of touch. Another compound, 'feel-of-primrose hands,' appears in the first line. This phrase provokes the image of hands which are sensitive to the delicate feel of the primrose. It also has the connotation of youthful hands since the primrose is regarded as "the flower of youth and innocence."³ 'Plushy' is an adjective common in Devonshire and means "glossy, velvety."⁴ 'Sward' may mean "sod; a

¹Ibid., Vol. V, p. 769.

²Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 619.

³Webster, p. 1965.

⁴Wright, Vol. IV, p. 561.

piece of turf."¹ In the stanza he addresses his feet which are responsive to the feel of soft, velvety turf and tells them that greater tactile pleasure can be derived from walking in the streets of heaven. He tells his sensitive, youthful hands that they will find pleasure in handling the consecrated Host in the Mass for they shall 'unhouse and house the Lord.' That is to say, the hands will remove the Host from the tabernacle and replace it there when the Eucharist is finished.

In the last stanza, Hopkins refers to the final vow of poverty which a religious novice takes. He indicates that the novice weds poverty when he takes this vow and the wedding feast may then begin. This same bride (poverty) will provide the 'lily-coloured clothes,' or the habit of the monk, and he will thus be garbed in "The Habit of Perfection."

The last two lines are an allusion to Christ's words:

Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not,
they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon
in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.²

Hopkins maintains that by taking the vow of poverty and giving up his worldly raiments, he will be clothed in a finer habit than money could buy.

Throughout this poem Hopkins uses images which are paradoxical. The device is evident in the first stanza when he depicts silence singing

¹Ibid., Vol. V, pp. 866-867.

²St. Luke, XII: 27.

and piping music. It is also seen in later stanzas in such images as dumb lips being eloquent, and closed eyes finding light. This use of paradox is one of the features of the poem which gives it its rich, fresh quality.

The poem also illustrates Hopkins' ability to create striking and original images even in his early work. It is most evident in the closing stanza. He uses a biblical quotation in such a way as to make it entirely fresh and original. Hopkins' language is related closely enough to the original language so that it is still recognizable, yet he uses it in a new way and in a new context and therefore avoids becoming trite.

The construction of the poem gives it a well balanced proportion. In each stanza he treats a separate sense with equal importance. Then, in the closing stanza, all the joys described in the previous stanzas are accepted in a final decision to embrace the way of life which promises so many pleasures.

Since this is one of Hopkins' earlier works, it is much more orthodox in form than his later poems. The rhythm is almost perfect iambic tetrameter, and contrasts sharply with the exciting and forceful rhythmic patterns of his later works written in sprung rhythm. Although this selection is not typical of Hopkins' more mature works, it demonstrates that even at this early age he possessed the remarkable originality which later becomes so apparent.

The theme of the poem is universal in appeal. It concerns the

basic struggle of every man to find his proper relationship with his God. Yet, Hopkins treats this age-old theme in an entirely fresh and exciting manner. The ability to write poetry on a universal theme and still maintain a high degree of individuality is one of the outstanding characteristics of Hopkins' work. It is also one of the primary factors which distinguishes him as an important poet.

The interpreter approaching this poem for oral presentation will find, as in almost all of Hopkins' work, that his primary task will be to prepare his audience for what is to come. None of Hopkins' poems are easy to understand. They require study and careful analysis in order to find a clear meaning. The reader must give his audience much of the information necessary to a full understanding and appreciation of the poem. If, however, the unfamiliar words are defined, and the vague allusions clarified in advance, the audience should be able to ascertain the meaning without undue difficulty and at the same time appreciate the sound of the language which Hopkins so skillfully manipulates.

GOD'S GRANDEUR

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

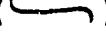
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs ---

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

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

"God's Grandeur" was written in 1877 and belongs to the latter part of Hopkins' Welsh period. It is in sonnet form and is, according to Gardner, standard rhythm, counterpointed.¹ Counterpointed rhythm is the name applied by Hopkins to the rhythmic pattern which he discovered in Milton's Samson Agonistes and it is in "God's Grandeur" that he consciously uses it for the first time.² In his "Author's Preface," Hopkins explains the use of 'twirls' () to mark counterpointed or reversed rhythm.³ In his notebooks he uses these symbols to indicate the counterpointed rhythm of this sonnet. The first line, consisting of five feet, is marked in the following manner: 'The wórld is chárge'd with the grándeur of Gód,' indicating that the third and fourth feet are reversed, or counterpointed.⁴ The same symbols appear in the line, 'Générations have tród, have tród, have tród.'⁵

The beginning of sprung rhythm is also evident in the sonnet. There are, for example, several instances of accented syllables occurring in juxtaposition with no intervening unstressed syllables, as in 'séared with tráde; bléared, sméared;' and in 'wéars mán's smúdge' and in 'sháres mán's sméll.'

¹Gardner, Poems and Prose, p. 219 n. 8.

²See Chapter IV of the present work for a discussion of counterpointed rhythm.

³Poems, p. 5.

⁴Gardner, Poems and Prose, p. 219 n. 8.

⁵Ibid., p. 9 n. 1.

Like so many of Hopkins' poems, this sonnet is a hymn of praise to the wonder of God's work. He expresses the idea that in spite of man's mistreatment of nature and God's works, nature triumphs and is ever fresh.

In the opening line, 'charged' seems, at first glance, to imply "full" or "filled to capacity." The world is full of the grandeur of God. Doyle-Curran, however, has defined the word so as to enlarge the meaning and enrich the emotional connotations:

One thinks immediately of two common uses of the word that would fit this line: to charge a battery, or to charge a gun. It is probably the latter sense in which Hopkins is using it, as his next image is one of explosion. The electrical meaning of the term is also interesting in an analysis of this line; for it means 'to restore the active materials in a battery by the passage of direct current through it in the opposite direction to that of discharge.' In this sense it could mean the constant renewal of the world of God; that renewal produces the deepest freshness down in things.¹

The second line contains one of the most startling and amazing images to be found in any of Hopkins' work. He refers to God's grandeur as 'shining from shook foil.' There can be no doubt as to the meaning of this phrase for Hopkins defines it in a letter to Bridges:

With more truth might it be said that my sonnet might have been written expressly for the image's sake. But the image is not the same as yours and I do not mean by foil set-off at all; I mean foil in its sense of leaf or tinsel, and no other word whatever will give the effect I want.

¹Doyle-Curran, pp. 22-23.

Shaken goldfoil gives off broad glares like sheet
lightning and also, and this is true of nothing else,
owing to its zigzag dints and creasings and network
of small many cornered facets, a sort of fork lightning
too.¹

These 'broad glares' of lightning 'flame out, ' or burst forth brilliantly
and suddenly like the flare of a discharged gun.

In the next line Hopkins presents the image of oil being 'crushed'
in the sense of being squeezed from a tube or other container causing it
to ooze or flow gently. The viscosity of heavy oil causes it to 'gather to
a greatness' or into a large size. It masses into an ever enlarging body
when forced from its container rather than run rapidly into shapeless-
ness.

Hopkins frequently uses what Gardner calls a 'sectional pause'
after the first word or syllable of a line. Gardner also points out that
this usage is "unprecedented in the English sonnet."² The line just dis-
cussed illustrates the sectional pause:

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed.

Two words in the next line may need to be defined. 'Reck' occurs
in certain dialects and it means "to take heed of, care of, regard."³ 'Rod'
has two meanings which could be applicable in this context. It may mean

¹Letters I, pp. 168-169.

²Gardner, Vol. I, p. 78.

³Wright, Vol. V, p. 65.

"stock; race; tribe, as of the rod of Jesse; also offshoot, scion"¹

In this sense it could be taken to mean God's offspring, i. e., mankind, nature and all of God's creation. 'Rod' may also be used to refer to "a scepter; hence, figuratively, power; authority."² The line may then be interpreted to mean, why do men not take heed of, and have proper regard for God's creations and his authority.

The second half of the octave develops the idea that man has mistreated nature. 'Generations have trod, have trod, have trod.' The repetition of 'have trod' emphasizes the long line of men who have continuously trampled under foot all the beauties of nature. As a result of this mistreatment all nature is 'seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil.' 'Seared' means "withered; dry" and used figuratively it can mean "worn out, aged."³ 'Bleared' means "obscured vision."⁴ 'Smeared' means "soiled, besmirched."⁵ The line, then, means that the world is withered and worn out from business and commerce. It is soiled, and our true values are obscure or lost in the daily routine of work. Nature has become so subjugated to man's mistreatment that it has taken on his

¹Webster, p. 2160.

²Ibid.

³Wright, Vol. V, p. 309.

⁴Ibid., Vol. I, p. 295.

⁵Webster, p. 2373.

undesirable traits. It 'wears man's smudge (grime, smut, dirt) and shares man's smell.'

These lines are an indictment against the industrialization of the world, and it is not surprising that Hopkins should write them. As a priest in the manufacturing and mining areas of Britian he frequently remarked how much he disliked the city. He once wrote to Baillie of his hatred of cities. That statement reflects the same attitude expressed in the sonnet:

What I most dislike in towns and in London in particular is the misery of the poor; the dirt, squalor, and the illshapen degraded physical (putting aside moral) type of so many of the people, with the deeply dejecting, unbearable thought that by degrees almost all our population will become a town population and a puny unhealthy and cowardly one.¹

The concluding lines of the octave are 'the soil Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.' By this he means that even the very land is barren and unproductive from misuse and man has come so far from his natural state that he can no longer feel the earth under his feet. 'Shod' is the past participle of the verb, 'shoe.'

The sestet, true to the prescribed form of the sonnet, reflects upon the general theme of the poem. Having shown how man mistreats nature, he turns to the brighter side of the theme and explains that in spite of all man has done, nature is always fresh and constantly renews

¹Letters III, p. 146.

herself. 'And for all this, nature is never spent; There lives the dearest freshness deep down things.' The priceless freshness which he finds within all things is a direct reference to his concept of inscape.¹ He goes on to say, 'And though the last lights off the black West went Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, spring.' Just as man can always be sure that the bright morning will follow the darkness of the night, so can he rest assured that nature will constantly renew herself.

The sonnet concludes with an explanation of why nature is ever fresh and will triumph over man's abuses. It is 'Because the Holy Ghost over the bent World broods with ah! bright wings.' In this image, Hopkins compares the Holy Spirit of God to a mother hen protecting her little ones. 'Bent' carries a double connotation. It may be thought of in terms of the curvature of the earth. In this respect the mother hen analogy is carried further. The bent, or curved earth is to the Holy Ghost as the curved egg is to the hen. The Holy Ghost maintains the same protective spirit over the earth that is seen in the hen protecting her egg. 'Bent' may also be defined as 'broken' or 'stooped,' as in the common phrase, 'he is bent with age.' This definition reinforces the concept of the worn and tired world described in the octave of the sonnet.

'Brood' also has a double connotation. In addition to the meaning described above --- the mother hen, or the mother of anything protecting

¹ See Chapter III of the present work for a discussion of the concept of inscape.

her young --- it may also mean "to dwell continuously or moodily on a subject; serious thought; to ponder."¹ This concept of the word provokes the image of the Holy Ghost constantly thinking about the state of the world, giving serious consideration to it at all times in the spirit of protection.

In form, "God's Grandeur" adheres in most respects to the traditional requirements of the sonnet. It consists of fourteen lines divided into the octave and the sestet. The first quatrain of the octave expresses the basic theme. The second quatrain develops the theme. The sestet reflects upon the theme then brings it to its logical conclusion. The octave is rhymed a b b a a b b a and the sestet is rhymed c d c d c d. This poem departs from the traditional sonnet, however, in its rhythm. Rather than following the usual iambic pentameter of the sonnet form, "God's Grandeur" is written in counterpointed rhythm.

In preparing this selection for oral presentation, the reader should be especially aware of the imagery. This sonnet contains some of the most unusual and interesting images to be found in English poetry. It should, therefore, be the special concern of the interpreter to give them due attention. They should be presented with the appropriate and necessary pauses, emphases and vividness to make them readily apparent and clearly understood by the listener.

¹Webster, p. 342.

Although the sonnet contains several archaic words which may need explanation, for the most part Hopkins uses words which are rather familiar. The originality of the sonnet rests primarily in the unusual manner in which the words are employed. It should, therefore, be possible to present this selection orally with a minimum of explanation preceding the reading.

The success of an oral reading of this selection (as with any of Hopkins' poems) will be directly related to the degree of attention given to the reading by the listener. It is true that a listener may grasp the meaning of many selections by giving only a passive, casual attention to the reading. This is not the case with Hopkins' poetry. They all require close attention by an active listener if that listener is to receive a full appreciation of the poem as a work of art.

THE WINDHOVER:

To Christ our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-

dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in

his riding

Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and

striding

High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing

In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,

As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the

hurl and gliding

Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding

Stirred for a bird, --- the achieve of, the mastery of the

thing!

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

Buckle! And the fire that breaks from thee then, a

billion

Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion

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

Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

"The Windhover" was written in 1877 and belongs to the author's Welsh period. There seems to be little disagreement that from this period, "The Windhover" is his best poem. As Schoder suggests, it is "one of the most discussed, and it would seem least understood, poems of modern English literature."¹ He goes on to give this appraisal of the poem:

It admirably manifests Hopkins' characteristic style, his wealth and depth of ideas, his vigorous, sense diction, vivid imagery, and marvelous rhythmic sense.²

Gardner calls it "the crowning masterpiece of the second period,"³ and Pick says:

"The Windhover: To Christ Our Lord" is the greatest of Hopkins' poems of this period, greatest in the implications of its subject, greatest in its metrical accomplishment . . . It is indeed 'the achieve of, the mastery of the thing.'⁴

Hopkins would probably agree with the critics who regard this sonnet as his masterpiece, for in a letter to Bridges he refers to it as "the best thing I ever wrote."⁵

¹Raymond V. Schoder, S. J., "What Does the Windhover mean?" Immortal Diamond, Norman Weyand, ed. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1949), p. 275.

²Ibid.

³Gardner, Vol. I, p. 98.

⁴Pick, Priest and Poet, p. 70.

⁵Letters I, p. 85.

As Schoder points out, this is perhaps the most misunderstood poem of modern English literature. This misunderstanding has resulted from the various conflicting interpretations of meaning which have been advanced by critics. Before an effort is made in this writing to offer an explanation of meaning, it seems appropriate to review some of the interpretations submitted by those critics.

The conflict seems to center around four primary points: (1) the significance of the subtitle, "To Christ Our Lord;" (2) whether the sonnet is a joyous song or a lament of depression and despair; (3) whether there is a great deal of religious symbolism in the poem or little; and (4) the difficulty in defining certain key words.

Grady stresses the positive quality of the poem. He places emphasis on its joyous spirit and its rhythmic art. The theme is that "each thing by being itself proclaims God." The bird in the poem is achieving glory and ecstasy by energetic natural activity. In Father Grady's view, the dedication "To Christ Our Lord" implies nothing special. He also feels that the 'buckle' merely states that all the elements listed are brought together and united in the bird as it flies. The 'here' and 'chevalier' refer exclusively to the bird.¹

Ruggles sees in the bird "one facet of nature reflecting and declaring God's immanence" by its fulfilment of its natural destiny. It

¹Thomas J. Grady, "Windhover's Meaning," America Vol. LXX (January 29, 1944), pp. 465-466.

makes the poet see how he and other men fail to live up to this ideal.¹

This interpretation is in basic agreement with Grady's. Ruggles, however, attaches more religious significance to the bird itself. She interprets the windhover to be Christ.

Phare's analysis is also very similar. She explains the poem as being spoken by Christ to the poet, or even to the bird.²

Many critics find a negative element in the poem. I. A. Richards does not view the sonnet as joyful. He interprets the line 'my heart in hiding' to mean that the poet's heart has been in hiding from all the sensual pleasures of life, from the life of imagination. It has been hiding in the routine of the religious life, in the meditations and the acceptance of doctrine. Then, when he sees the bird, and experiences sensual pleasure from the sight, it is "with a pang of regret for the renunciation of physical adventure imposed by his choice of life."³

Richards feels that the poet in Hopkins was often "oppressed and stifled by the priest."⁴ This point of view and the interpretation of "The Windhover" as displaying regret are in agreement.

Empson agrees with Richards. He feels that the poem is a poem

¹Ruggles, pp. 155-157.

²Phare, pp. 130-133.

³As quoted in Phare, pp. 133-136.

⁴I. A. Richards, "Gerard Hopkins," The Dial, Vol. LXXXI (September, 1926), p. 199.

of defeat. He thinks of "The Windhover" as a sad, envious outcry. The poet is bemoaning the fact that his chosen way of life deprives him of the same freedom exhibited by the bird.¹

Another point of dispute revolves around the meaning of the term, 'buckle.' John Pick interprets the word as meaning collapse, and he sums up the theme of the poem in this manner:

It is in the act of 'buckling' when the windhover swoops down, when its flight is crumpled, when 'brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume' in an act of self-sacrifice, or self-destruction, of mystical self-immolation send off a fire far greater than any natural beauty.²

Empson admits two meanings of the word. One interpretation suggested by him is that 'buckle' may mean "like a bicycle wheel, 'make useless, distorted, and incapable of its natural motion'."³ He later admits, however, that Hopkins would probably have "denied with anger that he meant 'like a bicycle wheel.'"⁴

The disagreement over the true meaning of "The Windhover" goes unresolved. Nevertheless, what ever the theme of this or any of his other poems, Hopkins treats it in a fresh way and, as Schoder points out,

¹William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1961), pp. 254-256.

²Pick, Priest and Poet, p. 71.

³Empson, p. 255.

⁴Ibid., p. 297.

gives it "a deep-felt, authentic expression it has never received elsewhere. He will give us, for certain, a new and striking poetic experience."¹

It seems that the most satisfactory approach to interpreting the meaning of "The Windhover," would be the same as for any of Hopkins' poems. Recognizing the fact that he frequently uses archaic words, or uses words in a peculiar manner, one should concentrate first on the possible meanings of the key words in the poem. One should not lose sight (as many critics seem to have done) that Hopkins was a deeply religious man and found joy in his chosen life. From his earliest years he was attracted to asceticism. To imply that he was unhappy in his life of discipline is to overlook an important feature of his personality. There seems to be little basis for the assumption that the poem is one of gloom and despair. It is difficult to see how, after close study of the sonnet, that one could interpret the poem as anything but a very joyous song of praise to God.

In attempting to provide a detailed analysis of meaning it would perhaps first be in order to define exactly what is meant by the title. The windhover, or kestrel is a common European falcon. The name is derived from its habit of hovering over one spot, riding on the currents of air. It is sometimes called the sparrowing hawk in this country.

¹Schoder, "What Does The Windhover Mean?" p. 276.

The dedication, "To Christ Our Lord," has been a source of dispute among the critics. But, if the sonnet is regarded as being simply in praise of God, then the dedication should cause no difficulty. It is interpreted as having no special significance except to offer the sonnet to God since it is in praise of him. Ben Jonson's most famous poem is written for Celia so it is offered as a "Song for Celia;" much of Bach's music, written for the church, bears the dedication, "To the Glory of God." By the same token "The Windhover" is a sonnet in praise of God, and is offered to him with the dedication, "To Christ Our Lord."

The opening line simply means that the poet saw this morning morning's minion. 'Minion' means "a loved one; a beloved object; one highly esteemed and favored; a favorite."¹ 'Dauphin' originally meant the lord of certain territories. Therefore, these lines refer to the windhover as the favorite of the morning, the lord of the kingdom of daylight. 'Dapple,' meaning spotted or stippled may refer to either the coloration of the bird or to the dappled morning sky, spotted with scattered clouds and spots of sunlight. The phrase, 'dapple-dawn-drawn' is interpreted to mean the falcon is drawn by or attracted by the dappled dawn light. 'Stride' meaning to walk with long steps, is used figuratively to refer to the stage of progress or the swift advance of the bird as he flies.

'Rung upon the rein' is precisely defined by Richards when he

¹Webster, p. 1564.

suggests that it is "a term from the manege, ringing of a horse --- causing it to circle round on a long rein."¹ 'Wimpling' may be defined as "a winding turn; a curve; bend."² The line then means that the bird flies in a circling fashion, the long 'wimpling' or curved wing which points to the center of a circle is analogous to the rein of the horse which moves in a ringing fashion. He then turns in another direction, curving smooth as a skate as he swings around. In its flight the bird exhibits strength and sureness as it rebuffs the wind and hurls itself along its path. Observing the beauty of the bird's flight, the poet's heart is stirred, filled with admiration for the achievement of perfect flight which has been mastered so well.

The reference to the heart 'in hiding' is not interpreted to mean, as Richards suggests, that the poet is hiding from the world of pleasure in his monastic life. Rather, it seems that the bird provokes in the poet's mind the vision of a Christian Crusader boldly advancing the word of God. This image is revealed in the reference to the windhover as a chevalier. Seeing this bold proclamation, the poet is stirred from his commonplace Christian life and is inspired to do God's work with more energy and enthusiasm. He is inspired to also proclaim God boldly, as the windhover does.

¹ Richards, "Gerard Hopkins," p. 198.

² Webster, p. 2929.

The phrase, 'here Buckle' is interpreted to mean that here, in the flight of this bird, are joined, fused, all the things which are listed in the opening line of the sestet. As all these things are brought together in the bird, there is a sudden evidence of God's handiwork. The bird becomes a billion times more lovely because, in its natural act of being itself, it is proclaiming the glory of God's creation. This is a most interesting and obvious example of the Hopkinsian concept of 'inscape.' The innate beauty which lies within all things is observed in the flight of the bird.

It is also interesting to compare the phrase, 'And the fire that breaks from thee' to the line in "God's Grandeur" which reads, 'it will flame out, like shining from shook foil.' In both lines the idea of God's creation showing itself as a sudden burst of fire is made apparent. Drawing upon the image from "God's Grandeur," one could assume that the beauty observed in the windhover suddenly flames out and again displays the grandeur of God.

The closing lines of "The Windhover" provide one of the most unusual but interesting images to be found in any of Hopkins' works. The word 'sillion' is an obsolete form of the word, 'selion' which may be defined as the ridge which is thrown up from the furrow made by a plow. In this closing tercet Hopkins says that it should not be surprising to find

¹Morris, p. 56.

God's presence in the windhover's flight. It may be seen in even more mundane objects. When a plow moves down the furrow, the soil constantly rubs against the plowshare, polishing it. If left idle, the plow rusts. Therefore, by the constant toil of pushing the plow, it is kept shining and bright. An ember which is blue-gray and colorless in its coating of ashes has the potential of beauty. When it falls, it rubs away its own outer surface and breaks apart revealing the beauty of the red and yellow fire inside. Therefore, through toil and self-sacrifice, one can reveal the grandeur of God in his own life.

It would be difficult to give much attention to the poetry of Hopkins without becoming aware of the assonance and the alliteration in his work. As Morris states, "The art of patterning and varying vowel-sounds is highly developed in Hopkins. In conjunction with alliteration, it pervades the whole of his verse."¹ Clear assonance between two or more words where both vowel and consonant sounds correspond, are common in Hopkins' verse. Several examples are evident in "The Windhover." 'Dawn-drawn falcon,' 'stirred for a bird,' and 'Fall, gall themselves' all exemplify this element of his poetry.

Alliteration is even more abundant throughout Hopkins' poetry. In "The Windhover" it is possible to observe this list of examples:

¹ Morris, p. 56.

morning morning's minion
daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn
riding of the rolling
rolling leve
high there, how he
rung upon the rein
wimpling wing
as a skate's heel sweeps smooth
bow-bend
rebuffed the big
heart in hiding
brute beauty
and act, oh, air
pride, plume
plod makes plough
sillion shine
blue-bleak
gall themselves, and gash gold

It is always interesting to observe the rhyme scheme employed by Hopkins. He often exhibits unusual daring in his rhyme patterns and occasionally displays a rather contrived set of rhymes. He frequently departs from conventional methods in order to secure a desired effect. Such an unorthodox approach is apparent in the opening line of "The

Windhover." He breaks the word 'kingdom' makes the second syllable of the word appear as the first syllable of line two. Through this device he is able to rhyme 'king-' with 'wing.' The overall rhyme pattern follows the convention of the sonnet form, however (a b b a a b b a c d c d c d). He does not hesitate to disregard convention for the sake of freedom of expression when he breaks the word; yet, he shows absolute regard for it by adhering strictly to the prescribed sonnet form. Thus he displays both freedom and discipline. This apparent paradox is further evidence of that quality in Hopkins' nature which has been emphasized elsewhere in this study: in Hopkins, the aesthete combines with the ascetic.

The rhythm of "The Windhover" has been defined as "Falling paeonic rhythm, sprung and outriding."¹ Because of the rhythmic variation in this work and in others, it cannot be scanned in the traditional manner. Hopkins insists that when one scans sprung rhythm one should consider the stressed syllables as the beginning of a foot and disregard the number of intervening unstressed syllables. Even when following this suggestion, however, it is not always clear which syllables he expects to be stressed. It may appear to have a varying number of feet per line, but if the poem is scanned as Hopkins intended it to be, one finds that it is written in pentameter lines. In order to demonstrate the scansion which Hopkins wished, the sonnet is reproduced below with the accent marks and

¹Poems, p. 106 n. 12.

divisions of feet indicated.¹ This scansion may be useful to the oral interpreter because it aids in understanding the rhythm as Hopkins intended it. It is doubtful that any oral reader would adhere strictly to all the markings as indicated, but it does help in discovering the rhythmic patterns. In this arrangement one discovers five accented syllables in each line and the liberal use of what Hopkins calls outrides or hangers.

I caught this mórning mórning's minion, kíng-
 dóm of daylight's dáuphin, dápplē-dáwn-drawn Fálcon, in
 his riding
 Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and
 striding
 High there, how hé rung upon the réin of a wimpling wing
 In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
 As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl
 and gliding
 Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
 Stirred for a bird, --- the achieve of, the mastery of the
 thing!

¹Gardner, Vol. I, p. 99. Gardner combined all the markings shown by Hopkins in two separate autograph copies. This scansion is based upon Gardner's report.

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

Buckle! And the fire that breaks from thee then, a

billion

Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,

Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

The interpreter's approach to "The Windhover" is much the same as with his other work. For a thorough understanding on the part of the audience, it will probably be necessary to preface the reading with some introductory material, including the definitions of some of the words. However, "The Windhover" would probably be enjoyed by an intelligent, responsive audience even if their understanding is incomplete. It is difficult to find another sonnet which displays a more interesting sound pattern. The special kind of beauty which it displays makes it possible for an audience to respond favorably to an acceptable reading of this poem. There is pleasure to be found in the mere sounds of the words in "The Windhover."

SPRING AND FALL:

to a young child

Márgarét, are you gríeving
Over Goldengrove unleaving?
Léaves, like the things of man, you
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?
Áh! á as the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder
By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;
And yet you will weep and know why.
Now no matter, child, the name:
Sórrów's spríngs áre the same.
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What heart heard of, ghost guessed:
It ís the blight man was born for,
It is Margaret you mourn for.

From the time Hopkins entered his novitiate in 1868 until he was ordained in 1877 he was either studying or teaching. During these years he was surrounded by members of the Society of Jesus, he was immersed in his theological pursuits and he was filled with religious fervor. This was the period which produced "God's Grandeur," "The Windhover," and other joyous poems singing the praises of God.

In 1877, however, he was ordained. He began his duties as a parish priest. In his new surroundings he saw, as if for the first time, the unpleasant realities of life. He became painfully aware of the evils of modern society and the apparent futility in the lives of the people he saw. In 1881 he wrote to Dixon of the "hollowness" of modern civilization:

My Liverpool and Glasgow experience laid upon my mind a conviction, a truly crushing conviction, of the misery of town life to the poor and more than to the poor, of the misery of the poor in general, of the degradation even of our race, of the hollowness of this century's civilisation: it made even life a burden to me to have daily thrust upon me the things I saw.¹

In a letter to Baillie, written in 1888, he expressed the fear that man was becoming a puny and cowardly lot.²

The physical and spiritual misery he saw had a depressing effect upon Hopkins. He was only mildly successful as a parish priest and this fact may also have contributed to his frustration and disappointment.

¹Letters II, p. 97.

²Letters III, p. 146.

But, he began to exhibit signs of doubt concerning man's fate. Whether serious doubts about his religion were raised is improbable, but at least he began to wonder about the purpose of men's lives.

"Spring and Fall," written in September, 1880, reflects this general attitude. It lacks much of the sense of hope which is evident in some of the later "terrible" sonnets. It is, rather, a statement of resignation. Man is mortal; he must grow old and die, and he must accept this fate for which he was born. All the poems written during this period are, according to Peters, "autobiographical in this sense that they relate incidents of his priestly life in which he acted in the way described in them."¹ Peters goes on to say, "These poems of Hopkins are not his best."² The reason becomes evident when one reads the letters written during this time. He indicates to his friends that he is always tired, he is depressed, and he finds it difficult to keep in good spirits. The impulse to write was lacking. Lacking the inspiration to write, he wrote as a means of release. Heuser explains it in the following manner:

Tears entered into Hopkins' verse, particularly when, in spare time away from parochial duties, he wrote, out of simple release of feeling, weeping poems characteristic of a 'man of feeling.'³

¹Peters, p. 43.

²Ibid.

³Heuser, p. 60.

Leavis maintains that the poem shows a preoccupation with "nature, beauty, transience."¹ Of these three qualities, 'transience' seems to come nearest to describing the basic theme of the work. The theme is succinctly described by Reeves as follows:

This poem expresses the idea of the 'sad mortality' of man and nature alike. The child that weeps because of the golden leaves falling in autumn really mourns, though she does not yet know it, her own mortality.²

The poem is addressed to a young child though obviously it is not intended to be understood by a child. It is as though the adult, for whom it is intended, is eavesdropping on the conversation. In the opening couplet the poet asks the child if she is grieving because the leaves are falling from the trees in Goldengrove. The term 'unleaving' is used to mean the opposite of the verb 'leaf,' as in the phrase 'the trees leaf out.' Bridges indicates that the word appears as 'unleafing' in most of the manuscripts.³ However, for the sake of the rhyme, it is changed to its present form.

Goldengrove appears as a proper name in the poem and Gardner indicates that the name may be found on a map of North Wales.⁴ It is more likely chosen, however, because of the imagery. 'Golden' reinforces

¹F.R. Leavis, "Metaphysical Isolation," Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. The Kenyon Critics (Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions Book, 1945), p. 117.

²Reeves, pp. 90-91.

³Poems, p. 111.

⁴Gardner, Vol. II, p. 309 n. 1.

the idea of the gold leaves of autumn and 'grove' connotes a grove of trees.

The poet then asks, 'Can you care as much for the leaves as you do for the man-made things which you, in your young mind, regard as important?' He then explains to the child that as she grows older she will see things much sadder than this, and she will find that her heart will have become more hardened to them. It will not expend so much as a sigh, even though the world is full of leaves which fall one by one and crumble into meal.

There appear two typical Hopkins compounds in line eight. They have both been very clearly defined by Gardner as follows:

In wanwood the meaning 'bloodless' is combined with the older meaning --- 'dark,' 'black:' and the bitterness of 'wormwood' lurks beneath. Leafmeal is an adverb made from 'piecemeal,' and harks back to similar Shakespearian forms --- inch-meal and limb-meal: -meal also implies the mealy fragments of dry rotting leaves.¹

In a footnote appended to this explanation, Gardner goes on to offer an alternative but less satisfactory meaning:

It is possible to make sense of this line by taking -meal as the word and not as a suffix, so that wanwood becomes an adjective; but this reading weakens the force not only of "lie" (which calls for an adverb) but of the whole image.²

¹Gardner, Vol. I, p. 123.

²Ibid., p. 123 n. 4.

The first eight lines of this poem are rather specific in their meaning. Once the words are understood the meaning becomes plain. Line nine, however, is filled with ambiguity. It may be interpreted in two entirely different ways. It may be taken to mean: "At some later time in your life you will weep and at that time you will understand why. It will not be for the falling leaves but rather because you have come to realize that your own life is as fleeting as that of the leaves." Since Hopkins places an accent on the word 'will,' it seems to change the meaning somewhat. With the emphasis on 'will' it may be interpreted to mean: "You insist upon crying and you want me to tell you why." It is likely the latter meaning which Hopkins wished to convey with the accent mark. This meaning seems to be more nearly related to the remainder of the poem which is an answer to Margaret's inquiry.

The poet goes on to explain that there is no need to try to identify any particular reason for the grief. All our sorrows spring from the same source. Even though the child cannot express it in words, nor fully understand it in her mind, she has, nevertheless, felt in her heart the reason for her sorrow and her spirit has guessed the reason. The reason she grieves is not simply for the falling leaves, but for herself. She senses that, like the leaves, she too is mortal and must die. This is the blight of man, and man must accept it.

The surface meaning of "Spring and Fall" is fairly easy to discern. Unlike many of Hopkins poems, it contains few archaic or difficult words.

'Unleaving' is, of course, an unusual word, but employed as it is, its meaning is rather self-explanatory. 'Wanwood' and 'leafmeal' are the only other words which could possibly cause difficulty, but their meaning is also clarified to a great extent by the context in which they are used.

What is more important than surface meaning to a full appreciation of the poem is an understanding of the depth meaning, or the basic, fundamental idea which the author is expressing: the inevitable mortality of man. More important still is the attitude of the author in expressing that theme. It seems to be basically one of regret. Pick feels that in the expression of that regret, however, Hopkins also points the way for man to direct his life:

On the use man makes of his own powers and of created things depends his eternal status; his own weakness and the transiency of his years make the call of the future life overwhelmingly important.¹

Viewed in this manner, the poem presents a subtle lesson and reflects a faint note of encouragement. The same somewhat optimistic attitude on the author's part is also pointed out by Iyengar:

Hopkins could have merely sentimentalized over the child's grief -- but he would not; not out of ignorance, but through knowledge illumined by grace, could real happiness evolve.²

An additional clue to the overall meaning of the poem may be

¹Pick, Priest and Poet, p. 93.

²Iyengar, p. 95.

found in the title. For Gardner, "'Spring' suggests Eden and 'Fall' suggests the penalty of Adam."¹ Pick also assigns the same connotation to 'Fall' when he describes the basic theme of the poem: ". . . youth has an intuitive, almost innate knowledge of the sad transiency of all things due to the blight of original sin."²

"Spring and Fall" is written in sprung rhythm with four stressed syllables in each line. Because of the presence of four accents, it becomes necessary according to Hopkins' theory of sprung rhythm to compose lines which are 'rove over.' It is, in fact, this poem which Hopkins uses to illustrate the practice of 'overreaving' to Bridges:

. . . in my lyrics in sprung rhythm I am strict in overreaving the lines when the measure has four feet, so that if one line has a heavy ending the next must have a sprung head (or begin with a falling cadence) as ---

Márgaré[́]t, áre you griéving

Óver Góldengróve

(and not e.g. Concérning Góldengróve) unléaving? ---

when it has only three I take no notice of it, for the heavy ending or falling cadence of one line does not interfere with the rising cadence of the next.³

Hopkins also indicates, with accent marks, certain syllables which should be stressed in this poem. For example, he places stress

¹Gardner, Vol. I, p. 161.

²Pick, Priest and Poet, p. 92.

³Letters I, p. 120.

marks over both the first and last syllables of the first word, Márgaré[́]t.

This has led to some confusion since the third syllable would not normally be read with a stress. It also may pose a special problem for the oral interpreter. Ong offers a plausible explanation for the extra stress:

The answer here lies, I think, in the thoughtful deliberation which marks the emotion of this poem and which brings to the interpretation an unusual second heavy accent as the speaker begins slowly and pensively. This second accent need not have the exact physical volume of the first, although it should be heightened psychologically at least. There is no need to explain this kind of enunciation in any other way than by noting its natural place in emotional speech. The touch here is exquisite.¹

This explanation, believed to be wholly accurate, is based upon Hopkins' own words. Explaining the role of stresses in both isolated words and in connected discourse, he notes the following:

But besides the stress or emphases and pitch or intonation of single syllables one against another there is a stress or emphasis and a pitch or intonation running through the sentence and setting word against word as stronger or as higher pitched and though it may make every syllable of the emphatic word stronger still it is most felt on the accented syllable, the unaccented are often as weak as any other word in the sentence.²

To illustrate his point, he writes the following sentence:

I said my UNcle, not my GREATuncle.³

¹Ong, "Hopkins' Sprung Rhythm and the Life of English Poetry," pp. 141-142.

²Note-books, p. 225.

³Ibid.

He continues by explaining how emotional intonation may alter the normal sense stress of a word:

But emotional intonation, especially when not closely bound to the particular words will sometimes light up notes on unemphatic syllables and not follow the verbal stresses and pitches.¹

The desire to indicate an emotional stress, as Ong explains it, is very likely what prompted Hopkins to indicate accent marks on both the first and last syllable of 'Margaret.'

The oral interpreter should give the same kind of attention to other accent marks which Hopkins places in his work. There is invariably a reason for them and, if carefully analyzed, they usually offer aid in preparing the oral reading. Since Hopkins insisted that his work be read aloud, he uses these marks as a means of explaining how he wishes the poem to be read. They should not, therefore, go unnoticed. The interpreter must assume the responsibility of presenting the poem in a manner which is as true to the author's intention as is possible.

¹Ibid.

(AS KINGFISHERS CATCH FIRE)

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies dráw fláme;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves --- goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying What I dó is me: for that I came.

Í say móre: the just man justices;
Kéeps gráce: thát 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.

The sonnet which begins "As kingfishers catch fire," is unnamed by Hopkins and is usually identified by the opening line or by the number '34' which was its designation in the original volume of poems edited and published by Bridges. It was written in 1882 and falls within the period of Hopkins' life in which he was active as a parish priest.

Two aspects of Hopkins' philosophy are readily revealed in this sonnet. First, the acceptance of the Duns Scotus idea of 'individuation' is apparent,¹ and secondly, Hopkins' concept of 'inscape,' which grew out of the Scotus philosophy, is clearly seen.²

The theme of the poem is expressed by Reeves in the following manner:

In this sonnet Hopkins expresses in his own way a religious idea derived partly from the medieval theologian, Duns Scotus. Everything expresses its own nature and exists for that purpose alone. Not only natural objects and creatures, but also men fulfil themselves in the eye of God, and exist to express God through their own nature.³

Gardner expresses the opinion that it is in this sonnet that one is able to see Hopkins the poet and Hopkins the Scotist most completely and successfully united.⁴ The Scotist influence in this poem is also emphasized by

¹See Chapter V of the present work for a discussion of the influence of Duns Scotus on Hopkins.

²See Chapter III of the present work for a discussion of the concept of inscape.

³Reeves, p. 91.

⁴Gardner, Vol. I, p. 27.

Pick¹ and by Grigson.²

Devlin points especially to the last three lines of the sonnet as expressing the Scotus idea of all human nature united in and expressing God. He expresses it in this way:

GMH, in his refutation of a universal mind as a self identified with other selves, does not deny --- indeed he affirms --- the reality of the concrete universal 'humanity' which includes all human natures apart from their selves. This looks forward to Scotus's theory of the hypostatic union as the assumption by God the Son of the totality of human nature.³

The concept of inscape permeates the entire sonnet. The sonnet is, in fact, a statement concerning the inscape of the inner 'soul' of all things.

The first quatrain is a list of objects and creatures that exhibit their inscape in their very existence and in their natural function. The first line is defined by Heuser as meaning "kingfishers flash to feed on dragonflies in a moment of exchanged fire."⁴ This explanation, which seem plausible, emphasizes the habit of the kingfisher to sit quietly then suddenly to dart out after its prey. In this case the prey is a dragonfly.

¹Pick, Priest and Poet, pp. 104-105.

²Grigson, pp. 22-23.

³Christopher Devlin, S.J., ed. The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 286 n. 129.1.

⁴Heuser, p. 70.

Just as the natural function of the kingfisher is to prey on the dragonfly, so is the function of the dragonfly to resist the attack. Therefore, the image of 'exchanged fire' is provoked. 'Roundy' is an adverb form of the word, 'round'.¹ The second line is merely saying that stones, when tumbled over the rim of round wells will ring. 'Ring' carries a double connotation. It makes a ringing or echoing sound when it splashes; it also makes rings in the water when it strikes the surface. 'Like each tucked string tells' also may be interpreted in two ways. 'Tuck' may mean "to touch; to pull."² When thought of in this sense the line means that when a string on a musical instrument is touched or pulled, it will 'tell' or make its characteristic sound. In addition to this meaning, 'tuck' may also refer to the practice of drawing cloth into pleats or folds. This definition conveys the idea that the string or thread which holds the tuck in place is fulfilling its function by doing so. The next image is of a large bell as would be hung in a tower. 'Bow' may refer to the collar or yoke by which it is hung. When this yoke is swung it causes the bell to ring, to broadcast its sound over a wide area. Because the sound is easily identifiable, it is as though the bell is declaring itself to be a bell --- it 'flings out its name.' 'Bow' may also refer to the curving shape of the bell's rim. The use of the phrase, 'finds tongue' not only

¹Wright, Vol. V, p. 161.

²Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 259.

conveys the idea of finding the voice to speak, but it also refers literally to the clapper of the bell which is sometimes called the tongue.

The first line of the second quatrain says that every thing in nature has one primary function to fulfil. Though each thing may accomplish this task in a different way (as is illustrated by the examples in the first four lines of the sonnet), every creature or object performs this same basic act. The basic function which it accomplishes is to proclaim itself. It must 'deal out,' proclaim, make known that own, individual being which is found within ('indoors') everything.

'Selves' at the beginning of the seventh line is a verb form. 'To self' means to proclaim oneself. The poet goes on to say that every mortal thing says, 'myself.' It cries out 'What I do is me: for that I came.' The objects cited in the opening quatrain, then, do what they must do. It is their function to perform in a certain manner, and to perform as they must is why they came. It is their raison d'etre.

In the sestet the poet turns his attention away from the world of animals and inanimate objects. He concerns himself specifically with man and man's place in the world of things which assert 'self.' Man, he maintains, has more than an inner, instinctive sort of self. Kingfishers, dragonflies, stones, strings and bells only proclaim themselves as they must; man proclaims himself as he wills. It is man's will which distinguishes him from the other forms of nature. While other things in nature 'speak and spell' only of self, man says more. The opening words

of the sestet, 'I say more, ' should be read to mean "I, man, am able to say more than just 'what I am is me'." In the sentence, 'the just man justices, ' 'justices' is used in its obsolete sense as a verb meaning "to exercise justice over, bring to trial."¹ The line may be taken to mean that the just man practices justice. He goes on to say that man 'keeps grace.' That is to say, man makes an effort to stay in God's favor. Man's purpose and function is to serve and please God. By 'keeping grace' it makes all his activities favorable. Man acts in all he does in the imitation of Christ, for in God's eyes Christ is evident in all men. That element of Christ which is in every man makes him lovely, for God sees Christ 'through the features of men's faces.'

One of the outstanding characteristics of Hopkins' poetry is the bold and unusual but effective manner in which he uses sound patterns to achieve alliterative and onomatopoeic effects. This sonnet yields some excellent examples. In the first line, the /k/ and /f/ consonant sounds and the /dr/ and /fl/ blends are each used two times in an alternating fashion. The result is an extremely interesting pattern of interwoven alliterative sounds. The practice of using alliteration throughout a sequence of lines rather than in immediate succession is also evident in the remaining lines of the quatrain. Gardner points out the following four groups of triple alliteration:

¹The Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), Vol. V, p. 641.

<u>t</u> umbled	<u>t</u> ucked	<u>t</u> ells
<u>r</u> im	<u>r</u> oundy	<u>r</u> ing
<u>S</u> tones	<u>s</u> tring	- <u>s</u> <u>t</u> ongue
<u>b</u> ells	<u>B</u> ow	<u>b</u> road ¹

In the first quatrain three sets of internal rhymes are used, each set containing three rhymed words:

ring	string	fling
hung	swung	tongue
wells	tells	bell's

In addition to these rhymes, which tie the lines together in a strongly unified manner, the "ng" sound occurs six times, producing a very interesting onomatopoetic effect.

As has been mentioned previously, Hopkins frequently wrote accent marks into his poems in an effort to more accurately convey his intentions to the reader. The oral interpreter must, therefore, give attention to these marks. If the words so marked are read with more stress than would normally be given them, a new meaning is sometimes revealed. There are two such instances in "As kingfishers catch fire." Line eight is written, 'Whát I dŏ is me:' The first accent calls for emphasis on 'what' rather than on 'I' as it might be read. This is important not only for the rhythm, but also for meaning. It draws attention to the

¹Gardner, Vol. II, p. 316.

specific activity of the 'mortal being' which is speaking, that one function which is distinctive in him. The accented 'what' is a further indication of the Scotist philosophy of the entire sonnet.

The second accent which is of particular importance to the oral interpreter is the one over the 'I' in line nine. By accenting the 'I' attention is drawn to the fact that the speaker, the poet, differs from the other creatures described in that his purpose is more than theirs. Read with the emphasis on 'I', it means "I am in a position to say more about my reason for being than you are. My reason for existence is more important or significant than yours." Without this accent the line might be read with the only noticeable emphasis on 'more.' This would alter the meaning. Read in the latter manner it would seem to say, "I say the reason you (the other creatures) came is more than you have indicated."

Although this sonnet and "Spring and Fall" were both written during the same dismal period of the poet's life, this poem is by far the more optimistic of the two in its theme and mood. Whereas "Spring and Fall" reflects only melancholy and a poignant resignation to the unpleasant fate of man, "As kingfishers catch fire" seems to reaffirm Hopkins' belief in the fundamental worth of mankind. It reflects the belief that Christ exists in all things in somewhat the same manner which was so enthusiastically proclaimed in "The Windhover." As Iyengar phrases it, in this poem "Hopkins' welling faith in the intrinsic goodness of things and in the beauty of human faces is expressed in terms of universality."¹ It is this spirit of faith which the oral interpreter must convey.

¹Iyengar, p. 85.

THE LEADEN ECHO AND THE GOLDEN ECHO

(Maidens' song from St. Winefred's Well)

THE LEADEN ECHO

How to kée¹p - is there á²ny any, is there none such, nowhere
known some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, lá³ce,
latch or catch or key to keep
Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, . . . from van-
ishing away?
Ó is there no frowning of these wrinkles, rankè⁴d wrinkles
deep,
Dó⁵wn? no waving off of these most mournful messengers,
still messengers, sad and stealing messengers of grey?
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's 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;
So be beginning, be beginning to despair.
O there's none; no no no there's none;
Be beginning to despair, to despair,
Despair, despair, despair, despair.

THE GOLDEN ECHO

Spare!

There [/]is one, yes I have one (Hush there!);

Only not within seeing of the sun,

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 away with, undone,

[/]Undone, done with, soon done with, and yet dearly and

dangerously sweet

Of us, the wimpled-water dimpled, not-by-morning-matched
face,

The flower of beauty, fleece of beauty, too too apt to,

ah! to fleet,

Never fleets [/]more, fastened with the tenderest truth

To its own best being and its loveliness of youth: it is

an everlastingness of, O it is an all youth!

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, long locks, lovelocks, gaygear, going

gallant, girlgrace -

Resign them, sign them, seal them, send them, motion them
with breath,

And with sighs soaring, soaring sighs deliver

Them; beauty-in-the-ghost, deliver it, early now, long
before death

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

See; not a hair is, not an eyelash, not the least lash
lost; every hair

Is, hair of the head, numbered.

Nay, what we had lighthanded left in surly the mere mould
Will have waked and have waxed and have walked with the
wind what while we slept,

This side, that side hurling a heavyheaded hundredfold
What while we, while we slumbered.

O then, weary then why should we tread? O why are we so
haggard at the heart, so care-coiled, care-killed,
so fagged, so fashed, so cogged, so cumbered,

When the thing we freely forfeit is kept with fonder a care,
Fonder a care kept than we could have kept it, kept
Far with fonder a care (and we, we should have lost it)
finer, fonder

A care kept. - Where kept? Do but tell us where kept,
where. -

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

Yonder, yes yonder, yonder,
Yonder.

In 1881 Hopkins' duties as a parish priest ended when he returned to Manresa House to enter his tertianship. The year spent at Manresa was followed by two years as an instructor at Stonyhurst College. This interim period, which preceded his appointment as Professor of Classics in Dublin, came as a relief, for he had never been entirely happy as a parish priest. It was during this period that "The Leaden Echo and The Golden Echo" was completed.

Although the poem bears the date, October 13, 1882, it was perhaps several years in preparation. It grew out of a plan to write a play on the martyrdom of St. Winefred. The idea for the play, to be called "St. Winefred's Well," is first mentioned in a letter to Bridges dated October 8, 1879:

I have a greater undertaking on hand than any yet, a tragedy on St. Winefred's Martyrdom. . . It has made some way and, since it will no doubt be long before it is finished, if ever, I can only send you some sample scenes.¹

The inspiration for the play goes back even further. The 1877 he wrote from Wales that the miraculous well of St. Winefred "fills me with devotion every time I see it and wd. fill anyone that has eyes with admiration."² It was during this time in Wales at St. Beuno's College that Hopkins came in close contact with the legends of St. Winefred and

¹Letters I, p. 92.

²Ibid., p. 40.

it was here, doubtless, that the idea for a play found its beginning.

St. Winefred (c. A.D. 650) and her uncle, St. Beuno, are both highly revered Welsh saints. According to the legend, St. Winefred was greatly influenced by the moral teachings of her missionary uncle. A young chieftan, by the name of Caradoc, fell in love with Winefred and when she refused to submit to his wishes, he cut off her head in a fit of rage. St. Beuno miraculously restored her to life by placing her head on the shoulders where it regrew at once. She entered a nunnery and became abbess of the monastery in Denbighshire. The well, which is reputed to have miraculous qualities of healing, sprung up on the spot where Winefred's severed head had fallen.¹

Although in his letters Hopkins frequently refers to the proposed play, it was never finished. Most of his references are to the fact that he has made little or no progress, or he expresses the wish that he could go on with it.² There are, therefore, only fragments of various scenes in existence. The only completed segment is "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo," which was written as "a song for St. Winefred's maidens to sing."³

¹Herbert Thurston, S.J. and Donald Attwater, eds., Butler's Lives of the Saints: Complete edition edited, revised and supplemented (New York: P.J. Kenedy and Sons, 1956), Vol. IV, pp. 245-246.

²See Letters I, pp. 92, 106, 124, 161, 191, 203, 211, 219, 227, 291; Letters II, pp. 32, 89, 105, 143, 149.

³Letters I, p. 106.

Hopkins displayed an increasing interest in music. This poem, written as a song, was very likely intended to be set to music. Since he experimented to some degree with musical composition and wrote music for some of Bridges' verses, it may have been his intention to write music for this poem upon completion of the play.

In a discussion of Hopkins' affinity for music, Gardner makes the following observation about the poem:

The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo . . . seems even now to be crying out for a free modal setting, with harmony borne by stringed instruments and oboe.¹

Hopkins himself remarked about the poem, "I never did anything more musical."²

The first section of the poem, "The Leaden Echo," reflects the sense of despair which has previously been observed in Hopkins' verse regarding the mortality of man. If "Spring and Fall" is bemoaning the fate of man, this poem is an enlargement of the same theme. In this section of the poem, the speaker is openly distraught because of the passing of physical beauty. The second half of the poem is a comforting answer to the wails of the first. Its message is that the outward aspects of beauty which pass with age are not lost at all if one knows that he will be restored to eternal life in God. Gardner describes the theme of the entire poem

¹Gardner, Vol. II, p. 392.

²Letters II, p. 149.

in these words:

The ethico-poetic purpose of the Maidens' song from St. Winefred's Well is to instress and stress the doctrine that mortal beauty can be repossessed, at a price, on the supernatural plane. The subjective point of view in The Leaden Echo (the utterly hopeless anguish of personal loss) is felt even in The Golden Echo, where the consolation is plangently delivered by those Christian Sibyls, the virgins who, at the instance of St. Winefred, had dedicated their lives wholly to God.¹

The poem opens with what has been described as an ". . . impulsive breathlessness, a taut eagerness to find words that will keep pace with the thoughts, which, even as he writes, are rushing on ahead."²

The sense of eagerness is coupled with a feeling of mounting crescendo obtained by the elongated lines and the long series of words. There is a surprising use of words but the result is an effective sound experience, producing an exciting sense of constant forward motion. The almost frantic rush of words is sustained throughout the poem. As one reads, there is the feeling that the stream of words has built to an absolute maximum point of endurance, yet they continue in a sort of piling up of words and ideas and emotions until a sense of rest finally comes at the end of the thought sequence.

¹Gardner, Vol. II, p. 318.

²William T. Noon, S. J., "The Three Languages of Poetry," Immortal Diamond: Studies in Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. Norman Weyand, S. J. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1949), p. 256.

Hopkins explains the effect he is trying to achieve in the opening lines as follows:

I cannot satisfy myself about the first line. You must know that words like charm and enchantment will not do: the thought is of beauty as of something that can be physically kept and lost and by physical things only, like keys . . . Back is not pretty, but it gives that feeling of physical constraint which I want.¹

The next two lines continue the query, asking if there is no way to avoid wrinkles and graying hair. 'Ranked' may mean "strong, great, formidable;" or it may also mean "thorough, extreme;" still another meaning is "wild, rugged, rough;" or "numerous, common."² Any or all of these definitions could be applicable in this context. The fourth line begins rather abruptly and unexpectedly with 'Down?' This unexpected single syllable, isolated so obviously by the question mark following it, can, at first encounter, be confusing to the reader. But its meaning becomes quite clear when one realizes that it is an adverb completing 'frown.'

The remainder of "The Leaden Echo" comes as an answer to the pleas from some 'key' to keep beauty. It is a negative response and both in meaning and in sound it falls heavy. The voice which answers does indeed echo like lead. The constant repetition of negatives (no, none, nothing, nor) emphasizes the futility of trying to 'keep back beauty.' The only answer is despair. The meaning of lines five to sixteen may be summarized

¹Letters I, pp. 161-162.

²Wright, Vol. V, p. 34.

as follows: 'There is no way to retain beauty. You cannot remain fair as you are now no matter what you do. It is wise to know this now and begin to despair. There is nothing which will prevent old age, white hair, wrinkles, and the bodily weaknesses which come with age. Eventually there is death, which is the worst part of getting old, and then you will be wrapped for burial, entombed, and fall quickly into decay. Since this is your only alternative, you may as well not try to retain your beauty, but rather give way now to despair.

"The Golden Echo" comes as a contrast to "The Leaden Echo." It differs in meaning, mood and sound. Where "The Leaden Echo" is negative and speaks of despair, "The Golden Echo" gives a positive answer of hope; where the former is heavy and ominous in sound, the latter is light and joyous. The title, "The Leaden Echo," implies a dullness, heaviness, unpleasantness. By the same token a clue to the second half of the poem is found in its title.

The voice of the golden echo tells how one may keep beauty. It says there is one way, one 'key' to hold it. It is not, however, within this world, nor in this universe. It is a place where all those prized traits of beauty are kept for one more safely than one could keep them himself. The poet then lists some of those possessions of beauty which are desirable. 'Wimpled-water-dimpled, not-by-morning matched face' is one of those qualities and the phrase illustrates Hopkins' practice of combining words to obtain a desired effect. The description is of a face which is dimpled

like a ripple on the water and which is so beautiful that the beauty of morning can not hope to match it. 'Fleece of beauty' compares the beauty of the maidens to the golden fleece of Greek legend which was brilliant and dazzling. These features of beauty are fastened 'To its own best being.' Gardner interprets 'own best being' as "the body after the Resurrection."¹ With this definition in mind, the phrase seems to mean that beauty is kept in safety so that it may be restored in one's eternal life.

The voice then urges the maidens to come to the place where beauty goes and can never be lost. It tells them that they should gladly send their beauty away. 'Beauty-in-the-ghost,' or spiritual beauty, should be returned to God who is beauty himself and the only source of our own beauty.

The next two lines read as follows:

'Nay, what we had lighthanded left in surly the mere mould
Will have waked and have waxed and have walked with the
wind what while we slept . . .'

These lines apparently caused some difficulty for Bridges for Hopkins explains the meaning of them in a letter to Bridges:

'Nay, what lighthanded' etc means 'Nay more: the seed that we so carelessly and freely flung into the dull furrow, and then forgot it, will have come to ear meantime' etc.²

¹Gardner, Poems and Prose, p. 231 n. 36.

²Letters I, p. 159.

The poem concludes by saying there is no reason for one to be troubled about the loss of beauty for if we will freely give it up it will be kept with greater care than we could keep it.

There are several words in the last lines of the poem which may need to be defined. 'Care-coiled' means ensnared with care and 'care-killed' implies an eventual defeat which may result from worry and care. 'Fagged' means "to grow weary, flag, droop."¹ 'Fashed' is defined as "troubled, afflicted, weary."² 'Cogged' means "to cheat, deceive,"³ and 'cumbered' means "inconvenienced, or troubled."⁴

In many respects "The Leaden Echo and The Golden Echo" is one of Hopkins' most interesting and surely one of his most unusual poems. In his definition of poetry, Hopkins says that it may exist "to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning."⁵ Certainly that quality is apparent in this poem. Although the meaning might not make itself immediately apparent, one can hardly hear the poem even on the first reading, without being struck by the sound patterns which the poet has so carefully constructed.

¹Wright, Vol. II, p. 277.

²Ibid., Vol. II, p. 303.

³Ibid., Vol. I, p. 693.

⁴Ibid., Vol. I, p. 838.

⁵Note-books, p. 249.

Among the devices used by Hopkins in this poem which are of particular interest is the interlacing of sounds in the first line. The series includes, bow, brooch, braid, brace, lace, latch, catch, key, and keep. These words are obviously chosen with special care and are arranged in an exact order. They move from "bow" to "keep" and each word is related in sound to the preceding word. The relationship is attained either by the alliterative quality of the initial consonant, or by rhyming. In addition, many of the words are further united by the use of assonance. Consequently one moves from "bow" to "keep" in a steady, step-by-step manner unaware that the first and last words in the series are in no way related to each other in their sound.

Another ingenious device is the transition from "The Leaden Echo" to "The Golden Echo." The first ends with the word 'despair' repeated five times in succession. This repetition reinforces the meaning of the word and the mood of sadness and anguish tremendously. But as this segment of the poem ends and the sound of the word dies away into a melancholy acceptance of the inevitable loss of beauty, the sound is immediately echoed by a new voice. The last syllable of the word then becomes 'Spare!' and takes on an entirely new meaning. It is as if the 'golden voice' which is about to speak is saying, "Hold! Wait a moment! There is a more satisfactory answer."

There are also several excellent examples of onomatopoeia,
Line twelve reads,

'Ruck and wrinkle, drooping, dying, death's worst, winding
 sheets, tombs and worms and tumbling to decay.'

This long list forms an almost perfect trochaic line which sets up a repetitious rhythm until one reaches the last three words. By contrast to the strong rhythm of the first part of the line, 'tumbling to decay' literally 'tumbles' to the end of the line where the completed thought gives a feeling of rest.

Another example of the onomatopoeic effects in the poem is the line which reads, 'And with sighs soaring, soaring sighs deliver.' In order to read this line with clear articulation, it is necessary to decrease the reading rate. The slowing of rate combined with the series of "s" sounds produces a feeling of slow, gliding flight.

In addition to these examples, one may find numerous samples of alliteration, assonance, internal rhyme and other poetic devices which make the poem a unique experience in sound.

Hamilton very efficiently summarizes the total effect of the poem in the following words:

. . . Hopkins saw the necessity of bringing the idea so close to the reader he could not fail to experience it, so he struggled for accurate, exact words, and repeated them until there was nothing left for the reader to do but experience along with the poet.

In . . . "The Leaden Echo" the lushness of phrasing is far from the compression of the Imagists' poetry, but it has the same sort of "terrible immediacy."¹

¹Anne Hamilton, The Seven Principles of Poetry (Boston: The Writer, Inc., 1940), pp. 92-93.

(CARRION COMFORT)

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

Not untwist - slack they may be - these last strands of man

In me [/]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 [/]tróð

Me? or me that fought him? O which one? is it each one?

That night, that year

Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!)

my God.

In 1884 Hopkins assumed the role of Professor of Classics at the Royal University in Dublin, a position which he occupied until his death in 1889. This last period of his life was an unhappy time. He was in poor health, he was burdened with excessive work, he disliked Dublin and, as a loyal Englishman, he was out of place in Ireland in the 1880's. At that time the Irish nationalist movement was at its height. The movement was supported by his students and colleagues alike. All of these factors combined to make his years in Dublin a period of desolation.

In May, 1885 he wrote to Bridges, "I have after long silence written two sonnets, which I am touching: if ever anything was written in blood one of these was."¹ Bridges indicates that the sonnet to which he refers was probably "Carrion Comfort."²

The theme of this poem has been described as "despair faced and hope found."³ The poet reveals the desperate feeling of being deserted by the God to whom he has devoted his entire life, but he resolves not to give in to self-pity or self-destruction. The poem tells of a dark period of doubt and self-examination in which the poet struggles with his own

¹Letters I, p. 219.

²Poems, p. 114 n. 40.

³Anne Fremantle, "Hound of Heaven, Part II: The Labyrinthine Ways," written for "The Catholic Hour," and broadcast by National Broadcasting Company Radio on June 11, 1961.

conscience in an effort to find his proper relationship to God.

Gardner describes the imagery of the octave as having "the vivid inconsequence, the unbelievable actuality of a nightmare."¹ He views the entire poem as the poet's recollection of that nightmare experience of his battle with God. This point of view is a plausible one, especially evident in the last line of the sonnet which refers back to 'That night, that year Of now done darkness.' This phrase is taken as a reference to the long, dark period of struggle between conscience and God.

Perhaps it was the terrifying dream described in his journal that led Hopkins to couch the sonnet in the form of a nightmare. In September, 1873 he wrote in his journal the following description of that dream:

I had a nightmare that night. I thought something or someone leapt onto me and held me quite fast: this I think woke me, so that after this I shall have had the use of reason . . . I had lost all muscular stress elsewhere but not sensitive, feeling where each limb lay and thinking that I could recover myself if I could move my finger, I said, and then the arm and so the whole body. The feeling is terrible: the body no longer swayed as a piece by the nervous and muscular instress seems to fall in and hang like a dead weight on the chest. I cried on the holy name and be degrees recovered myself as I thought to do. It made me think that this was how the souls in hell would be imprisoned in their bodies as in prisons and of what St. Theresa says of the 'little press in the wall' where she felt herself to be in her vision²

¹Gardner, Vol. II, p. 333.

²Note-books, pp. 184-185.

The poem begins with a rejection of despair. The opening line could erroneously be read to mean, "Carrion comfort, I'll not despair." The capital letter which personifies Despair, however, makes it clear that the remark is addressed to Despair. 'Feast' is the verb and 'carrion comfort' describes 'Despair.' The sense of the line is, "I'll not feast on thee, Despair; you are a carrion comfort."

In attempting to find a definition for the phrase, 'carrion comfort,' a common expression comes to mind: 'to eat one's heart out.' 'Carrion' provokes the image of devouring unclean flesh, of satisfying one's appetite on unwholesome material. To feast on Despair would be to give in to self-pity, to 'eat one's heart out.' Comfort derived in this manner is unsatisfactory. The idea is rejected in the opening line.

The poet goes on to say that he will not give up what little strength is left in him and, in utter defeat, say, "I can go no further." He resolves to do something if it is no more than to hope for improvement, to look for a better day tomorrow or to throw aside any wish for death.

In the second quatrain he seeks a reason for his misery. The question, 'why wouldst thou rude on me Thy wring-world right foot rock?' may be confusing. It becomes clear when one realizes that the verb is 'rock.' Holding the verb til near the end of the sentence is a rather common practice with Hopkins. It frequently has the effect of heightening suspense or interest. 'Rude' is an adverb modifying 'rock.' Another frequent practice of Hopkins' is to omit the adverbial ending, -ly. That

practice is exemplified in 'rude.' 'Wring-world' is a descriptive compound which seems to refer to the adversary's ability to wring from the entire world his every wish. The meaning of the line may be further clarified by simply rearranging the words into a more conventional syntax. It may be read as, "Why wouldst thou rudely rock thy wring-world right foot on me?" In other words, he asks, "Why do you choose to trample me under your heavy tread?" The 'terrible' adversary is next presented as a lion-like beast who watches the almost defeated victim and fans him with great gusts from his demon wing, (or perhaps it is an angel's wing).

It is interesting to compare the line, 'me frantic to avoid thee and flee' to the opening lines of Francis Thompson's "The Hound of Heaven" in which a similar battle between God and poet is described:

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;

I fled Him, down the arches of the years;

I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways

Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears

I hid from Him, and under running laughter.¹

Neither poet knew the other's work but they both describe a futile flight from God with remarkable similarity.

In the sestet, the attitude changes. No longer is the poet questioning God or seeking an explanation for his misery. The opening line of

¹ Francis Thompson, The Hound of Heaven (Mt. Vernon, New York: The Peter Pauper Press, no date), p. 5.

the sestet indicates that he knows the answer. The reason for his punishment is so that he may be cleansed. His agony comes from God as a means of purging him. Being freed of all his earthly impurities, he will emerge clean and pure in spirit.

Gardner points to a note made by Hopkins while he was at retreat in 1883 which reflects the same general attitude that God-given suffering brings purity; to be purified one must be purged:

In meditating on the Crucifixion I saw how my asking
to be raised to a higher degree of grace was asking
also to be lifted on a higher cross.¹

The next line is interpreted by Pick as meaning, "Since, so it seems to me at least, I kissed the rod, or rather I should say, the hand that punished me, etc."² 'Rod,' it may be recalled, was also used in "God's Grandeur" as a symbol of God's authority. There is the implication of the same meaning in this sonnet. But, in addition there is the stronger connotation of 'rod' as an instrument of punishment. In this context, that instrument of punishment (God's authority) is being wielded by the mighty hand of the punisher (God). The poet indicates that he 'kissed the rod,' meaning that he willingly accepted God's will and abandoned all self-interests in total submission to God. In that submission he finds strength and joy and cheer. Then the question arises

¹Devlin, The Sermons and Devotional Writings, p. 254.

²Pick, Priest and Poet, p. 148.

as to who is being cheered. Is it the tormentor whose terrible punishment is gladly accepted, or does the joy come from the sense of pride he feels from having withstood the punishment inflicted upon him? Perhaps, he decides, it is both.

The last line is a recollection of the struggle which has been described in the preceding lines. It is a recollection of the period of self-examination in which he finds renewed hope. Knowing that God has inflicted him with punishment in order to purge him of his sins, he now wonders how he could have ever resisted God's will. With a sudden feeling of horror he realizes that he has dared to 'wrestle' with his God.

The phrase, '(my God!) my God.' which appears in the last line is vaguely reminiscent of Christ's last words on the cross. Although they are used in a different sense by Hopkins, the words present a striking parallel. In the early part of the poem he reveals his sense of having been forsaken by God. The torment has been so great that it is not unlike Christ's suffering on the cross. Through his own agony, he can more clearly understand Christ's words and he can more fully appreciate Christ's outcry. The closing words of the sonnet come as a faint echo of Christ's plea, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

A special problem for the interpreter arises from the last line. Regarding this line and the task of reading it in an acceptable manner, Gardner makes the following observation:

The speaking of this line as it is written and as Hopkins intended it to be spoken has been described as "a physical impossibility." But Mr. Valentine Dyall the actor, in a broadcast reading of the poem, has shown that it can be done; he reduced the parenthesis to a whisper of horror without destroying the sequence of "wrestling with my God."¹

The example set by Dyall and described above by Gardner may be followed to good advantage by any oral interpreter of this sonnet.

The general problem of the oral interpreter in reading this sonnet is to reveal to his audience the author's attitude. The deep, agonizing desolation of the author must be communicated. The suffering is intense and the voice must show that intensity. It should be read with a quietness which comes from fatigue; with a weariness which has grown out of the long, useless battle; with a painfulness which results from suffering. There must also be, however, a certain stoic attitude in the reader's delivery. In spite of the pain and torment and mental anguish which has been experienced, it is endured without complaint. The reader, therefore, must avoid any indication of pitifulness in the voice. There must not be an element of complaint which could result in a whining quality of the voice. There is still a note of pride and strength of spirit in the author's attitude and the reader's voice and bodily action must convey this attitude. The poet emerges triumphant.

¹Gardner, Vol. II, p. 334 n. 1.

(I WAKE AND FEEL THE FELL OF DARK)

I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day.

What hours, O what black hours we have spent

This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!

And more must, in yet longer light's delay.

With witness I speak this. But where I say

Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament

Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent

To dearest him that lives alas! away.

I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree

Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;

Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.

Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see

The lost are like this, and their scourge to be

As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.

On September 1, 1885 Hopkins wrote to Bridges:

I shall shortly have some sonnets to send you, five or more. Four of these came like inspirations unbidden and against my will. And in the life I lead now, which is one of a continually jaded and harassed mind, if in any leisure I try to do anything I make no way --- nor with my work, alas! but so it must be.¹

Bridges indicates that one of the five sonnets to which Hopkins refers may be "I wake and feel the fell of dark." Although the poem is unnamed and bears no definite date, Bridges feels that it may go back as early as 1885.² At any rate it should be included, along with "Carrion Comfort," in that list of six or seven sonnets which were written during the years in Ireland and which Bridges calls the "terrible" sonnets.³

Gardner refers to "I wake and feel the fell of dark" and "Carrion Comfort" as sister sonnets.⁴ The two are indeed related not only in time but also in theme. The mood of both of these sonnets is one of despair and each sheds light on the other. Most of the sonnets of the Irish period reveal the unhappiness which Hopkins experienced and reflect the feeling of having been abandoned by God. They are called the sonnets of desolation, and the title is an apt one. But amid the desolation which

¹Letters I, p. 221.

²Poems, pp. 166-167.

³Ibid., pp. 99-100.

⁴Gardner, Vol. II, p. 335.

is apparent in these sonnets, there also remains a steadfast belief. Hopkins never surrenders completely to doubt nor indicates a loss of faith. There is always the hope of salvation.

The octave of "I wake and feel the fell of dark" is fairly straightforward and clear in meaning. Like "Carrion Comfort," the nightmare theme is again used. The night of restlessness described in the sonnet should be taken symbolically. It does not represent literally a single night of despair, but rather a period of darkness and doubt in his life. In "Carrion Comfort" the poet speaks of that period of darkness as 'now done,' indicating that it is past and the conflict resolved. In this sonnet, however, the conflict does not appear to be finished for he says there will be more black hours like those already witnessed.

'Fell,' occurring in the first line is perhaps the only word in the octave which is ambiguous. The word means "a skin or hide of a beast."¹ It is used in the sonnet in the sense of a covering or blanket of night. In addition, however, 'fell' carries another connotation. It may mean "cruel, fierce or very painful and destructive."² Consequently, the word may be taken to refer to the cruel, painful, dreaded cover of night. In the first quatrain, the poet experiences a moment of wakefulness in his period of darkness but is aware that it is still dark. He addresses

¹Webster, p. 930.

²Ibid.

his heart recalling the black hours they have experienced together.

He tells his heart that it must expect to see still more agony, for light will be delayed still longer. 'Light' refers to the eternal light and the spiritual peace which it will bring.

The second quatrain emphasizes the intensity of his agony and the apparent endlessness of it. The opening sentence is significant. 'With witness I speak this,' means that the suffering is so great, so indescribable that only God can know how painful it has been to him. He says that the dark hours of which he speaks are more like years, even a lifetime. This line is very similar to the line in "Carrion Comfort" in which he refers to 'that night, that year of now done darkness.' By first referring to the 'night' then immediately changing it to 'year,' he emphasizes the length of the struggle. Both references represent an endless struggle, for the suffering is not new, it is not just the one single period of restlessness. He has cried out countless times of his despair. The worst part of his despair is told in the last lines of the octave. He feels that his prayers have fallen on deaf ears. He has sent them to the Christ he adores, but they have gone like 'dead letters.' This is the whole basis for his utter desolation. This attitude is entirely consistent with the teachings of his Church. The Catholic Church does not place a great deal of stress on the fear of a fiery hell. It teaches, rather, that the worst part of damnation is being forced to live through eternity deprived of the presence of God.

The sestet is not quite so straightforward in its statement. The elliptical syntax so typical of Hopkins becomes more evident. The first tercet is a violent, self-debasing condemnation. The connotation of "bitterness" occurs three times. 'I am gall, I am heartburn' may be understood as "I am like gall; like heartburn." It is important to note, however, that the poet does not say that he is like gall and heartburn, but rather that he is gall; heartburn. He is saying that he does not suffer from these discomforts, he is the very embodiment of them. 'Gall' refers to anything which is bitter, and 'heartburn' may be defined in the same way. 'Heartburn' is sometimes used to mean "bitter jealousy."¹ All the references emphasize the bitter, deplorable being which he envisions himself to be. 'God's most deep decree Bitter would have me taste,' is interpreted to mean "God would have me understand a most bitter fact, would have me face a truth which is difficult to admit." That bitter truth is the poet himself. He is man, and is filled with the sin of man. His bones, flesh and blood all carry his curse. The description of himself in terms of flesh, blood and bone emphasizes the mortal aspect of the man. This description is used elsewhere by Hopkins. The line brings to mind immediately a line in "The Wreck of The Deutschland" in which he says, 'Thou has bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh.'² 'Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours,' means that a spirit or

¹Ibid., p. 1151.

²"The Wreck of The Deutschland," Stanza 1.

soul which is independent of God, which is alone, selfish will sour like dough in which bad yeast has been used. Dough can not properly rise without active yeast, nor can a soul rise or increase in grace without God. It cannot grow by itself, it will only sour.

The sonnet concludes by drawing an analogy between the lost souls, or those in hell, and himself. The scourge of the lost souls is that they must remain their own pitiful selves with no hope of change. His scourge is the same, to be himself; but, with one important difference. He still has hope. The scourge of the lost souls, therefore, is even worse than his.

The last two words of the sonnet are very important. The only note of optimism, the only consolation found in the sonnet is summer up in those words. The poet realizes that the plight of the damned is like his, but he also finds hope in discovering that their condition is far worse. In spite of his desolation and suffering, the misery could be greater, his soul could be totally lost. His condition of mind and spirit is an almost unbearable burden to him, but at least he still has the hope of God and salvation. Although he is filled with doubt and feels completely abandoned by his God, there is still a chance for redemption. He is not yet lost.

The oral interpreter of this sonnet may employ much the same general approach followed for "Carrion Comfort." Because of the similarity of the two sonnets, the method of reading is also similar. The same quietness and sense of defeat should be revealed in both readings.

In "I wake and feel the fell of dark," however, the feeling of surrender may be even more apparent. In "Carrion Comfort" the author's strong resolution not to give in to despair is apparent from the first. In the latter sonnet, the poet is closer to the point of submission.

Special attention should be given by the interpreter to the two final words. As has been pointed out, these words carry the only hope in the sonnet. They are emphatically isolated by the punctuation and are intended to be read with the same isolation. These two words should be preceded by a pause which will set them apart from the rest of the line and should come as a sudden revelation. The last line gradually falls in volume, pitch and intensity. The diminuendo carries down to the word, 'selves' and then, after a pause, the last two words bring the line back up to a slightly higher level of pitch and volume.

THAT NATURE IS A HERACLITEAN FIRE AND OF THE
COMFORT OF THE RESURRECTION

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.

Delightfully the bright wind boisterous | ropes, wrestles,
beats earth bare

Of yestertempest's creases; | in pool and rut peel parches
Squandering ooze to squeezed | dough, crust, dust; stanches,
starches

Squadroned masks and manmarks | treadmire toil there
Footfretted in it. Million-fueled, | nature's bonfire
burns on.

But quench her bonniest, dearest to her, her clearest-
selved spark

Mañ, how fast his firedint, | his mark on mind, is gone!

Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark
 Drowned. O pity and indignation! Manshape, that shone
 Sheer off, disseveral, a star, death blots black out;

nor mark

Is any of him at all so stark

But vastness blurs and time beats level. Enough! the

Resurrection,

A heart's-clarion! Away grief's gasping, joyless days,
 dejection.

Across my foundering deck shown

A beacon, an eternal beam. Flesh fade, and mortal trash
 Fall to the residuary worm; world's wildfire, leave but
 ash:

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.

"That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" bears the date July 26, 1888.

It was written just nine months before the onset of Hopkins' final illness and less than a year before his death. It belongs in the final period of his life and is one of the "terrible" sonnets of that period. It is included in the present study, however, because it represents the poet's most mature work. It was one of the last poems he wrote. This would be reason enough to include it in the group of poems currently under study; but in addition, it is a contrast to "Carrion Comfort" and "I wake and feel the fell of dark." It represents the poet's final victory over the doubt expressed in those two earlier poems. Gardner calls it a poem of "recovery" and describes it as "the almost exhausted poet's great counter-blast" to the dejection and desolation which is seen in the other "terrible" sonnets.¹ It is certainly among the most admired of all Hopkins' works and has been called "one of the great Christian poems of all time."²

The title of the poem is derived from the early Greek philosopher, Heraclitus (c. 500 B.C.). He advanced the theory that everything is in a constant state of flux. Nothing ever remains the same but is constantly changing from one form to another. For Heraclitus the substance which seemed to have the least stability and which least tolerates it in other things is fire. Therefore, the essence of all things is fire:

¹Gardner, Vol. I, p. 360.

²Ibid.

This world, which is the same for all, was made neither by a god nor by man, but it ever was, and is, and shall be, ever-living Fire, in measures being kindled and in measures going out.¹

The idea of constant change is exemplified in another of his illustrations for which Heraclitus is perhaps even more famous. It was he who voiced the notion that one can never step twice into the same river, meaning, of course, that because of the constantly changing nature of all things, the river would have altered from the time one first stepped into it until he stepped into it again.²

The Heraclitean notion is employed by Hopkins as he depicts various elements of nature acting and interacting against each other to produce an ever-changing scene. Clouds, water, wind, and even mankind are all caught up in the change. One element blots out the other and they are all fuel for 'nature's bonfire.'

The overall theme of the poem is that all nature is a part of this enormous transiency. Even man, who is nature's finest creation, is apparently only a part of the 'fuel.' But, consolation may be found in the fact that man does not simply disappear in the great holocaust. Because of the Resurrection, man's earthly demise is only the beginning of a far greater and richer life. In an ecstatic moment of realization,

¹Heraclitus, On the Universe, fragment XX, With an English Translation by W. H. S. Jones, Vol. IV of The Loeb Classical Library (50 vols; London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1931).

²Ibid., fragment XLI; fragment LXXXI.

the poet sees that with death comes the total fulfilment of his existence. All at once he is 'immortal diamond.' He, like Christ, is in the presence of God.

This poem is filled with the compounds, archaic words, and unique usages of which Hopkins is so fond. In order to obtain a full understanding of the poem, many of these words need to be defined.

The first line of the sonnet is an accumulation of three "cloud" images. The practice of adding one image to another in a series is not uncommon in Hopkins' poetry. It is a device which he successfully uses to intensify the thought. This practice is common in Welsh poetry, where it is called dyfalu¹ and it may well have been adopted from that source by Hopkins. It is also of interest to note that among the many notations on nature which appear in his early note-books, various descriptions of clouds are abundant. Many of the words employed in this line, such as 'tufts,' 'tossed,' and 'pillow' are also used in those early prose descriptions of clouds.²

'Chevy' means "hunt, chase, flight,"³ and 'roysterers,' appearing in the second line, is an alternate spelling of 'roisterer' which means "a bully; a swaggering, blustering fellow."⁴ The compound

¹Gardner, Vol. I, p. 110.

²See Note-books, pp. 136, 140, 181.

³Webster, p. 463.

⁴Wright, Vol. V., p. 142.

'heaven-roysterers' refers to the cloud's swaggering, blustering movement about the sky. In view of the lines which follow, describing wind and water, one may assume that the cloud movement described is the turbulent activity so apparent before a rain storm. The basis for the description of clouds which 'glitter in marches' may also be found in the note-books. He describes clouds as being "in march . . . marching across the sky in regular ranks."¹ Many of the images in the third and fourth lines are also described elsewhere. He once wrote that, "young elmleaves lash and lip the sprays,"² and on another occasion he observed, "The hangers of smaller but barky branches, seen black against the leaves from within, look like ship-tackle."³ These descriptions help to clarify the line, 'wherever an elm arches, Shivelights and shadowtackle in long lashes lace, lance, and pair.' 'Shive' means "a thin piece or fragment."⁴ Combined with -light, it creates the image of a thin splinter of light.

The next line describes the 'boisterous' wind as one which 'ropes, wrestles, beats earth bare . . .' These words all help to create the feeling of strife and conflict, one element of nature against the other.

Bridges indicates that 'rut peel,' which appears in line six, may

¹Note-books, p. 145.

²Ibid., p. 190.

³Ibid., p. 124.

⁴Webster, p. 2317.

be a compound word since it is not clear in the manuscript.¹ In either case 'peel' may be taken to mean 'rind' or 'skin.' In this context it probably refers to the ridge of mud which is forced up when a rut is made. One may not immediately locate the subject of the verb, 'parches,' but it is the boisterous wind which parches the ruts and pools, changing them from ooze, to dough, to crust and finally to dust. The compound, 'manmarks' refers to any man-made marks which are left, particularly in this instance, to the many footprints left in the mud. 'Footfretted' has been defined as "stamped into intricate interlaced pattern or fretting."² It has been noted that "The phrase, 'treadmire toil' exploits all the unpleasant associations of 'treadmill' in a wider field of reference."³ As further clarification of the line, Bridges observes that the relative pronoun is apparently omitted and the line should be read to mean, 'the manmarks that treadmire toil footfretted in it.'⁴ All of these descriptions are then followed by the observation that nature's bonfire burns on, being kindled by these activities and in a million other ways besides.

At this point in the sonnet, the poet turns his attention from the flux observed in nature generally, to the more specific observation of

¹Poems, p. 117.

²Schoder, "Glossary," p. 213.

³Gardner, Vol. I, p. 123.

⁴Poems, p. 117.

it in man.

The next two lines take notice of the fact that man, like all other things in nature, also dies and is soon forgotten, even though he is nature's fairest and dearest creation. The word, 'dint' which occurs in the compound, 'firedint,' means "a blow; a stroke; striking." It may also mean "force; power."¹ The compound is taken to mean man's mark, the power he has exerted, the stroke he has made in the great fire of nature. The line means that the place he has occupied and the memory of him in the minds of others are both soon gone. They are 'drowned in an enormous dark.' This thought elicits from the poet a cry of despair, 'O pity and indignation!' He goes on to amplify and enforce the idea that death brings an absolute and total end to man. He says the man that shone is thoroughly severed; he was a star, but death extinguishes him. No matter how strong a mark the man makes, the vastness of eternity will slur him and time will erase any memory of him. 'Stark' is used in its original sense of "strong."

The author's attitude changes a second time at this point. This time a totally new point of view is introduced. All of the preceding lines have dealt with the apparent transiency of man, but the remaining lines show how thoroughly wrong such an attitude is. The transition comes abruptly. The new idea is introduced with a sharp command, 'Enough!'

¹Webster, p. 734.

The foregoing pessimistic outlook may be forgotten, for the Resurrection has clearly and loudly proclaimed it to be false. All the grief and 'joyless days' (such as were described in "Carrion Comfort" and "I wake and feel the fell of dark") may be done away with. At a time of doubt this realization comes as an 'eternal beam.' One's flesh may fade and the body may fall to the worms, one's worldly life may be reduced to ashes, but it is unimportant. The reason is then explained in the closing lines which stand as a triumphant declaration of the poet's victory over despair. It is because Christ became man and through his Resurrection became immortal; and mortal man, through his imitation of Christ, may also enjoy immortality.

Several words in the closing lines may need definition. 'Jack' means "a man of the common people," but it formerly meant a "lowbred fellow; a boor."¹ It is in the more disparaging sense that the word is used. 'Joke' is used to mean "an object of joking; laughingstock."² 'Pots-herd,' meaning a "piece or fragment of a broken earthen pot,"³ is taken as a reference to the incomplete or unfulfilled man. 'Patch' is used to mean "a fool or jester; a clown; ninny, dolt."⁴ 'Matchwood' refers to

¹Webster, p. 1322.

²Ibid., p. 1340.

³Ibid., p. 1933.

⁴Ibid., p. 1790.

that wood which is suitable only for making matches, hence, splinters or small pieces. Here it refers to the insignificance, the unimportance of the man. All of these descriptive words are used to emphasize the worthlessness, the unimportance and the insignificance of the mortal man. But along with all these unimpressive qualities, man also possesses the quality to become 'immortal diamond.' This is the quality which matters.

In the closing lines of this sonnet Hopkins employs a curious rhyme. He rhymes 'diamond' with 'I am, and.' This is only one of several unusual rhymes which may be found in his poetry.¹ The practice has been condemned by some critics but it illustrates his fondness of manipulating words to meet his needs and his amazing skill in handling the language.

The sonnet has been described by Bridges as being in "sprung

¹Attention is frequently called to the rhyme in stanza six of "The Loss of the Eurydice:"

'But what Boreas wrecked her? he
Came equipped, deadly-electric.'

Perhaps the most peculiar of all his rhymes is in "The Bugler's First Communion:"

'This very very day came down to us after a boon he on
My late being there begged of me, overflowing
Boon in my bestowing,
Came, I say, this day to it - to a First Communion.'

About the latter rhyme, Bridges wrote: "The rhyme to communion in 'The Bugler' is hideous, and the suspicion that the poet thought it ingenious is appalling." (Poems, pp. 98-99).

rhythm, with many outrides and hurried feet."¹ He also points out that the sonnet form which is used has three codas.² Hopkins refers to this sonnet in a letter to Bridges in which he describes it as having only two codas:

I will now go to bed, the more so as I am going to preach tomorrow and put plainly to a Highland congregation of MacDonalds, MacIntoshes, MacKillops, and the rest what I am putting not at all plainly to the rest of the world, or rather to you and Canon Dixon, in a sonnet in sprung rhythm with two codas.³

Bridges points out that this was an oversight on Hopkins' part since the sonnet has three, not two, codas. Gardner agrees with Bridges. He describes the sonnet's form in the following manner:

Actually there are three codas with an extra burden-line at the end, making a total of twenty alexandrines, three trimeters and one dimeter . . . the first fourteen lines are rhymed like a regular sonnet of Miltonic structure.⁴

The first fourteen lines are rhymed a b b a a b b a c d c d c d, in the regular sonnet form. If the three trimeter lines are not counted as part of the rhyme scheme, but rather are regarded as part of the lines which follow them, then the sonnet may be regarded as having twenty

¹Poems, p. 117.

²Ibid.

³Letters I, p. 279.

⁴Gardner, Vol. I, p. 107.

lines with the last six rhymed e e f f g g. In this case, the sonnet does indeed have three codas.

It is the opinion of this writer, however, that Hopkins did, in fact, mean it when he said the sonnet has two codas. If the three trimeters are included in the rhyme pattern, then the sonnet may be regarded as having twenty-three lines and the extra nine lines are rhymed d e e c f f f g g. The first lines (d e e) form the first coda; the remaining lines (c f f g g) form the second coda. The later follows exactly the rhyme pattern of the extra lines in Milton's tailed sonnet "On the New Forcers of Conscience Under the Long Parliament," which is also rhymed c f f g g. The dimeter at the close of the sonnet is regarded as part of the closing alexandrine.

Whether this sonnet has three codas or two is a moot point and bears little direct relationship to the successful reading of the poem. The oral reader's first task in preparing for a presentation of this poem is to gain a clear understanding of the meaning, thereby gaining a knowledge of the correct placement of stresses. He should keep in mind the caesural marks as inserted by the poet and in general follow Hopkins' advice that it should be read "leisurely, poetical (not rhetorical) recitation, with long rests, long dwells on the rhyme and other marked syllables. . ."¹

When reading this sonnet or any of Hopkins' poetry, the oral interpreter should keep in mind, above all else, the poet's instruction: ". . . take a breath and read it with the ears, as I always wish to be read, and my verse becomes all right."²

¹Letters I, p. 246.

²Ibid., p. 79.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

It was proposed at the outset of this study that its purpose be two-fold. The first task was to organize Hopkins' scattered prose writings into a unified statement of his poetic theories. The second purpose was to analyze selected poems of Hopkins' for oral interpretation. To complete either of these tasks, it was also necessary to study the events and influences in the poet's life in order to form a background which would explain his theories and his poetry. Such a background is needed to provide an understanding of the bases for the theories, and it is also necessary for a full appreciation of his poetry. Therefore, the study was organized in a manner which, it is felt, would best provide this information.

The first step was to develop the necessary background for understanding his theories and works. This includes the relevant facts about his life, the influences which worked upon him, his most outstanding contributions to original thought, and the basic philosophies which governed his actions. Secondly, an attempt was made to define and organize his poetic theories. This information was discussed in relationship to those

events and influences of his life which helped to mold his ideas. The third step was to select a representative body of Hopkins' poetry for analysis. In selecting the poems to be analyzed, an effort was made to choose works from various periods in the poet's life so as to give a fair sample of all his writing.

It was found that several factors in Hopkins' life were profoundly influential in shaping his outlook and his poetry. He came from a home which encouraged active scholarship and a lively interest in art and literature. His formal education at Highgate school and at Oxford provided a sound background in classical literature which influenced his own writing. Another circumstance of his life brought him into close contact with Welsh poetry which was also a major influence. Some of the most original qualities of his poetry, such as "consonant-chiming" and the practice of adding one image to another in series, are directly traceable to the Welsh influence.

The most influential factor in the events of his life, however, was his conversion to the Roman Catholic Church and his subsequent entrance into the priesthood and the Society of Jesus. Hopkins' religious enthusiasm, which began at Oxford, was a constant and profound influence on his life. His devotion to his church and to his religious order permeated every action and belief. It dictated the course of his life and was the most important single influence on his poetry.

In addition to the circumstances of his life which were influential, there were several individuals whose writings helped shape Hopkins' own philosophy and attitude toward poetry. Among these, the most important was John Duns Scotus, in whom Hopkins found the philosophical justification for his love of natural beauty. Heretofore the sensual awareness which Hopkins felt, had seemed unsuited to his Jesuit discipline. Among the poets who bore an influence upon Hopkins' writing, Milton is the most significant. Hopkins regarded Milton as the great master of English poetry. It was through a study of Milton's works that Hopkins formulated his theories of rhythm which eventually led to the development of his own system of sprung rhythm, his most significant contribution to English prosody. Hopkins was also influenced by Wordsworth with whom he shared a great love of natural beauty. For the same reason Hopkins also was influenced by Keats. Keat's influence is most easily seen in Hopkins' earliest work, but the appreciation which he held for Keats lasted throughout his lifetime.

The circumstances of Hopkins' life which bore an important influence on him culminated to produce some unique and original thought. His intense love for natural beauty, supported by the Scotian concept of "individuation," led him to the concepts of inscape and instress. Inscap is Hopkins' idea of internal design or force of things, the "soul" of an object which gives it its individual beauty and purpose. The related concept, instress, may be defined as the felt effect of inscape upon the perceiver.

A more important contribution to original thought is the development of sprung rhythm, which grew out of Hopkins' desire for freedom of expression but which also reflects his acceptance of discipline. This innovation stemmed from the influence of Milton's poetry.

Because of his interest in poetry he also was able to formulate some interesting theories based upon the poetry which he read. He classified poetry into three major divisions: Poetry proper, which is inspired; Parnassian, which is the language of most true poets; and Delphic, the lowest form of poetic language. He also identified two minor sub-categories which he called Castalian and Olympian.

The study of Hopkins' poetry readily reveals the influences of his life, his background, and his vocation. First, his poetry is almost entirely religious in nature, an indication of his unfailing devotion to his vocation. The moods of his poetry vary from joyous ecstasy to deep despondency, but the theme always reflects an unswerving faith in Christianity.

Many of his works show the influence of his general philosophy. The concept of inscape makes itself very apparent in "The Windhover" and "As kingfishers catch fire," and, of course, the devotion to Christ, which comes from his religious training may be seen in almost all of his poetry.

His religion is also reflected in the themes of his poetry. One of the features of Hopkins' work which is outstanding is the universality

of their appeal. His poems deal primarily with the theme of man and his relationship to God. Few themes can be more universally appreciated than that of religion. Whether an individual shares Hopkins' ritualistic and sacramental attitude toward religion, he is likely to be interested in this point of view, for the various practices of religion, its acceptance or rejection, is of interest to all men.

Hopkins' acceptance of discipline and exactness also manifests itself in his poetry. Most of his poems were carefully worked and revised until he produced the effect for which he was striving. There are many entries in his note-books which show that several versions were frequently written before a poem reached a satisfactory form.

For the oral interpreter the aspect of Hopkins' poetry which is of paramount importance is his employment of various auditory devices. One of the first things that strikes the reader of Hopkins' poetry is the abundant use of alliteration. It pervades all of his verse. But Hopkins goes beyond simply using a series of words whose initial consonants are the same. He succeeds in weaving alliteration into an entire line so that several alliterative patterns are effectively bound together. An excellent example is seen in this line from one of his sonnets: 'As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame.' Four pairs of alliterative consonants are woven together (k, f, dr, fl). In the same poem he uses the "ng" sound six times in the space of two lines producing a strong alliterative and onomatopoetic effect. He also succeeds in using a single

alliteration throughout an entire line without making it so obvious as to be offensive. Such a line occurs in "The Golden Echo:" 'Will have waked and have waxed and have walked with the wind what while we slept.' He occasionally uses vowel alliteration as in "The Windhover:" 'and act, oh, air.'

Together with alliteration, the patterning of vowel sounds is a technique which is apparent in all of Hopkins' poetry. Several examples are evident in one of his most famous poems, "The Windhover." 'Fall, gall,' 'dawn-dawn-falcon,' 'plough down,' and 'stirred for a bird' all exemplify this use of assonance. One of the most ingenious examples of assonance, used in conjunction with alliteration to produce a unified pattern of sound, may be found in the first line of "The Leaden Echo," which includes this series of words: 'bow, brooch, braid, brace, lace, latch, catch, key, keep.'

Another of Hopkins' practices which results in an interesting sound pattern is the use of images one after the other in such a manner as to intensify the thought. This technique (probably copied from the dyfalu of Welsh verse) is evident in many line. In the opening line of "The Windhover," for example, the bird is presented as 'morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn falcon.' It is also apparent in "The Golden Echo" when beauty is described as 'whatever's prized and passes of us, everything that's fresh and fast flying of us, seems to us sweet of us.' "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" provides still another

example of this "piling up" of images, in a description of clouds: 'Cloud-puff-balls, torn tufts, tossed pillows . . . heaven-roysterers.' This device which gives the feeling of a sudden rush of words provides an effective sound experience and moves the line forward with a smooth motion.

Hopkins always employs a strict rhyme pattern. His ascetic nature insisted that he impose upon himself the discipline of an exact rhyme scheme. His methods of achieving that rhyme are frequently unorthodox, but they are always interesting. On several occasions he divides the last word in a line to make it rhyme. Examples may be found in "The Windhover" where he divides 'kingdom' so as to rhyme 'king-' dome 'wing;' or in "The Loss of the Eurydice" where 'all un-' is rhymed with 'fallen.' He also uses other unconventional methods of achieving rhyme. In "The Bugler's First Communion" he auditorily transposes the "sh" of 'shares' from the beginning of one line so that the preceding line will produce the desired rhyme. In this manner he rhymes 'Irish' with 'sire he Sh(ares.)' In the same poem he rhymes 'communion' with 'a boon he on.' In "The Loss of the Eurydice" he transposes the initial "e" sound of 'electric' to the end of a phrase so that it may be thought of as rhyming with 'wrecked her? he.'

His rhymes are frequently unexpected, a bit obscure and perhaps too contrived, but they are never dull or uninteresting. The oral interpreter must give them due attention and abide by Hopkins' wishes that

his poetry be read with "long dwells on the rhyme."¹ He recognized the pleasure which may be derived from interesting rhymes, and so must the oral reader.

Other aspects of Hopkins' poetry which are of particular interest to the oral interpreter should also be noted. It is necessary to read only a few of Hopkins' poems to be made very much aware of the frequent use of compound words. Occasionally the poet combines three or more words to form a compound. He frequently combines two words to create images which are not only terse and exact in their description, but are also provocative in that they widen the field of reference and make the image more vivid. He does not hesitate to combine any of the various parts of speech but the compounds which seem to be most prevalent are (a) the combination of noun and noun (leafmeal,² lovelocks,³ girlgrace,³ lionlimb,⁴ shivelights,⁵ shadowtackle,⁵ manmarks⁵); (b) the combination of adjective and adjective (lovely-dumb,⁶ blue-bleak,⁷ gold-vermilion⁷); and (c) the combination of adjective and noun (wanwood,² gaygear,³ and gay-gangs⁵).

¹Letters I, p. 246.

²"Spring and Fall"

³"The Golden Echo"

⁴"Carrion Comfort"

⁵"That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire"

⁶"The Habit of Perfection"

⁷"The Windhover"

Another feature of Hopkins' poetry which is readily apparent is the use of unfamiliar words. The result of this practice has been that Hopkins is frequently credited with having coined many new words. The truth is, however, that there are few coinages. But he frequently revives words which are obsolete, archaic, or are dialectical in usage. Examples are abundant and can be seen in almost any of his poems. Either the revival of older words or the use of original compounds will account for almost all of the words which are sometimes regarded as Hopkins' coinages.

The oral interpreter should also note Hopkins' practice of including certain markings in his poetry. In his early manuscripts he employed many and varied markings (for the most part borrowed from musical notation) in an attempt to show the performer how he intended his poetry to be read. He later abandoned the practice however, and admitted that an over abundance of such marks was distracting and confusing. Those which he felt are essential were retained, however, and are usually printed in all editions of his poetry. Of the marks which remain the only two which occur with any degree of frequency are the stress mark and the caesural mark. The stress markings are of particular significance for the oral interpreter since they give him some indication of the way the poet wishes the poem to be read.

The author's markings may also be a clue to the intended meaning for they occasionally fall on a word which would not normally be stressed. The shift of emphasis, indicated by the mark, may change the sense of

the line.

The interpreter needs also to be aware of Hopkins' use of the sectional pause. It is not uncommon to find a line whose first word completes the thought of the preceding line. Since the thought is completed, a pause usually follows. Occuring, as it does, so near the beginning of the line, it may come unexpectedly, thus disrupting the proper reading of the line. These sectional pauses should be observed and carefully rehearsed by the reader. If necessary, they should be marked on the manuscript so as to avoid any error in reading. Examples of this device may be seen in "God's Grandeur;"

'It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed.'

or in "The Windhover;"

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

Buckle!'

and again in "The Leaden Echo;"

'O is there no frowning of these wrinkles, ranked wrinkles deep,

Down?'

Throughout the analysis of Hopkins' poetry in Chapter VI of this work, suggestions were made for reading the individual selections. In conclusion it should be pointed out that the oral performance of the poetry of Hopkins is not an easy task. The unconventional syntax, the use of archaic words and unfamiliar compounds, the omission of connective

words, and the compressed phrasing make his poems difficult to understand and frequently provoke the criticism that they are too obscure. Because they are difficult, they present a challenge to the oral reader. That challenge can only be met through diligent effort. Each poem must be carefully studied as an individual work of art, but one's understanding will be greatly enhanced if it is also viewed in relationship to Hopkins' other work. Further understanding and appreciation may be obtained if one possesses a knowledge of Hopkins' life and poetic theory. It is felt that the present work provides that information for the oral interpreter. It is also felt that the analysis of selected poems provides a foundation upon which the interpreter may build. It is intended as a guide to preparation, an approach to understanding the poetry of Hopkins. It is hoped that this analysis effectively points the direction which the oral interpreter should take in presenting a successful reading of the poetry. The success of such a presentation will depend not only upon the understanding and preparation of the reader, but also upon the attention of the listening audience. Hopkins' poetry demands an active listener. But if the poetry is read by a well prepared interpreter, it will also command the listener's attention for it is difficult to hear Hopkins' poetry without becoming intrigued by the music of its sound.

Although a reading of the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins must be preceded by diligent preparation, it is worth the effort involved. The outcome can be rewarding for both reader and listener. When properly treated the poetry, like the poet, does indeed emerge 'Immortal Diamond.'

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