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Hopkins's conversions: The case of A. C. Swinburne

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City University of New York, 1992

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HOPKINS'S CONVERSIONS: THE CASE OF A. C. SWINBURNE

by

RENEE V. OVERHOLSER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University
of New York.

1992

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

HOPKINS'S CONVERSIONS: THE CASE OF A. C. SWINBURNE

by

Renée V. Overholser

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Gerard Manley Hopkins's religious and psycho-sexual crisis at Oxford, which led him to renounce poetry, culminated in his entry into the Society of Jesus. There the young novice eased the problem of "looking" at beautiful male bodies by turning his eyes toward the fully-imagined body of Christ, as Jesuit training prescribed.

During the seven years before The Wreck of the Deutschland, Hopkins began to develop a new poesis which would permit him to return to the practice of poetry. He accomplished it in part through appropriations from the texts of Algernon Swinburne. Hopkins and Swinburne had diverged over major social and reli-

gious issues at Oxford, and Hopkins was an astute, if disingenuous, critic of his poetry. Turning away from lyric subjectivity, Hopkins attempted to serve the cause of Roman Catholicism by incorporating transmuted elements from the work of the era's most vocally heretical revolutionary into his early Jesuit poetry. The shift in intention was announced in "St. Dorothea: Lines for a Picture," written just before he entered the novitiate.

"Ad Mariam," a direct imitation of the "Hounds of spring" Chorus from Atalanta in Calydon, transforms praise of Artemis into a paean to Mary while erasing the threatening sexuality of Swinburne's landscape. "Rosa Mystica" continues the process of sexual purification. However, the many Swinburnian appropriations in The Wreck of the Deutschland, most notably from the political poetry of Songs Before Sunrise, serve a double purpose: to counteract Swinburne's attacks on the Church and the Jesuits; and to celebrate Hopkins's sense that the beloved body of Christ is everywhere present in the natural world. Swinburne's repeated trope of the figure of Freedom rising to proclaim mankind's future release from the bondage of priests and kings looms behind Hopkins's representation of Christ. Reinvesting nature with generative sexuality, with the help of Swinburne's sensual insights, Hopkins went on to the great sonnets of the 1870s.

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My greatest debt is to my family, my children Charlie, Margaret, and George, and most especially to my husband Chuck, whose years of enthusiastic support have made it all possible, and to whom I dedicate this dissertation.

Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
One: Contexts	1
Two: Gerard Manley Hopkins's Oxford Crisis: "Looking with terrible temptation"	30
Three: Two Poets at Oxford: "a simple remedy — the authority of the Church"	100
Four: Hopkins as a Swinburne Critic: "This song of Lucifer's"	154
Five: Poetic Vocation and the Dorothea Poems: "Monstrous miracles of conversion"	203
Six: Versions of Mary: "We have . . . been in their ruinous reigns oppressed".	262
Seven: Swinburne's Songs: "Thou madest a choral- souled boy-priest"	303
Eight: Swinburne and <u>The Wreck of the Deutschland</u> : "the faithless fable and miss"	346
Works Cited	406

Chapter 1

Contexts

In 1866 Gerard Manley Hopkins left the Anglican Church into which he had been born to convert to Roman Catholicism, and two years later he entered the Jesuit Novitiate at Manresa House to begin his studies for the priesthood. By late 1866 he had also largely stopped writing poetry. Two years later, a week after he had "resolved to be a religious," Hopkins burned the fair copies of his poems in what he termed the "slaughter of the innocents" (Journals 165), because, as he later explained to Robert Bridges "I saw they w[oul]d interfere with my state and vocation" (Bridges 24). The immediate result of his decision to enter the priesthood was a poetic silence which lasted until The Wreck of the Deutschland in 1875-76.

During the decade of the 1860s Algernon Swinburne had become increasingly prominent. In 1862 a series of reviews and poems, the latter of which would be included in Poems and Ballads First Series (1866), had begun to appear in Once a Week and The Spectator (Works 20: 431-37). Swinburne's reputation as a major poet was made by the publication of Atalanta in Calydon in 1865, and if that reputation was augmented by the brilliance of many of the Poems and Ballads First Series a

year later, the sexually charged and heretical content of the volume caused a critical uproar. The "great grace, flexibility, and power of expression" of Swinburne's verse, which had been noted by Richard Monckton Milnes in a review of Atalanta in Calydon (qtd. in Hyder 16) was widely acknowledged; at the same time, charges of anti-theism and sensuality were leveled at Swinburne's "libidinous song" by established critics like John Morley, who accused him of "vileness and childishness [in] depicting the spurious passion of a putrescent imagination, the unnamed lusts of sated wantons" (qtd. in Hyder 24). The poems combined with Swinburne's public dissoluteness and outrageous opinions — for his widely reported irreligion, immorality, and revolutionary views marked him as extreme even by the standards of advanced thinkers — and made him a national celebrity. Individual poems continued to appear in periodicals, and they were gathered together in 1871 in Songs Before Sunrise and Songs of Two Nations, which appeared in 1875. Swinburne continued to publish prolifically into the twentieth century.

Hopkins effectively stopped creating poetry in English in mid-1866. The last poem written before he entered the Society of Jesus in September 1868, which he sent to Robert Bridges on 7 August, is a revision of a lyric on St. Dorothea which Hopkins had first entered

into his notebook late in 1864. "St. Dorothea (Lines for a picture)" (Poetical 57-58) has a double link to Swinburne: it marks the first use of sprung rhythm, which derives importantly from Swinburne's prosodic practice, as Elisabeth Schneider has convincingly argued (48-60); and Swinburne had also included a poem on the subject of St. Dorothy in the 1866 Poems and Ballads First Series. Hopkins appears to have written no poetry at all during his noviceship at Manresa, from September 1868 to September 1870 (MacKenzie, Poetical 301). Of the ten poems written between late 1870 and late 1875, when he began The Wreck of the Deutschland, eight were either in Latin or translated from that language. However, both of the poems written in English give unmistakable evidence of Hopkins's reading of Swinburne. "Ad Mariam" (Poetical 105-06), which was probably written in 1873, was described by Robert Bridges as "in direct and competent imitation of Swinburne" (qtd. in Hopkins, Poems 253). It is a version of the famous "Hounds of spring" chorus from Atalanta in Calydon. The second English poem from the period, "Rosa Mystica" (Poetical 107-08), employs anapestic tetrameters, one of Swinburne's favorite meters, and several lines allude directly to Swinburne's usages (Bump, "Hopkins' Imagery" 107-09).

The Wreck of the Deutschland was begun in December 1875 and completed in mid-1876. Between June and

August 1876 it was followed by "Moonrise" (Poetical 131), which is also "exceedingly Swinburnian," echoing lines from "Hendecasyllabics" (Schneider 84); by "The Woodlark" (Poetical 131-32), which displays a kinship to the prosodic pattern of "St. Dorothea"; and by "Penmaen Pool" (133-35), with its "pronounced mechanical Swinburnian movement" (Schneider 84). The Deutschland, then, is bracketed by works which bear specific signs of another poet, and the great ode itself, for all that it has been described as "an anomaly, a sport" (Mariani, Commentary 47), abounds in echoes of Swinburnian rhythm, diction, and imagery. Hopkins broke his poetic silence less in his own poetic voice than either in another language, Latin, or in the distinctive voice of the Victorian period's most powerfully defiant heretic.

While a number of Swinburnian usages have been noted in Hopkins's work by various critics, there has never been an extended examination of the relationship between the two poets. To begin that exploration, it is necessary to develop a sense of the context within which both men lived and wrote, and in this regard the work of Edward Said and Jerome J. McGann is useful. Said has discerned a strong pattern in a group of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writers, Hopkins among them. In the pattern's first stage "the failure of the generative impulse — the failure of the

capacity to produce or generate children" leads to other relationships which "would substitute for those ties that connect members of the same family across generations" (16-17). This failure of "filiation," which is typified by celibate men, among others, prompts the development of new conceptions of human relationships which Said terms "affiliation," and defines as "the transition from a failed idea or possibility of filiation to a kind of compensatory order that, whether it is a party, an institution, a culture, a set of beliefs, or even a world-vision, provides men and women with a new form of relationship" (9). In the third stage of the pattern the new order is used to reinstate the kinds of authority which earlier had been associated with biological filiation through "institutions, associations, and communities whose social existence was not in fact guaranteed by biology, but by affiliation" (17).

Said maintains that the critic's job is to recognize the difference between the instinctual, "natural" filiation and the social affiliation, which is the product of culture, through scrutiny not only of both literary and non-literary texts, but also of the political and social worlds in which texts are embedded. Said's critic becomes aware of the "ways by which texts impose constraints upon their interpretation or, to put it metaphorically, the way the close-

ness of the world's body to the text's body forces readers to take both into consideration"; to use his term, the way in which a text is "worldly" (39).

Jerome J. McGann makes a related argument. Poetical works operate on the level of both generality and particularity, as acts of individual creative imagination which are, however, enmeshed in circumstance. The poet finds his material through paying attention to the workings of his own mind and emotions; at the same time, poems have reference to "the larger (human) world of social interactions," not only at the time they are created but also throughout their future, as, say, they are newly published, or as new particulars and critical attitudes are established" (Historical 12). McGann conceives of the process as a dialectic:

[A]rt must establish its referential systems. . . . [T]he particulars which are to count in art, the particular acts, events, circumstances, details, and so forth, along with the textualizations through which they are constituted, are those which in fact make (and/or have made) a difference — particulars which will be seen to have been (and be still) positively engaged in processes of change. (13-14; emphasis in original)

In a way similar to Said's, McGann sees criticism's task as a "constant pursuit of the text's lost and unrealized points of reference — all the verbal and eventual matters of fact which constitute the work's complex symbolic networks, and without which criticism cannot hope to re-constitute those networks" (15).

Through the concepts of "affiliation" Said describes the situation in which Hopkins found himself in the mid-1860s. Said's concept of the "worldly" text suggests a method by which it is possible to examine Hopkins's Oxford poetry as well as later works, where Hopkins's new Jesuit affiliation demanded development of a serviceable poesis. McGann's stricture to pursue the "lost and unrealized points of reference" which make up the changing dynamics of how poetry is read, would include such events as the publication of Hopkins's Oxford notebooks 100 years after they were written. A further point of reference for Hopkins has been, if not lost, then largely "unrealized": the work and world-view of Algernon Swinburne.

A number of critics have experienced considerable uneasiness in linking Swinburne with Hopkins, and particularly in dealing with "Ad Mariam." Robert Bridges, who edited the first collection of Hopkins's poems in 1918, refused to include the poem because he rejected the idea of Hopkins's authorship (see Hopkins, Poems 253). However, Fr. Joseph Keating wrote Bridges in February 1918:

As for the Swinburnian poem you may be quite assured that it is his. To the best of my recollection it was hung up with a number of votive verses at a shrine of Our Lady at Stonyhurst when I was a schoolboy there.
(qtd. in Poetical 305)

Keating's letter was found only recently, too late to convince another Hopkins editor, Claude Collier

Abbott, who, misled only in part by erroneous dating, commented in his edition of the Hopkins-Bridges letters that

It seems incredible that G. M. H. should have written this imitation of Swinburne (on whose poetry see his opinions, passim) at any time, and especially as late as 1884. Only the discovery of a manuscript copy in his handwriting will begin to shake my unbelief.
(Bridges xvii)

A third Hopkins editor, W. H. Gardner, remarked of "Ad Mariam" that "so competent is the imitation of a poet whom Hopkins always criticized with contemptuous severity that many critics refuse to believe that Hopkins would at any time have condescended to ape him" (Hopkins 2: 92). Gardner, however, finally admitted "Ad Mariam" into the canon in his 1948 edition of the poems, speculating that Hopkins wrote it "to please Catholics who (like so many others) admired Swinburne's metres but deplored his motifs" (Hopkins, Poems 253)

In the last twenty-five years several critics have linked the two poets, most frequently seeing them as polar opposites. In 1968 John D. Rosenberg contrasted their poetic technique:

Hopkins pushes language as far as it can go toward pointedness and sharpness of stroke; Swinburne moves it with equal daring in the opposite direction, diffusing where Hopkins concentrates, generalizing where Hopkins specifies. Together, they are the linguistic bravos of Victorian verse. (vii-ix)

In a 1974 dissertation Jean Thomson Fallis examined the use of religious symbolism in the work of

Hopkins, Rossetti, and Swinburne as it reflects changes in the conventional associations of sacred and profane. Hopkins finds sanctity in a natural world infused with Christ's redemptive power, and the profane where grace has been withdrawn, Fallis noted, while Swinburne uses ironic reversals of Christian symbol to attack the traditional Christian God. In 1979 Robert C. Schweik looked briefly at both poets in a discussion which centered on the extent to which formal features in painting, music, and literature can be accounted for by developments in the history of ideas. A year later Richard D. McGhee, while stressing the differences between the two also pointed out, in a discussion of marriage, duty, and desire, that both poets learned to express desire, although in opposing ways: Swinburne represented insatiable sexual desire, Hopkins the desire for self-sacrifice in the pursuit of duty (209).

In each of these cases, the stress is primarily on differences between Hopkins and Swinburne. Other critics have noted similarities but have dismissed them. Although he acknowledged that "the rhythm of The Deutschland owes much to Swinburne," W. H. Gardner, for example, saw the echoes as resulting from Hopkins's temporary fascination, which was quickly overcome (2: 93-4). More recently in 1970 Paul Mariani recognized the influence of Swinburne's meter on Hopkins's practices but, again, he characterized Hopkins interest as

brief, suggesting that he found Swinburne's prosody inadequate to express the Word in The Wreck of the Deutschland (Commentary 45). Two recent biographies continue to be largely dismissive, although Norman White gives examples of Swinburne's "surprising influence" on "Ad Mariam," which "reads like a parody" of the "Hounds of spring" Chorus (Hopkins 202). Robert Martin comments that "Rosa Mystica" "shows us what [Hopkins's] poetry would be in the improbable case of his trying to sound like Swinburne" (222).

A small group of critics, including a later Mariani, however, has made wider connections. The most important examination of the impact of Swinburne on Hopkins, although it is largely limited to an analysis of prosodic practice, remains Elisabeth Schneider's 1968 volume, The Dragon in the Gate, a landmark in Hopkins criticism. Schneider singled out two striking features of Hopkins's "new" sprung rhythm: "its provision for the juxtaposing of stressed syllables anywhere in the line and as often as is wanted, without loss of force or length in these syllables [emphasis in original]" (51) and its logaoedic or mixed character. Schneider demonstrated that both derive in part from Swinburne's blank verse, in which the rhythm of a line is sometimes difficult to determine because of the freely inverted stresses permitted by the frequent mixture of anapests and pentameter.

Schneider drew most of her examples of sprung lines in Swinburne's work from Atalanta in Calydon, among them the following speech of Althaea's:

Give place unto me; I am as any of you,
To give life and to take life. Thou old
earth,
That hast made man and unmade; thou whose
mouth (Poems 4: 314)

The juxtaposition of stressed syllables, and variations in the number of light syllables in each foot, characterize the passage as a forerunner of sprung rhythm.¹

Schneider continues with a detailed examination of other passages and argues that by the time of the The Deutschland Hopkins

had clearly studied the verse of Swinburne with a technician's concentration. Swinburne did not confine himself to anapests . . . [and] in his free handling of other measures . . . very often approaches remarkably close to sprung rhythm as Hopkins later defined it. (51)

¹ Analyzing the meter, Schneider comments that the last of these lines may be read either conventionally 'Thát hást / máde mán / ánd ún / máde; // thóu / whóse móuth,' or 'Thát hást máde / mán / ánd ún / máde; thóu / whóse móuth'; and several circumstances make the second perhaps as natural as the first: the meaning; the frequency of anapests elsewhere in the blank verse, preparing the ear for the trisyllabic foot; and the exceptional weight of the three preceding words, 'Thou, old earth,' which incline the reader to quicken the next words in compensation. (52-53)

Swinburne was "the one contemporary writer of whose influence we can be certain, aside from Bridges," Schneider concluded, and that influence, "coming from the contemporary world of metrical experiment, is I think one of the mainsprings of Hopkins's new rhythm and may well have provided the first incitement to experiment" (57).

Along with the metrical similarities Schneider also pointed out, although only in passing and without analysis, other similarities in diction, imagery, and verse form. For example, Swinburne's influence could also be seen in the eight-line stanza of the The Deutschland, which resembles that of the Hymn in Milton's Nativity Ode, and which Swinburne had used in 1871 in "Blessed among Women" and in the opening strophe and corresponding antistrophe of the "Ode on the Insurrection in Candia," in both of which prosodic and verbal elements look ahead to Hopkins (80). Swinburne had also used the stanza form in "The Eve of Revolution" from the same volume, and in "To Victor Hugo" from Poems and Ballads First Series (Havens 684).²

² Schneider discounted Hopkins's shorter poems almost entirely. "For a Picture of St. Dorothea," she observed, "has a mystifying but perhaps chance connection with Swinburne" but "[i]t was almost entirely an abortive venture and demonstrates little except [Hopkins's] interest in the effect of juxtaposed accents" (57-8). Of "Ad Mariam" and "Rosa Mystica" she writes that "[n]either can be taken seriously as poetry, and Hopkins himself probably did not take them

Lionel Stevenson also found close stylistic parallels between the two poets. His very brief discussion uses the Swinburne comparison to denigrate Hopkins's originality: his new style was "mainly a concentrated version" of Swinburne's alliteration of mixed rhythms (304). While the majority of critics had overlooked a Swinburne-Hopkins connections, Stevenson erred in the other direction.

A handful of critics have made provocative, if brief, suggestions about more fundamental relationships between the work of Hopkins and Swinburne. For example, in a discussion of Hopkins's "Spring" John Gleason remarks that the sonnet, like Swinburne's "A Nympholept," reflects the sexual anxieties of its creator. Swinburne, says Gleason, recognizes the necessity of facing up to the destructive energies of sexuality; Hopkins wants to crush them (25). In 1977 Jerome Bump analyzed "Rosa Mystica" as a poem which "Hopkins's readers undoubtedly perceived . . . was an attempt to defend devotional medievalism against the increasingly profane interpretations of Swinburne," and its Swinburnian echoes as "specific allusions to his latest sensation 'Dolores'" ("Hopkins' Imagery" 108). William Buckler touched on thematic as well as metrical

so" (50); indeed, she added, "one may well wish he had written neither of these poems" (205, note 7).

similarities in a 1980 essay, pointing out a "central commonality" with Hopkins (259, note 26). Buckler found particular similarities between The Deutschland and Swinburne's "Hertha," "On the Cliffs" (1879), and "A Nympholept" (1894). Interestingly, Buckler worked back from Swinburne to Hopkins in an attempt to rehabilitate the former's reputation.

Earlier, Paul Mariani had revised his dismissive 1970 estimation of Hopkins's involvement with Swinburne's texts in a seminal discussion of the 1879 "Andromeda." Mariani observed that "except for Bridges, Patmore, and Dixon (with all of whom the poet corresponded), Hopkins seems to have followed no contemporary poet as closely as he did Swinburne" (114; emphasis in original). Identifying the "lewd" beast in "Andromeda" with "the complex demon of sexual anarchy roaring out of the west," specifically the homosexuality associated with Whitman and Swinburne, Mariani saw Hopkins as both attracted to and repelled by the implied freedoms of the New Aestheticism (121). He suggests that both "Hymn to Prosperine" and "To Walt Whitman in America" provide close parallels to "Andromeda" in their imagery, syntax, and dramatic movement (115).

In their discussions of single poems both Bump and Mariani advocate a contextual approach similar to that suggested by Said and McGann. Each discussion sees

Hopkins as confronting Swinburne and what he stood for, although the identifications of what he reacted against differ: in the case of "Rosa Mystica," the attempts to revive paganism; in the case of "Andromeda," the New Aestheticism. Each is correct, although the picture which they present is far from complete.

A closer look at specific points of similarity that have been pointed out in critical studies and their footnotes shows these to be, as well, both frequently suggestive and tantalizingly brief. In her extended prosodic discussion, Schneider cited a number of passages from Atalanta in Calydon and compared them metrically with The Deutschland; she also pointed out that in addition to the prosodic resemblances, the image of unmaking in "Thou old earth, / That has made man and unmade" can be compared with a similar image in the first stanza of The Deutschland" (see Poetical 119, lines 5-6). Another footnote contains further suggestions:

Apart from comments in the letters, there are enough verbal and stylistic reminiscences, chiefly of Atalanta, the first Poems and Ballads, and Songs before Sunrise (1871), in Hopkins's poetry to show how closely he read these works. For brief illustration, cf. Swinburne's 'towering tresses' of Crete and 'The firewhite faith of Poland without spot' (from Ode on the Insurrection in Candia and The Eve of Revolution) with Hopkins's Dun Scotus's Oxford, 'Towering city,' and 'Who fired France for Mary without spot,' and with 'white-fiery' in the Deutschland (stanza 13). The mannered string of possessives that conclude this poem may have been suggested by a

similar construction used for the expression of a similarly grand thought in Swinburne's line 'The world's heart's thanksgivings' in Blessed among Women. This poem, which appeared in Songs before Sunrise, suggests Hopkins throughout in style, imagery, rhythm, and stanza form. (205, note 8)

Schneider notes also the echoes of Swinburne's rhythm and rhyme, and of the imagery of moonlight and leaves and eyes, in "Hendecasyllabics" in Hopkins's "Moonrise."

Other critics make occasional random comparisons. W. H. Gardner uses Atalanta's "The praise of the lips and the hearts of us bring to thee" as an example of Swinburne's prepositional genetives, pointing out a resemblance to The Deutschland's "Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us" (2: 94). Mariani notes that the halting rhythm of a line from 1877's "Hurrahing in Harvest," "I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes" (Poetical 149, line 5) may have been suggested by Swinburne's "Lift up thy lips, turn round, look back for love" (Poems 1: 79) from the first of the "Hermaphroditus" sonnets (Commentary 116). And in his later article on "Andromeda" Mariani cites a number of lines from "Hymn to Proserpine" and "To Walt Whitman in America" to make his argument. In addition, Mariani compares the line "her wild hollow hoarlight hung to the height / Waste; her earliest stars, earlstars, stars principal, overbend us," from the 1884 "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" (Poetical 191, lines 3-4) to Swin-

burne's "Hesperia," published in the 1866 Poems and Ballads (Poems 1: 174): "when the moon overhead / Wanes in the wan waste heights of the heaven, and stars without number / Die without sound" ("Andromeda" 114-15).

William Buckler (233-34) suggests that the opening stanza of "Hertha" is "in fact quite analogous metrically to the opening stanza of Hopkins's The Wreck of the Deutschland," although "the poems are not identical, certainly; and Swinburne is not using an uncoded species of sprung rhythm." Buckler gives the following examples, indicating first the lines from The Deutschland (Poetical 119, lines 1-5) then from "Hertha" (Poems 2: 72):

Thou mastering me
 God!
 Í am thát whích bégán;

 Gíver of breath and bread;
 Out óf mé thě yéars ról;

 World's strand, sway of the sea;
 Out óf mé Gód and man;

 Lord of living and dead;
 Í am équál and whóle;

 Thou has bound bones and veins in me,
 fastened me flesh . . .
 Gód chánges, and mán, and thě fórm óf thém
 bódfíly;
 Í am thě sóul. (Buckler 233-34)

Buckler's project was to reestablish Swinburne as a major poet by pointing out similarities to Hopkins. My intention here is to achieve a different goal, but

it is one to be reached by the same method. I wish to suggest, however, that the poetic relationship between Hopkins and Swinburne extends well beyond the many echoes in metrics, diction, imagery, and form. It is not a matter simply of "influence." Swinburne was not a past figure within the poetic tradition against whom a belated Hopkins needed to contend: both were "strong, authentic poets" in Harold Bloom's sense (30), and they were contemporaries, their poetry evolving at the same time within the same cultural context. I will argue that in addition to the echoes Hopkins used Swinburne's texts to fulfill both religious and emotional purposes, some of which may well have remained hidden from him.

I have used the metaphor of conversion to suggest the process which I will describe. To "convert" is primarily an action which effects change — it means to turn around, transmute, transform — and of course it carries specific religious meanings. The OED defines the verb as meaning "to cause to turn to and embrace a (specified) religious faith, usually implying that the turning is to truth from error or ignorance"; "to cause to turn from a sinful or irreligious life to one marked by love of God and pursuit of holiness." Hopkins's transmutations of Swinburne brought about a conversion of texts which he saw as sinful, irreligious, and riddled with error. Through his conversions, Hopkins transformed Swinburne's heretical outbursts into

poetry which expressed love of the Roman Catholic God and evidenced the pursuit of holiness.

Like many of his critics, who have emphasized the "'safe', albeit fascinating, aspects of his writings — his prosodic theories, of course, his linguistic experiments, his relation to both poetic and religious tradition," Hopkins himself tended to focus on technical matters in discussing other poets in relation to himself, turning away from more personal considerations (McNeely 98). Beneath the elusive equivocations of the letters, poetry, and journals, however, some of the reality of Hopkins's life-long involvement with his near-contemporary Swinburne can be discovered.

Although there were differences in their backgrounds, Hopkins and Swinburne moved in part in the same world, though despite the existence of mutual friends it does not appear that they ever met. Hopkins mentions Swinburne only once, on 29 May 1868: "Took my degree. — Saw Swinburne. Met Mr. [Simeon] Solomon" (Journals 166). Certainly their families present contrasts. Swinburne's father was an admiral whose aristocratic lineage could be traced back to the twelfth century, his mother the daughter of the third Earl of Ashburnham (Thomas 8-11); their son attended Eton. Hopkins's father Manley Hopkins was in business as a marine insurance adjustor, his grandfather a "surgeon, a fellow-student of Keats'" (Bridges 51), the

family upper middle-class; Hopkins attended Cholemondeley Grammar School, Highgate. Both poets, however, were at Balliol College, Oxford, within three years of each other, and several of Hopkins's closest friends had been Etonians.

There were physical similarities between the two which in at least one instance led to a direct comparison:

It is generally thought that Hopkins was no good at sports and took no account of them, not being physically suited. Adding to this picture, which is the one painted of him while he was in Dublin, where many misestimates of him were made, his brother likened him to Swinburne, the aesthete poet. He was certainly small, of slight build, and effeminate, but that was not the total picture[.] (White, "Athlete" 3)

The comparison is hardly a "misestimate" of either man. Like Hopkins, Swinburne the "aesthete" was often in poor health, but, again like Hopkins, he was physically active, and he was as well a fearless climber and swimmer.

When and under what circumstances Hopkins read Swinburne is unknown. Hopkins's name is linked with a volume of Swinburne's work only once, by Father O.R. Vassall-Phillips, a Roman Catholic convert who knew Hopkins when he served as a priest at St. Aloysius, Oxford, wrote that

It used to be said of him that he expressed surprise at not being allowed to keep by him Swinburne's Poems and Ballads whilst he was in the novitiate at Manresa. He was a very

lovable person and made great sacrifices to
 God of his natural tastes and inclinations.
 (81)³

Poems and Ballads First Series included "St.
 Dorothy," which has some bearing on Hopkins's "St.
 Dorothea (Lines for a Picture)," a reworking of an ear-
 lier version which Hopkins wrote in August 1868, a
 month before he entered the Novitiate.⁴

³ Norman MacKenzie has written: "The tale is most
 improbable, since the book had been reviewed as
 libinous [sic] whereas GMH burned even some of his own
 religious verse lest it should interfere with his voca-
 tion" (Poetical 305). In the context of this study,
 however, the story would confirm that Hopkins intended
 to reply to Swinburne's poetry from the outset of his
 religious career.

⁴ While Hopkins's reading of Swinburne is
 incontrovertible, there is no evidence of Swinburne's
 having read Hopkins beyond the "central commonality"
 which Buckler discerned between 1875-76's The
Deutschland and the later "On the Cliffs" and "A
 Nympholept." And yet it would at least have been pos-
 sible for Swinburne to have seen some of Hopkins's
 work. It was apparently Robert Bridges who gave Edmund
 Gosse some of Hopkins's poetry to read: on 22 April
 1879 Hopkins wrote to him that "I do warm to that good
 Mr. Gosse for liking and, you say, 'taking' my pieces:
 I may then have contributed fuel to his Habitual Joy"
 (Bridges 79). In spring 1879 Gosse was still seeing
 Swinburne frequently, trying with other friends to save
 him from the dissolution which by then was threatening
 his life, and which was accomplished only by Swin-
 burne's removal to Theodore Watts-Dunton's home, The
 Pines, in June of that year (Thomas 197-99). It would
 also have been possible for Swinburne to have read Hop-
 kins's letter describing the effects of the eruption of
 a volcano on Krakatoa, published in Nature in January
 1884; Swinburne incorporated his own description of the
 resulting natural phenomenon in a poem which attracted
 Hopkins's critical condemnation, "A New-Year Ode: To
 Victor Hugo," published in A Midsummer Holiday and
Other Poems later in the same year.

For all their obvious differences, Hopkins and Swinburne had a number of points in common. Both poets were intent on breaking down the binaries through which many of their contemporaries viewed the world. The two represent extremes of contemporary political and religious thought — conservative Tory (see Roberts) and fervent priest versus red republican and outspoken atheist — yet Hopkins once wrote that "horrible to say, in a manner I am a Communist" (Bridges 27), and it has been strongly argued that Swinburne, who in later years was sometimes on the side of kings and clerics, is a poet whose "On the Cliffs" is "one of the most intensely religious poems in English" (Buckler 250).

Hopkins and Swinburne have been positioned at opposing ends of the spectrum of opinion about the role of art, and indeed their differences seem extreme. Swinburne wrote famously in a critique of the work of William Blake in 1868 that art cannot be "the handmaid of religion, exponent of duty, servant of fact, pioneer of morality" (Works 16: 127); Hopkins, in an undergraduate essay written at about the same time, said that art was "made vigorous and efficient by being, not its own mistress, but the helpmate of religion" (qtd. in Bump, "Hopkins, Christina Rossetti" 5). For Hopkins, art properly was a celebration of God and sometimes of country. He congratulated Coventry Patmore in 1886 for poems which "are a good deed done for

the Catholic Church and another for England, for the British Empire" (Further 366). Swinburne, in contrast, expressed the belief that art should serve no purpose but its own: "such of us . . . as regard a good work of art as the first of all good deeds for an artist . . . would consider a fresh Hamlet or a new Ruy Blas cheaply purchased by the hanging without trial of a dozen innocent men" (qtd. in Peters 147). And yet Swinburne came to modify his views on art for its own sake in the course of his career as a critic, finding the "doctrine . . . true in the positive sense, false in the negative; sound as an affirmation, unsound as a prohibition" (Works 13: 244), and moving on to topical diatribe in many of his political poems; and Hopkins can be seen to have been drawn to the idea of a self-sufficient art (Mariani, "Andromeda" 121).

Both also see poetry as deriving from strong emotion. Hopkins felt that "Feeling, love in particular, is the great moving power and spring of verse" (Bridges 66); Swinburne considered that "Tempest or calm you may put to use, but hardly a flat fog. . . . Deep-reaching doubt and 'large discourse' are poetical; so is faith, so are sorrow and joy; but so are not the small troubles of spirits that nibble and quibble about beliefs living and dead" (Works 15: 97-98).

Hopkins and Swinburne have also been placed at opposite ends of the spectrum of poetic technique, for

example by John D. Rosenberg's contrast of Swinburne's diffuseness and Hopkins's concentration. Nevertheless, despite the differences in the thickness of their verbal mediums, they share similar poetic techniques. For example, "effects of temporal and spatial simultaneity are . . . striking" in Hopkins's poetry (Shaw 102); such simultaneity is also to be found in profusion in Swinburne's work, expressing the "divine contrairies" of human existence, although in a somewhat different manner (Johnson, Hopkins 50-51, note 2). Both poets privilege spoken over written poetry and embrace the idea that the aural connects intrinsically to verbal meaning: Swinburne "appeal[s] to a notion of sound as constituting the essence or 'soul' of things" (Dowling, Decadence 178); Hopkins "valorize[s] the power of words to convey meaning by the quality of their sound" (Plotkin 140-41). Unlike Swinburne, Hopkins is renowned for the use of etymological word play, but Swinburne "works" the word in much the same way, "manipulating its different meanings, teasing it for complex suggestions and nuances" (McGann, Swinburne 149). Further, each is looking for a new language to express a distinctive world-view, Hopkins at first through a "new rhythm" (Dixon 14), Swinburne a "'new' poetic speech" (McGann, Swinburne 115).

Despite the points of similarity there are of course vital differences between Hopkins and Swinburne.

While both poets searched for a new language to express a world view, and while both are acutely conscious of the flux of the visible world and the "theoretical need to unify experience" which W. David Shaw sees as typical of "holistic" philosophies and aesthetics (273), their notions of what sort of experiential unity are to be expressed are radically different. Hopkins's cosmos comprises a teleologically driven, God-centered stability, as opposed to Swinburne's circularly repetitive, revolutionary, pantheistic flux. Hopkins developed an incarnational aesthetic through which to celebrate the stable actuality of God beneath sensory appearance (Loomis 17-38); Swinburne's new language "transforms our vision . . . by making the form of every perception a human one" in a style which celebrates flux itself even as it "suggest[s] divine presences in all phenomena" (McGann, Swinburne 115).

There are elements in Swinburne's work which would horrify any religious believer, let alone a Jesuit. Swinburne presented the Judeo-Christian God, particularly in Poems and Ballads First Series, Songs Before Sunrise and Songs of Two Nations, as the destroyer of man's beauty and humanity, and in the same volumes wrote vituperative verses against Catholicism, specifically against the Pope and the Jesuit order. In these volumes as well as in Atalanta Swinburne repeatedly attacked the doctrine of the Incarnation, especially as

reflected in the sacrament of the Eucharist (Louie 36-49), which lay at the core of Hopkins's belief. As a religious poet Hopkins of course presented the figure of Christ, as well as those of Mary and saints like Dorothea, not only as objects of contemplation, but also as true objects of faith.

In 1886 Hopkins wrote to Coventry Patmore: "every true poet, I thought, must be original and originality a condition of poetic genius; so that each poet is like a species in nature (not an individuum genericum or specificum) and can never recur. That nothing sh[oul]d be old or borrowed however cannot be" (Further 370; emphasis in original). Two years later he stressed his own originality to Robert Bridges: "The effect of studying masterpieces is to make me admire and do otherwise. So it must be on every original artist to some degree, on me to a marked degree" (Bridges 291). In the case of A. C. Swinburne both statements hold true. His fellow-poet provided Hopkins with the impetus to do otherwise as well as the borrowed means to do it.

The complex interplay between Hopkins and Swinburne requires examination. However, while five of the chapters which follow concentrate on the relationship in the period between Hopkins's undergraduate years in the mid-1860s and 1876, when he completed The Wreck of the Deutschland, two chapters are devoted to discus-

sions of each poet individually. Indeed, my exploration of Hopkins's poetic relationship with Swinburne begins with a chapter in which Swinburne does not appear. Chapter Two details the religious and psychosexual problems which Hopkins's confession notes reveal, and which made it necessary to modify both his poetry and his life. Swinburne's work was not directly involved in the crisis. Importantly, however, Hopkins's experiences as an Oxford undergraduate made the search for a new poesis necessary, and they inflect all his subsequent dealings with his outrageous fellow-poet.

Chapter Three, "Two Poets at Oxford," examines the undergraduate careers of Swinburne and Hopkins, which included membership in opposing essay societies. Chapter Four, "Hopkins as a Swinburne Critic," finds a pattern in Hopkins's scattered critical comments: Hopkins's perception of the importance of Swinburne's voice in the dominant discourse added to his desire to reply poetically. In Chapters Five and Six I examine Hopkins's attempts to develop a serviceable theory of poetry during his early years as a Jesuit, accomplished in part through appropriations and conversions of fragments of Swinburne's work, which he incorporates into his own.

In Chapter Seven I analyze of some of the works included in Swinburne's Songs Before Sunrise and Songs

of Two Nations. The latter volume appeared shortly before the Deutschland foundered, and knowledge of both volumes of Songs is central to understanding Hopkins's handling of Swinburnian elements in The Deutschland. Many of these poems are unfamiliar, and have received relatively little critical attention. Chapter Eight is devoted to a discussion of the Swinburnian appropriations The Wreck of the Deutschland.

One school of Hopkins criticism tends to see him as the helpless, pre-Freudian victim of unexplored desires. I will argue, on the contrary, that through the process of confession Hopkins became very conscious indeed of his psycho-sexual makeup and took every means within his power to protect himself from the dangers to purity which it presented. Another question arises, however: how conscious was Hopkins's use of Swinburne's texts?

I will leave the development of strong positions on that matter to critics who are more committed to their ideological ground than I am. A good deal of the material which undergoes transformation in Hopkins's texts had become part of general Victorian discourse. Very few among the educated public would have failed to recognize that as winter leaves it is pursued by the hounds of spring. It is my sense that some of the Swinburnian sub-texts are language speaking itself, for the rhythms and phrases of Atalanta in Calydon and

Poems and Ballads First Series would have been difficult to avoid.

A considerable number of the appropriations may have been unconscious, or perhaps semi-conscious in instances where sexuality is involved, as clusters of images which came unbidden to Hopkins as part of his poetic and sexual being. I would argue for a degree of intentionality in some instances, however. It is difficult to see how so direct a parody as "Ad Mariam" could have been unconscious in the work of as self-conscious a craftsman as Hopkins. And the sheer number of later echoes militates in my mind against a theory which gives consistent priority to unconscious urges. In the chapters which follow Chapter Two, my own text sometimes assigns the role of agency to Hopkins as author; sometimes it speaks as if Hopkins's poetry were self-actuating. I believe that such oscillation reflects the reality of Hopkins's poetic relationship with Swinburne.

Chapter 2

Gerard Manley Hopkins's Oxford Crisis:

"Looking with terrible temptation"

In May 1868, a few days after he had "resolved to be a religious," Gerard Manley Hopkins burned the fair copies of most of his poems in what he termed the "slaughter of the innocents" (Journals 165), later explaining cryptically to Robert Bridges that "I saw they w[oul]d interfere with my state and vocation" (Bridges 24). While the possible vocational conflict between priest and poet has been extensively discussed, the nature of Hopkins's "state" has remained obscure.

During the years of religious and poetic decision Hopkins kept a series of notebooks and journals, two of which, covering the period between September 1863 and Lent 1866, were first published in their entirety one hundred years after the poet's death in 1989. They are in some ways startling documents, in particular the second, C.ii. Poetry appears as single lines, single images, sections of uncompleted dramatic forms which will be returned to pages later, and completed short lyrics. Sketches, quotations from newspapers, addresses, shopping lists, reading lists, and breakfast engagements interrupt. Running throughout, although operating on two different chronologies, is another

text which is literally under erasure, for it is scored through, though still readable: notes on "sins" which Hopkins made in preparation for auricular confession. Each of the strands operates on the margins of the others, interrupting and twisting around to provide a visual illustration of the weaving together from which the word "text" itself is derived. The notebooks are, however, in Edward Said's term a "worldly" text, one which can cast light on Hopkins's early poems.

The series of notes on "sins" date from between late March 1865 and Lent (14 February to 30 March) 1866, when Notebook C.ii ends. A year before they begin, 10 February 1864, Hopkins, the devout Oxford Anglican, first undertook auricular confession to Reverend Dr. Henry Parry Liddon of Christ Church, whose diary records five subsequent confessions, the last on 17 May 1866 (Higgins 151). By 16 December 1865 Hopkins was also in confession to Reverend Dr. Edward Bouverie Pusey, Oxford's Regius Professor of Hebrew and Canon of Christ Church, and the leader of the Tractarian Party (Journals 71). Hopkins was not isolated in his decision to undertake auricular confession, for a number of his fellow-students, encouraged by Liddon and Pusey, were doing the same thing.

Writing confession notes, like writing lyric poetry, demands that the writer pay close attention to the workings of his own mind, but the notes are as far

from imaginative fiction as it is possible to move. Confession's purpose is to name sin, and to reveal the truth about a human soul so that penance can be perfect and the pardon of God for all lapses from purity can be gained. The aim therefore must be for transparent language which will unsparingly expose the sinner's thoughts, desires, emotional states, and actions, without imagination and without reticence, for only then can the sinner hope for forgiveness. However, for the reader one hundred years later, there are numerous ruptures of intelligibility, arising not only from the subjective nature of the notes but also from the difficulty of establishing their socially determined context.

Nevertheless, it is possible to draw certain conclusions. For example, one group of entries concerns the fault of "looking."¹ I will argue that Hopkins's troubled sense of the possible sinfulness of "looking" and to a lesser extent of other sensuous stimuli carries strong sexual overtones and is related both the

¹ The role of sight in Western history is briefly summarized by Jay (176-80), who observes that "thinkers from the time of Augustine have recognized a fundamental relationship between ocular experience and desire, especially in its unfulfilled form" (177). See Augustine 222-42. The seminal discussion of scopophilia is of course in Freud. See also Sartre 310-70. For two recent discussions of the male gaze see Kaplan, Snow.

silencing of his poetic voice and to his becoming a Jesuit in the 1860s.

In the mid-1860s threats from the contaminating secular world assaulted Hopkins; threats from the effects of eros contaminated his poetic expression. Most of Hopkins's early poetry was written as a High Church Anglican, but the mature poetry required a second affiliative move to the Roman Catholic world of the Jesuit priesthood for, while each affiliation provided him with its "systematic totalizing world-view" (Said 19) they differed in important ways. The crisis led him specifically to the Society of Jesus, where the visual emphasis in Jesuit training combined with the doctrine of transubstantiation to provide relief. At the same time, Hopkins would replace the inadequate Tractarian poesis with which he began writing with specifically Roman Catholic concepts.

Hopkins's "little book for sins" (Journals 60) indicates that a particular thought or action could be a "temptation" or could cause a "scruple." Since a "temptation" did not become a sin at all if it was resisted, the level of resistance was measured carefully. A "scruple" occurred when Hopkins was unsure whether or not an action or thought was wrong, and the terms "scruple" and "scrupulosity" recur with great frequency throughout the notebooks. Much of what Hopkins recorded reflects a painful sensitivity to minor

faults which seems almost obsessive as we read it today, although such extreme scrupulosity may have been more widespread at Oxford than we now recognize, since it characterized even the agnostic Balliol undergraduate Arthur Hugh Clough (Kenny 3). It is important to place the sections dealing in a remarkably explicit way with Hopkins's sexuality within that context. For example, the confession notes mention "intemperance" frequently, but on a level demanding such extreme control that once even Hopkins realized his over-scrupulosity: "Folly about making a scruple ab[ou]t a sugar-plum," he noted just after Christmas 1865 (EPMN 198); nevertheless, he had considered that "eating two biscuits at the Master's" was worth listing some months earlier (156). There are numerous, ultimately tedious, notations about "idling": "Waste of time in dawdling and worse in idleness both morn. and evening;" "A good deal of idleness over work. . . . Idleness in going to work. . . . Idling . . ." (185-86, 187). It is useful to remember that Hopkins in fact studied sufficiently during the period to obtain a First in the Moderations examination and would go on to graduate from Oxford with a double First in Greats.

Hopkins examined himself minutely on every aspect of his life. The one which will concern us here is his purity, the chastity of his mind and body. Hopkins's lifelong ideal was the chaste life of Christ, and he

showed himself to be driven toward a level of sexual and moral purity which would have been almost impossible to achieve. The picture emerges of an anxiety-ridden and sexually confused young man who was concerned over even a hint of sexual arousal, and who had to resist, over and over again, a flood of "temptations" which surrounded him and sometimes came close to overwhelming him.

In confession Hopkins was able to express the sense of "danger" which he experienced, although not with his friends, some of whom in fact occasioned it. A notation such as "faults of manner to Bond and Philimore. Almost despair" (181) is hardly the result only of Hopkins's sense of his bad manners. Indeed, the confession notes show that Hopkins felt himself prone to the sin of "speaking" and watched himself closely to assure both self-control and a careful tongue. Unwanted self-revelation could prove not only an embarrassment but also the possible occasion for further temptation. Danger came about through his own weakness in thought, speech, and action: "Talking unwisely on dangerous subject"; "Folly in not resisting thoughts doing no good and leading to danger" (155, 196). There is no question that some of the danger arose from the threatening subject of his changing religious beliefs and of too openly discussing the possibility of his conversion to Roman Catholicism: "Jesting foolishly and

speaking of Romanising very unwisely to Coles" (191). Equally, however, in the light of the confession notes, there is no question that some of the temptations were primarily sexual ones. Indeed, sexual and religious anxieties appear to intertwine. Hopkins attempts to resolve his crisis should be seen as part of what John Maynard calls "an archetype of nineteenth-century aspiration: the quest to harmonize religion and sexuality" (Hartford 68).²

In private confession Hopkins could both express his faults and find them forgiven. Michel Foucault has observed that through the examination of conscience and the ritual of Christian confession personal desire is transformed into an analytic discourse which is "meant to yield multiple effects of displacement, intensification, reorientation, and modification of desire itself" (23). By the nineteenth century, Foucault maintains, confession demanded more than a description of what sexual acts were performed; it also required the "reconstructing, in and around the act, [of] the

² It is impossible in some instances to separate religious and sexual danger. For example, on 13 December 1865 Hopkins notes "Bad lateness . . . chiefly thro' weakness in talking to Oxenham (wh[ich] in itself unwise partly) ab[ou]t dangerous things' (EPMN 197). Henry Oxenham could have been doubly "dangerous": he was a Roman Catholic convert; it was also said of him that the "sealed fountains of his own nature seemed to be unlocked by" the society of young men (qtd. in Kitchen 82).

thoughts that recapitulated it, the obsessions that accompanied it, the images, desires, modulations, and quality of the pleasure that animated it." In the process, "what was hidden from" a subject in a state of latency is brought into consciousness and discourse (63). The "thoughts, . . . obsessions, . . . images, desires" of erotic longing comprise the material of some of the confession notes, for in Hopkins's case only involuntary sexual acts appear to have been performed, and these are listed separately. A series of entries written in Latin, which Norman MacKenzie describes as detailing "physical emissions during sleep, with [Hopkins's] subjective judgment as to whether he had been sufficiently conscious to make them sinful," appear at the end of Notebook C.ii. The wet dream records are indeed notably scrupulous; for example the entry for 27 May 1866 reads, "I released a drop not without sin, I fear, committed during sleep" (EPMN 203; trans. MacKenzie). Hopkins first noted having had a wet dream on the night following 6 January 1864 (126-27), one month before he made his first confession to Liddon, and it would appear from the closeness of the dates that the fact of the nocturnal emissions played a role in the decision to undertake confession: notes about other "sins" do not begin for another year and a half, in March 1865 (184). Taken together, the two sets of lists of sins indicate that the tightly dis-

ciplined Hopkins was intensely aware of his own sexuality, monitored every word and every gesture, lost physical control only during sleep, and feared the results even then.

It becomes clear that Hopkins, attracted all his life to physical and aesthetic beauty, was being tyrannized by his senses. Music, for example, could prove too seductive to the ear: "Weakness or temptation about dangerous sweetness of singing in ch[urch]"; "Going to hear M'can's musical exercise troubled with dangerous feelings" (180-81, 195). The pressure of touch was threatening: "Evil thoughts, especially from Rover [the Hopkins family retriever] lying on me"; "Physical danger while having my arm in Baillie's and speaking affectionately" (169, 196). The main source of sensuous danger, however, lay in the sense of sight. The temptations lay in gazing at young men, women and even animals: "Looking at and thinking of stallions"; "Looking at a man who tempted me"; "Looking at a cart-boy fr[om] Standen's shopdoor"; "Looking at a temptation in Newman's friend"; "Looking at Fyffe . . . Looking at Mitchell"; "Looking at a man who tempted me on Port Meadow"; "Looking at face in the theatre"; "Imprudent looking at organ-boy and other boys"; "Looking at temptations, esp[ecially] at E. Geldart naked"; "Looking with terrible temptation at Maitland"; "[L]ifting

eyes and smiling to girl at shop"³ (156, 156, 157, 165, 168, 168, 169, 174, 174, 191, 192). Hopkins's own body was also troubling to him: "Temptation from looking at my own feet"; "Tempt[ation] in washing"; "Temptation fr[om] myself in washing" (196, 196, 198). The degree of culpability varied: "Scruples not temptation in seeing men . . . at Worcester sports" (195). So sensitive was Hopkins to the pitfalls which lay in the sense of sight that there was danger in even listening to a Lesson about "looking" as it was read in church: "Evil curiosity in hearing Susannah [and the Elders] read [.] Temptations partly yielded to" (195).

The results of such stimulation could be "evil thoughts" and "evil curiosity." Some of what Hopkins considered "evil" was in all likelihood merely annoyance with friends, or perhaps the feelings of "conceit" for which he taxed himself. In other

³ In December 1863 Hopkins had been proposed for membership in the Brotherhood of the Holy Trinity, a society of High Church undergraduates and dons at Oxford, in December 1863. Although the group encouraged ascetic practices, Pusey's "original proposals that the members should always walk with their eyes turned to the ground (as he did himself) or, failing that, wear round their loins a girdle of flannel as a token of self-restraint, were not adopted." Hopkins never joined, however, possibly because "later, his own scruples and rules of asceticism may well have gone beyond those of the Brotherhood" (Journals 305-06, note 17.3). It is not unlikely that Hopkins followed the practice of walking with his eyes turned to the ground at times during his life, which would account for the last notation.

instances, however, the matter was of a different nature: "Looking at a chorister at Magdalen, and evil thoughts. Inatt[ention]. Idle[ness]. Evil curiosity" (195-96). Hopkins's desire to determine the precise nature of the fault is acute where these thoughts were concerned: "Evil thought ab[ou]t Magdalen [his cousin] wh[ich] I did not treat as I sh[oul]d. . . . Dallying with that temptation about Magdalen wh[ich] indeed I think was never a tempt[ation] in itself but a scruple and a wicked careless predisposition of mind"; "Scrupulous fear and two at least evil thoughts and one lewd curiosity" (198-99).

There is little question that many of Hopkins's "evil thoughts" were fantasies with some sexual content, and clearly he was finding them difficult to control, which would account for the attention he pays to the dangers of "idling" and "inattention" throughout the confession notes. The notes show that Hopkins experienced some heterosexual attractions, as for example with Magdalen and when "Temptation to adultery of the heart with Mrs. Gurney listened to" (182), but that for the most part his yearnings were what we would now call homoerotic. Guilt and despair, however, lay less in the sexual orientation of these feelings than in the fact of feeling any sexual attraction, toward man or woman. Hopkins's overriding concern was with his own chastity, for the state of the immortal soul of the

intensely religious young man was threatened by the threats to the chastity of his body and his thoughts. Hopkins would explain to Robert Bridges in 1879 that a beautiful body is no indicator of a beautiful soul, and it is the soul that is all-important:

I think then no one can admire beauty of the body more than I do, and it is of course a comfort to find beauty in a friend or a friend in beauty. But this kind of beauty is dangerous. . . . For though even bodily beauty, even the beauty of blooming health, is from the soul, in the sense, as we Aristotelian Catholics say, that the soul is the form of the body, yet the soul may have no other beauty, so to speak, than that which it expresses in the symmetry of the body.
(Bridges 95)

Just as temptations lay in looking at the figures whom he saw around him, looking at works of religious and secular art also presented dangers: "Madox Brown's pictures. Looking [?] at navvies in Swiss Cottage Fields";⁴ "Looking at tempting pictures and idling

⁴ In the case of "Madox Brown's pictures," Hopkins may have moved from a painted image to a real-life counterpart. An exhibition of Ford Madox Brown's works in which his major painting Work was displayed was being held at the time Hopkins made his notation on 21 April 1865 ("Exhibition of Pictures by Mr. Madox Brown"). The canvas features centrally a group of powerfully built "navvies," or laborers, at work on road repair. Hopkins had copied Brown's related sonnet "Work" into his Commonplace Book in February (Poetical 485), and it seems very possible that Hopkins, a frequent gallery-goer, attended the current exhibition, and that Brown's image led him to the temptation of "looking" (although the word is difficult to read in the facsimile) at similar figures of navvies in Swiss Cottage Fields.

over Once a Week"; "Temp[ation] fr[om] Fyffe and fr[om] pictures in Blake" (EPMN 158, 183, 201).

Hopkins's problems in looking at pictures in the mid-1860's were paralleled by those which he faced in looking at the written word. The intensity of danger in reading imaginative literature varied widely. Sometimes the flaw was simply that it distracted him from work: "Wasting time in looking at Poe's poems"; "Wasting time in reading Dixon" (EPMN 168, 195). On other occasions the dangers would appear to be greater: possibly so in "Reading Modern [? Love stanzas]," more clearly in "Looking with wicked curiosity at things in W.S. Landor"; "Evil weakness in reading Consuelo ["A Romance of Venice" by George Sand] and The [Surt's ?] Darling" (162, 183, 200). Another entry is puzzling, although suggestive: "Looking at temptations (then reading about buckles)" (166).⁵

⁵ The reference to "buckles" may shed further light on "The Windhover":

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! (Poetical 144, lines 9-11)

The confession note entry would appear to reinforce Gleason's argument for a sexual "underthought" in the much-discussed poem. Similarly, "Looking at and thinking about stallions" (EPMN 156) has bearing on "Hurrahing in Harvest": "And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder / Majestic — as a stallion stalwart, very-violet sweet!" (Poetical 149, lines 9-10).

Hopkins was also troubled by non-literary reading. In some instances he appears to have made a guilty search for suggestive words, illustrations, or articles: "Looking at a dreadful word in Lexicon"; "Evil thoughts in dictionary etc."; "Temptation over dictionary" (156, 157, 190). Current newspapers and periodicals other than Once a Week also presented dangers. Hopkins was a reader of periodicals throughout his life, and indeed found his inspiration for "The Wreck of the Deutschland" in a newspaper clipping. During the period covered by the confession notes he occasionally jotted down a reference in the main text of his journal ("Cornhill. Xanadu." [Journals 17]), but other references to periodical literature occur in the list of sins. Again, as was the case in reading literature, the flaw which they encouraged was sometimes no more serious than "wasting time in morning reading Athenaeum, etc." (EPMN 162), but at other times greater dangers are noted: "Dangerous things in The Saturday [Review] wh[ich] I w[oul]d read twice, anxiety to hear about Robinson Ellis";⁶ "Looking fully at a

⁶ The reference to Robinson Ellis is obscure. Ellis, a Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and later Corpus Professor of Latin Literature, was well-known for his work on Catullus. Hopkins noted a tutorial with Ellis in "Compo" early in 1864 (Journals 16). A year later he "met Oxenham, the Roman, formerly scholar of Balliol" (see note 2) while Oxenham was staying with Ellis (Further 224). An undated copy of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "The Blessed Damozel" in a commonplace book at Amen House, London, carries the annotation in Hopkins's hand, "From a MS belonging to Robinson Ellis,

sentence in a newspaper with terrible associations";
 "Scrupulosity ab[ou]t Punch" (156, 191, 196).

For the confession notes, the periodicals form part of what McGann called "the text's lost and unrealized points of reference," and as such they can be of some help in reconstituting the referential networks which surround Hopkins and his work. Three publications which Hopkins mentioned have some bearing here as sources of temptation. On 31 May 1865 he noted "Looking at the Lancet" on his list of sins (167). The issue of that medical journal which was current for the entry is typical in containing articles, case histories, and letters to the editor on a variety of subjects: paralysis, diseased bone, phthisis and uterine disease, glossitis, tapeworm, tumors of the leg (illustrated by a diseased amputated limb), a "new patent pneumatic enema" (illustrated), identification of the dead, the treatment of the poor in workhouse hospitals, the delirium of nervous exhaustion, hysterotomy, and a recent child murder. While Hopkins's reading of the Lancet and other publications may

Esqre., of Trinity College, Oxford, who lent it to me" (Bischoff 566). In an obituary notice Albert C. Clark remarked that Ellis's "want of delicacy, or indeed a certain insensibility, at times both in his choice of subjects and in his annotations on passages in the Latin poets" to whom he devoted his scholarly life "gave rise to misunderstanding among those who did not know the rigid asceticism of his life" (523).

indicate only a desire for greater knowledge of human reproductive organs (MacKenzie, EPMN 22), there could have been a further attraction in the frequently gory medical descriptions and illustrations, related to the guilty attraction to bodily pain exhibited elsewhere in the confession notes.

Michael Murphy has noted in Hopkins's poetry, particularly that written before 1867 and after 1880, "a continuous stream of images related to the body. . . . And the theme that holds all these images together is violence" (2; emphasis in original). He attributes these images in the early poetry "to a sado-masochistic element in his personality, [and] his acute sensitivity to pain and suffering" (1). Donna Moder has also detected a masochistic need for punishment as one element in Hopkins's "psychosexual conflict" (2-3), and Trevor McNeely has suggested that "pain, with all of its ambiguities and risks, is what gives his relations with both himself and God their pitch and intensity" (109-10). Hopkins appears to have been drawn to acts of masochism; for example, his schoolmate C. N. Luxmoore recalled that young Hopkins had tested his "powers of endurance" through an "abstinence from all drink for three weeks" (Further 395). Images of suffering, particularly within a religious context, seem to have attracted him: "The evil thought in writing on our Lord's passion"; "Evil curiosity ab[ou]t twice.

. . . Having an evil thought in looking on a beautiful crucifix of Aunt Kate's" (EPMN 157, 196).

Another set of references to journals is more specific. On 15 January 1866 Hopkins recorded: "Scrupulosity ab[ou]t the Pall Mall article before reading it in the Times. Evil thoughts arising therefrom and at the Giberne's party." The article which caused the trouble is identified in the entry for 18 January: "Idling much, twice. Weakness and indecision. . . . Scrupulosity (and I read the last no. of The [sic] Night in a Workhouse). Inatt[ention]" (201). The Pall Mall Gazette looked for and reported on scandal, and it found a major one in the conditions at the workhouses which provided shelter for London's "casuals," its homeless poor. On 8 January 1866 the reporter James Greenwood, who became known as the "Amateur Casual," disguised himself and spent a night in Lambeth Workhouse. His report, which created a furor, ran in three installments from 12 through 15 January ("Night," Pall Mall Gazette) and the London Times paid the compliment of reprinting it in its entirety ("Night," Times). Greenwood presented a vivid picture of filth, crowding, and chilling cold in the canvas shed which housed thirty or forty half-naked men and boys. Hopkins read the second and third installments in the Times, having suffered from scrupulosity before even doing so, perhaps from having heard about

the Pall Mall Gazette articles which were appearing a day earlier.

Christopher A. Kent argues for the central role of Victorian periodicals in defining what is possible and probable within the culture, urging that it is "not that they are an index to, ballast for, or the reflection of some separate and discrete reality but that Victorian Britain was a construct in the making of which periodicals played an essential part" (12). Journalism helps to define what is "realistic," Kent maintains, particularly as new hazards and codes of behavior emerge in a rapidly changing society, by concentrating on the "dangerous edge [which] is the boundary of probability" (6), specifically through the human-interest story whose "revelations are constantly expanding the realms of the possible" (8). In the 1860s exemplars of the "New Journalism" such as the Pall Mall Gazette published suggestive advertising and prurient agony columns as well as sensationalist human-interest stories, while protesting purity of motive and style, and even the magisterial Times of London admitted advertisements and articles such as "A Night in a Workhouse" which concentrated on the "dangerous edge" and expanded the realm of possible sexual activity through innuendo and suggestiveness.

The "Amateur Casual" opened the second installment of his series on 13 January with a description of three

young men, lying together in a single bed because there were not enough straw mattresses to go around. These three "related little autobiographical anecdotes . . . so abominable" that several of the "decent men" threatened them with physical force. "For several minutes there was such a storm of oaths, threats, and taunts — such a deluge of foul words raged in the room — that I could not help thinking of the fate of Sodom; as, indeed, I did several times during the night," the reporter commented ("Night" 10). Then the central character of the exposé appeared:

Soon afterwards the ruffian majority was strengthened by the arrival of a lanky boy of about fifteen, who evidently recognized many acquaintances, and was recognized by them as 'Kay,' or perhaps I should write it 'K.' He was a very remarkable-looking lad, and his appearance pleased me much. Short as his hair was cropped, it still looked soft and silky; he had large blue eyes, set wide apart, and a mouth that would have been faultless but for its great width; and his voice was as soft and sweet as any woman's. Lightly as a woman, too, he picked his way over the stones towards the place where the beds lay . . . 'What cheer, Kay?'. . . cried his friends; to which the sweet voice replied, 'Who'll give me part of his doss (bed)? _____ my _____ eyes and limbs if I ain't perishin!' (10)

Kay, just out of prison, told "rummy" stories of thieves and thieving "without any moderation of his sweet voice," sang a "rummy" song, and started a "swearing club." There were other pastimes and disturbances, notably noisy trips to a water pail "once at least in the course of five minutes . . . and then was

to be seen at the pail the figure of a man (sometimes stark naked) gulping down the icy water as he stood upon the icy stones." Finally,

silence reigned, to be disturbed only by drinkers at the pail, or such as, otherwise prompted, stalked into the open yard. Kay, for one, visited it. I mention this unhappy young wretch particularly, because he went out without a single rag to his back. I looked out at the rent in the canvas, and saw the frosty moon shining on him. When he returned, and crept down between [his friend] and another, he muttered to himself, 'Warm again! O my G-d! warm again!.' (10)

For Hopkins, with his unsettled sexual nature and his acute desire for purity there was much to provoke both the "scrupulosity" and the "evil thoughts" which the articles prompted in him. The scene of Kay in the courtyard can be seen, in fact, as an example of the temptation of "looking": a beautiful, blasphemous, corrupted young man, who shared a bed with other young men, was "looked out [at] at the rent in the canvas" with "the frosty moon shining on him" as he stood on icy stones "without a single rag to his back." The picture would have been both compelling and horrifying to Hopkins, not only for the portrait of young male beauty but also for the hints of pain in the frosty cold of the "icy stones." Hopkins's mention of the articles in his confession notes would indicate that he found his purity threatened by this description of an impure beauty, which he would have considered particularly "dangerous" because in wicked Kay's case, indeed,

the distinction which Hopkins had made for Bridges clearly applies: "the soul [had] . . . no other beauty . . . than that which it expresse[d] in the symmetry of the body."

The effect of the articles would have been intensified by the reticence which the Pall Mall Gazette suggestively claimed to have displayed in reporting the story: "Part, indeed, of the picture was far too disgusting to be drawn . . . What was done was worse than what was said, and what was said was abominable beyond description or decent imagination" ("Casual Wards" 1). The picture may have been "beyond . . . decent imagination" but there was room indeed for the free play of an imagination given to "evil thoughts," the frequent result, one must conclude, of the "idling" and "inattention" with which Hopkins blamed himself on the day he read the last number of the Workhouse series.

On another topic the Pall Mall Gazette had less to do with "expanding the realm of the possible" than with reporting that sexually suggestive hazards were also present on the streets of London. In the same issue of the Gazette which contained one installment of "A Night in a Workhouse" a London doctor, Tilbury Fox, made a case against "obscene anatomical museums." Among the articles in the Saturday Review current for Hopkins's mention of it on 6 April 1865 ("Dangerous things . . .

wh[ich] I w[oul]d read twice") was a review of Revelations of Quacks and Quackery by "Detector," in which the reviewer also, like "Detector," deplores the "obscene advertising" that "flaunts itself in the most crowded thorough-fares in the shape of Priapeian Museums and Public Lectures" and "ruins foolish young men by the thousand, ruins them in body, soul, and purse" (Saturday 384). Similarly, Dr. Fox protested against "touting" to young men "'up' for their matriculation examination at the University of London . . . many of them perhaps suffering from the effect of hard brain-work, [who] have their imaginative faculties played upon by such horrid influences and suggestions" (Fox). Certainly the description fits the young, susceptible Hopkins, who differed from hundreds of other young men only in the strength of his religious belief and his desire to remain chaste, but whether these were the articles which occasioned the appearance of these publications on the list of sins must remain speculative. Nevertheless, the confession notes suggest that threats to Hopkins's heightened sense of purity were frequent in the secular Victorian world.

Hopkins, then, experienced guilty qualms in reading both non-fiction and imaginative literature, as well as in looking at works of art. When he himself drew, or wrote poetry, the effects were also troubling. Late in 1865 Hopkins had particular difficulty with a

picture which he was making of "Bramley": "Obstinacy ab[ou]t drawing Bramley's picture ag[ain]st warning of idleness and scruple"; "Going on idly and against scruples studying for Bramley's picture" (EPMN 195, 196). Again, the problem of drawing was exacerbated by images of the body in pain: "Evil thought slightly in drawing made worse by drawing a crucified arm on same page"; "Weak scrupulosity in looking at Bramley's picture and in thinking of our Lord on the cross" (167, 198-99). The temptations which accompanied this aspect of "looking" led Hopkins to express a half-formed intention of giving up a possible career as an artist in September 1865: "Temptations as looking at William. . . . Idling despondently in evening over work and speaking despondently of prospect of not being a painter" (188). Indeed, that prospect was about to become a reality. As he would explain in February 1868 to his friend A. W. M. Baillie (with whom he had once guiltily walked arm-in-arm):

You know I once wanted to be a painter. But even if I could I w[oul]d not I think, now, for the fact is that the higher and more attractive parts of the art put a strain upon the passions which I sh[oul]d think it unsafe to encounter. I want to write still and as a priest I very likely can do that too, not as freely as I sh[oul]d have liked, e.g. nothing or little in the verse way, but no doubt what w[oul]d best serve the cause of my religion."
(Further 231)

But with writing, as with drawing and painting, dangers were also present when Hopkins himself was the

author. On 15 April 1865 for example, he noted that "In looking over the above poem [? "Easter Communion"] an evil thought seemed to rise fr[om] the line before" (EPMN 157).⁷ He may have discussed the problem with his confessor, for five days later he noted, "An evil thought rose while I was making some poetry in fields but I was only guilty of not dismissing the subject as far as I understand" (158). A few weeks later he experienced a "scruple" over "That sonnet beginning 'See how Spring opens with disabling cold'" (173). Entries in the list of sins about his own poetry increased in frequency in late 1865 and early 1866, when he was also experiencing problems with "Bramley's picture" and when he read "A Night in a Workhouse." Between 6 September 1865 and 21 January 1866 Hopkins entered: "Lateness to bed, in writing the above ["Castara Victrix"], in the last lines of which . . . (not put down) a wholly illogical association or alarm came, not relinquished soon enough. O.H."; "Scrupulosity ab[ou]t poems"; "Dangerously (physically perhaps) persisting on going on thinking ab[ou]t the above [? "The Half-way House"] but the physical part very doubtful"; "Scruple over writing out a stanza of Beyond the Cloister [the original title for 'A Voice from the World']";

⁷ Where "?" appears, MacKenzie feels the reference is less than certain.

"Scrupulosity over Beyond the C[loister]"; "Dangerous scrupulosity ab[ou]t finishing a stanza of Beyond the Cloister for Dolben"; "Repeating to myself bits of Beyond the Cloister"; "Scruples ab[ou]t Magdalen and weakness, and perh[aps] some temptations elsewhere. Ab[ou]t Magd[alen] again on 4 [January 1866] and over a line above ['The earth and heaven so little known']. O. H."; "Self-will in writing down (past 12) corrections in The Nightingale ag[ain]st warning. Effect possibly physical. Temptation. Dwelling on poems. — And in morning of 21 [January 1866]" (184, 193, 193, 193, 194, 197, 197, 199, 201).

Undoubtedly, again, some of the scruples which Hopkins felt in writing, remembering, reciting, or copying poetry came about because of his growing intention to convert, for in the overheated religious atmosphere of Oxford in the 1860s such a decision took on enormous importance. The "physical" dangers which Hopkins noted might have been at times simply getting overtired, on a par with "lateness to bed." However, the phrase could indicate a degree of sexual reaction to the "evil thoughts" occasioned by the language of poems. The notation "O. H.," which follows the entries on "Castara Victrix" and "The earth and heaven so little known," appears in a number of places in the confession notes, i.e., "O. H. Drawing against a scruple or rather pos[sible] danger" (195). MacKenzie

interprets O. H. as "Old Habits"; most probably, "touching erogenous zones" (22). But while "O. H." follows directly after the mention of "Castara Victrix" and "The earth and heaven" there is no way to determine whether the physical act did as well.

Nevertheless, it is significant that Hopkins was now examining his conscience to determine whether in fact a physical reaction had occurred. It suggests that he was focusing on a fault which he found particularly troubling, perhaps having been directed to do so by his confessor.⁸ Taken with other evidence from the confession notes and the poems themselves the self-examination suggests, further, a growing awareness of the possibility of sexual stimulation from his own poems, the result of the process of confession which was bringing latent feelings into consciousness and discourse.

The four poems mentioned in the confession notes between September 1865 and January 1866 for which

⁸ As a guide to how to make a good confession Hopkins could have used Jeremy Taylor's The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living (1650), a widely-known manual for those High Anglicans who were seeking perfection, or perhaps pamphlets such as one recently found among the papers of Canon Liddon, Questions for Self-Examination (MacKenzie, EPMN 12-13). Liddon's confession handbook advises its readers to "fight specially against one particular sin." Questions to be asked about "Purity" include "If there is any special line of thought, or circumstance of life, or mode of speech, which tempts me, have I avoided it as I would the fire of the pit?" (204, 206).

references are certain involve "looking" either directly or indirectly, as do several of Hopkins's other Oxford poems.⁹ The process of imaginatively recreating either the act of looking, the physical appearance of the object of the gaze who is now absent from sight, or the emotion of yearning which is induced by gazing directly or in memory or dreams, appears to have become as charged as "looking" itself. The process is inscribed within the poetry as well, as human beauty is perceived directly or in the eye of the imagination by the persona. The fragment of "Castara Victrix" which prompted a "wholly illogical association," and caused Hopkins to "not put down" its "last lines," is a soliloquy by Daphnis in which he conjures up the beauty of his beloved Castara's face: "Why, there's an interest and sweet soul in beauty / Which makes us eye-attentive to the eye / That has it" (Poetical 82, lines 5-7). In "The Nightingale," written in the feminine voice, a wife "watching" (88, line 12) the dawn is distracted by the nightingale's song and fails to hear her sailor husband leave for a voyage. He is lost at sea and she, by then asleep and dreaming of him with longing, "[t]imed her sad visions

⁹ Seib finds that the furtive watcher is "a pervasive metaphor" in Hopkins's poetry; watchers are variously "exiles" from the world, from God, and from the self.

with his wreck" (89, line 55). The male speaker in the unfinished "Beyond the Cloister" (later "A Voice from the World") dwells with "passion-pastured thought" (53, line 187) on a past he shared with an absent beloved who has embraced a religious life and who now "see[s] but with a holier mind" (49, line 40), and implores her to return to him. In a dream the worldly speaker is unable to see her for his eyes fail: "the clammy ball was dry" (50, line 98). Hopkins's repeated reactions to "Beyond the Cloister" may well have been intensified by writing or copying out a section of the fragmentary poem for Digby Dolben, the handsome, fervently religious young cousin of Robert Bridges with whom Hopkins had a brief but apparently intense friendship before Dolben's death by drowning in 1867.¹⁰ While the theme

¹⁰ References to Dolben are scattered through the confession notes (which Hopkins began to make a month after meeting Dolben in February 1865): "Dangerous talking about Dolben"; "Desire to hear things coupled with forbidden subject, as questions about Dolben"; "Running on in thought last night unseasonably against warning onto subject of Dolben, and today and some temptation"; "Inatt[ention]. O.H. Temptation. Going on into a letter to Dolben at night ag[ain]st warning. . . . (On this day [6 Nov. 1865] by God's grace I resolved to give up all beauty until I had His leave for it; and also Dolben's letter came for wh[ich] Glory to God.) Rebellion and spiritual pride ab[ou]t sacrifice"; "[C]onceit over letter to Dolben" (*EPMN* 158, 163, 192, 194, 197). After Dolben's death Hopkins wrote to Bridges, "You know there can very seldom have happened the 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 w[oul]d not easily come together" (*Bridges* 16-17). For discussions of Dolben and his relationship with Hopkins see Kitchen 63-76; Martin 80-97, 155-70, passim; White 106-21, 145-46.

of vision is expanded to include the universe in the fragment "The earth and heaven so little known," no lover figures in it. Rather, Hopkins intellectualizes the process of vision. The speaker, a solitary observer, measures all of creation from himself as he stands in the midst of flux, for there is no "permanence in the solid world" (87, line 16); "[t]he unchanging register of change" is his "all-accepting fixèd eye" (86, line 5-6).

References to two of the poems on Hopkins's list of sins are uncertain. In the case of "The Half-way House" an excision makes the reference unclear, although probable (EPMN 193), but the poem also involves "looking," taking as its theme the "paradox: Love, when all is given, / To see Thee I must [see] Thee, to love, love" (Poetical 85, lines 13-14). In the second instance, the reference is displaced in time but "most probably alludes to the draft of 'Easter Communion'," Norman MacKenzie writes, noting further, however, that "the 'evil thought' could then possibly be from the prose notes above the poem" (9). If one discounts the crossed-out "Owed to Addis 6d," the last prose line reads "Frieze of sculpture, long-membered vines tugged at by reaching pursuant fauns, and lilies" (153), which could certainly have proved suggestive.

The poem could have as well, given Hopkins's sometimes guilty attraction to pain, as could the juxtaposition of prose and verse, with its address to "Ye whom the East / With draught of thin and pursuant cold so nips." In any case, Hopkins recognized that the "evil thought" was prompted by his own writing, as it had been in another instance: "The evil thought in writing on our Lord's passion" (157).

Hopkins worked on "Castara Victrix" in August and September 1865 (Poetical 278-79); he began "Beyond the Cloister" in June 1864 and was still working on it in December 1865 (252); "The earth and heaven so little known" and "The Nightingale" were written in January 1866. The confession notes indicate that by late 1865 a fall into knowledge of the possible dangers of writing poetry had occurred, particularly when, as in these cases, the theme of "looking" was inscribed. The fact that Hopkins was by now examining his conscience to determine whether he had had a "physical" reaction to his own poems points to an increasing recognition of some connection between what he had written and the persistent nocturnal emissions. There is some slight corroborating evidence for this in the notebooks, although the correlation between poetry and physical reaction is in no way exact, nor can poetry be connected with wet dreams in a large number of instances. However, it is worth observing that between mid-April

1865 and January 1866, a period when a total of about thirty-three wet dreams were recorded (EPMN 203), Hopkins noted an emission on 15 April, the day on which "in looking over the above poem [? 'Easter Communion'] an evil thought seemed to rise fr[om] the line before"; on 27 June, the day after entering "See how Spring"; again on 27 October, when he was writing "The Half-Way House," which in all likelihood prompted mention of a "doubtful" physical reaction on 30 October; and on 4 January 1866, when he had experienced a temptation "over a line" of "The earth and heaven so little known."

Two poems from a year or so earlier provide a contrast to what was becoming a crippling self-consciousness about the poetic problem of "looking." Eight lines written in June 1864 give a sense of Hopkins's prelapsarian vision as they deal uninhibitedly and punningly with the heady dangers of looking at a lover:

She schools the flighty pupils of her eyes,
 With levell'd lashes stilling their disquiet;
 And puts in leash her pair'd lips lest
 surprise
 Bare the condition of a realm at riot.
 If he suspect that she has ought to sigh at
 His injury she'll avenge with raging shame.
 She kept her love-thoughts on most lenten
 diet,
 And learnt her not to startle at his name.
(Poetical 22)

The concerns which would darken the confession notes, "dangerous" looking and speaking, are here

treated with the giddy delight characteristic of first love. In another early poem, a fragment of the uncompleted play "Floris in Italy" which dates from August and September 1864, Hopkins engages another matter which would also cause him great concern. A scene involving the dangers of looking at a beloved would appear when staged to be taking place between two young men, since the female speaker is disguised in an "unsexing doublet" with a "downy counterfeit" (38, lines 4-5) on her lip. After asking sleep to "[p]ly fold on fold across his dangerous eyes" (39, line 18) the disguised Giulia approaches the sleeping Floris in the dark, even though "[d]eep shame were it were to be discover'd so" (line 38), for she has "said Goodnight to shame" (line 41). She then shines her lantern on him, although only on his "large, princely hand, / Since on the face it is unsafe to look" (lines 42-43). In the poetry "looking" prompts "shame" from the outset, but the reaction is high-spirited in "She schools the flighty pupils" and barely guilty in the fragment from "Floris," since Giulia has said "Goodnight" to that emotion.

In spring 1865, however, when Hopkins had begun to include his own poetry in the list of "sins," he entered "The Alchemist in the City" into his notebook. The poem, which is Hopkins's clearest expression of the desire for "free long looking" (76, line 44), exhibits

a sense of longing and guilt which parallels that of the confession notes. The speaker looks out a window at men who "do not waste their meted hours" (75, line 5) while he himself produces nothing, for he has been made "[m]ore powerless than the blind or lame" (76, line 20) by an unspecified "incapable and cumbrous shame" (line 18). A month later, on 26 June, Hopkins entered "See how Spring opens with disabling cold" and it immediately caused him a "scruple." Here, again, troublingly guilty memories figure. The "[c]hilling remembrance of my days of old" (77, line 5), of the "waste done in unreticent youth" (line 10), afflicts the speaker, preventing any productive yield from the "seed which the good sower [Christ] once did sow" within him (line 7). Both poems express a sense of regret over unproductive years and the second seems clearly to relate Hopkins's doubts about Anglicanism and the need he felt for reticence about his growing intention to convert to Roman Catholicism. Yet the language of "See how Spring" and "The Alchemist" permits a second range of meanings. There is no longer a light-hearted approach to "shame." The alchemist, far from having "said Goodnight to shame," regrets the "waste" of his talents because of its obstructing, incapacitating effect. The speaker in "See how Spring" regrets that his youthful "waste" negates the fructifying "seed" sown in him by Christ. There are echoes of

Shakespeare's Sonnet 129 in both poems and, indeed, for Hopkins as well as for Shakespeare, "Th'expende of Spirit in a waste of shame / Is lust in action."¹¹ Further, lust is "blouddy" (line 3) and "savage" (line 4) even "till action" (line 2) ("until it becomes action" [Thompson 273]). It leads to the expenditure of seminal fluid and the waste of mental and moral capabilities. In the "underthought" (Further 252) of the two Hopkins poems the sin of "looking," lust of the eye, is coupled with that of wasting time, mentioned so frequently in the confession notes, and with the fruitless spilling of seed as well. In "See how Spring" the speaker's remembrance is very possibly also of the "waste" of his own seed in persistent wet dreams, for the sinfulness of the action would prevent Christ's divine "seed" from falling on fertile ground. Depending upon the degree of Hopkins's consciousness, wet dreams could even be mortal sin: "I fear mortal sin, effluximina nulla adhibita mora [night emissions to which no restraint was applied]," he wrote in November 1865 (EPMN 195).

¹¹ Shakespeare appears more directly in the confession notes later in 1865: on 6 September, "Slight tempt[ation] in Shakspeare"; and on 13 September, "Reading weakly a thing in Love's Labour [sic] Lost," the same day on which Hopkins entered his unfinished sonnet "Shakspeare" into his notebook (EPMN 184, 187).

At least some of the alchemist's "waste" and "shame" derives from the visual longing which the poem expresses. The direction of the alchemist's gaze is curiously ambiguous, however. He yearns to escape the city into a "wilderness": "I walk my breezy belvedere" (Poetical 76, line 25), he says, "Then find in the horizon-round / One spot and hunger to be there" (lines 31-32). He imagines himself to be in a position where he can indulge a visual desire: "There on a long and squarèd height / After sunset I would lie, / And pierce the yellow waxen light / With free long looking, ere I die" (lines 41-44). The referent of "there" in the second instance cited is unclear, however. If the "there" from which the alchemist looks is his "belvedere" then he gazes away from the city toward the "one spot," the "free and kind . . . wilderness" (line 36). If, on the other hand, "there" refers to the wilderness (as it had in the first instance), then the alchemist's desire could be either to gaze further into that wilderness; or, on the other hand, to gaze with longing from that uncontaminated spot of purity and safety back into the city, the site of the "incapable and cumbrous shame" (line 18).

In reaction to his growing recognition of the problem involved in the poetic treatment of "looking" Hopkins was beginning, uncertainly, to undertake a crucial visual turn, from human beauty to the pure beauty

of divinity. In June 1865, a month after writing "The Alchemist," he treats the turn thematically and clarifies what was to become the object of his gaze. In "Myself unholy" the speaker refocuses his vision: "[F]rom myself unholy / To the sweet living of my friends I look — / Eye-greeting doves bright-counter to the rook" (76, lines 1-3). But he finds that the friends are "purer, but alas! not solely / The unquestion'd readings of a blotless book" (77, lines 5-6); and so he turns from human beauty to the absolute purity of Christ: "No better serves me now save best; no other / Save Christ: to Christ I look, on Christ I call" (lines 13-14). However, confession notes in the summer and fall of 1865 show that the temptations occasioned by Hopkins's friends and others were not relieved by the attempted poetic turn; in fact they were affecting what was most precious to him, his religious commitment: "Self-exam. Despair of God . . . Temptations and last night in bed"; "Faults of manner to Bond and Phillimore. Almost despair. Temptation in thinking over boy I saw. Another about drawing Phillimore. Loss of faith in God"; "Temptations, a good many. . . . Want of faith in God about temptations" (EPMN 173, 181, 186). Since temptations were occasioned by the human and creative beauty which he saw around him, on 6 November Hopkins "resolved to give up all beauty" until he had God's "leave for it"; the

action was followed the next day by the tormenting "O[ld] H[abits]" (194).

Hopkins's considerable interest in philosophy had some effect upon his poetry. Until 1866, although he may have been contemplating conversion, Gerard Manley Hopkins was an adherent of the Tractarian party of the Anglican Church. G. B. Tennyson observes that John Keble and other Tractarians "make clear that what is moving the poet to artistic expression . . . is the yearning for God," and that the concept influenced Hopkins's poetry, where one detects "a good deal of the Tractarian yearning after an object out of reach, an object that Hopkins, like the Tractarians, would equate with God" (206). Hopkins himself said in 1879, in what appears to have been a reference to Christ, that "Feeling, love in particular, is the great moving power and spring of verse" (Bridges 66), and certainly yearning is prominent in the early poetry, but it is distinctly not the case in the mid-1860s that the object of yearning was exclusively God. This fact contributed significantly to the poetic crisis, for the dangerous attractions of eros confused and obstructed Hopkins's movement toward a pure love exemplified by caritas.

Keble, the leading Tractarian poetic theorist, saw poetry as indispensable to religion because the poet paved the way for religious feelings by purifying the

human affections through the use of his creative imagination. As he explained in an early essay on Edward Copleston's Praelectiones Academicae:

All the pleasures of poetry, as the term is commonly apprehended, imply the embodying something visionary, the presenting something absent, the bettering something imperfect: their very being lies in the consciousness of some such operation. Now what (excepting in a mind thoroughly diseased and depraved, wherein imagination and reason too are slaves of the body) what can tend more strongly to make man feel his own dignity; to disencumber him of earthly affections, and lift him nearer what he once was, and what he may be again, than the exercise and invigoration of a power so totally independent of material things, so much at variance with the sense as this is. If, then, all the honest pleasures of the imagination have this high kindred, and if we may boldly exclude as unpoetical such as are corrupt and sensual, what hinders but that the poetry of the imagination, as well as that of the heart, be owned to have its beginning and end in religious and moral associations? (Occasional 158)

Disencumbered from earthly affections, free from the corrupt and sensual attraction of material things, the poet draws on his imagination to present a visionary and absent ideal which lifts his reader toward a greater moral perfection. He uses the strength of his own emotions to accomplish his high task, for poetry is "the indirect expression of overpowering but impeded feelings," impeded both by their "very strength and intenseness" and by "an instinctive delicacy which recoils from exposing them openly" (Lectures 2: 11). Giving the Psalms as an example, Keble writes that such delicacy shows itself in religious poetry, where the

control and restraint required by formal demands provides a necessary discipline which furnishes "a vent for eager feeling, and a veil of reserve to draw over them"; the poetry can therefore "utter . . . what is would have shrunk from setting down in the language of conversation" (18). What might have proved to be "dangerous talking" about religious matters, then, is channeled and vented through the demanding form, and poetry provides the additional advantage of a "veil of reserve."

The idea of poetic reserve derives from the notion of religious Reserve, a central concept in Tractarian thought which holds among other things that "it is both unnecessary and undesirable that God and religious truth generally be disclosed in their fullness at once to all regardless of the differing capacities of individuals to apprehend such things" (Tennyson 45). As Keble explains,

[T]he chief effect of this modesty, as we may call it, of poets, will thus be seen to be that they hint at very many things rather than are at pains to describe them. For they are under no necessity to delineate in minute detail; neither to assist recollection of the thing itself (for it is treasured up in their own mind and soul); nor to rouse the feelings of hearers[.] (Lectures 1: 77)

Keble concludes by comparing this "modest reserve" to the "modest blush of a country maiden" (84).

Certainly the Tractarian poets believed that their emotions were purely religious ones, and their poetic

theory reflects that belief. However, it is precisely this aspect of Tractarian poetic theory which represents an insolvable problem for Hopkins, as the pleasures of the text were experienced too intensely. Tractarian poetics does not have the capacity to provide for a case when the "repressed emotion" is a yearning for both for God and for human beings, for both caritas and eros. The poet, says Keble, is to use his imaginative power to express his religious belief and love for God, veiled for the uninitiated, clear to the initiate; but what if it is possible for that imagination to be contaminated by earthly desire, by looking and yearning, and it is that which is expressed in a veiled manner in the poetry? Poetry, says Keble, is "the presenting something absent": but what if the absence is that of a human beloved, not alone that of a beloved God? What if, further, the poet's attempt to achieve the expression of love for God can be overwhelmed by the pull of eros in the very act of writing poetry? Keble maintained that it is not the role of poetry to "rouse the feelings of hearers"; but what action is the poet to take when the hearer in question is the poet himself, and his own, sexual, feelings might be roused in the act of writing, reading, and speaking his own poetry? The poetic language of love is the same in the case of either eros or caritas, despite the radical difference in its object, and it

would be capable of moving the susceptible poet in either case: "physically perhaps." The "perhaps" of course indicates uncertainly; but in as finely-tuned a temperament as Hopkins's, the possibility would have as inhibiting effect as the reality. Poetry can never fulfill its moral function of purifying the affections under these circumstances. Keble states it clearly: if "imagination and reason too are slaves of the body" the poet is not, in fact, writing poetry; for "we may boldly exclude as unpoetical such as are corrupt and sensual."

For Hopkins, then, the poetic danger lay not only in the religious revelations which Tractarian poetic theory dealt with, although these clearly were causing problems for him. Hopkins's early poetry is also affected by his unstable sexuality, with its yearnings toward both heavenly and earthly love, which he expressed in the language common to both. Hopkins showed an awareness of the difficulties inherent in love language in the summer of 1864, and signalled that he would make a linguistic turn from eros to caritas, parallel to the later turn of his gaze from the human to the divine. In "He hath abolished the old drouth" the higher love unites two earthly lovers in heaven. God has put a "new song" in the speaker's mouth in which "The words are old, the purport new"; he has taught his lips to "quote this word" (Poetical 28,

lines 4-5). The old words are love-speeches, the word quoted is clearly "love," and all words of love are directed toward God instead of toward a human lover, with whom however the speaker will be "sheavèd" (29, line 14) in heaven as they look without guilt at each other: "I will turn my looks to you, / And you shall meet me with reply" (lines 12-13).

Hopkins was not yet ready to make the turn toward heaven, however. In the sonnet "Where art thou friend, whom I shall never see," entered into the notebooks in April 1865, yearning for an absent human beloved becomes thematic. "Sundered from" the speaker's sight the friend cannot be looked at, and because of that absence the speaker will (and indeed, does) "conceive amiss" (73, lines 2-3). The resulting lines are awkwardly confused and one must suspect that the sexually charged longing which accompanies the theme has in this instance overwhelmed Hopkins's language. By fall 1865 two poems again address the problem of love-language thematically, and they use it with "purport new." In a sonnet from 22 October 1865, "Let me be to Thee as the circling bird," the speaker rejoices: "I have found my music in a common word" (84, line 5). His "authentic cadence was discovered late" (line 9) after he has tried other harmonies, which are now a "minor sweetness" (line 2). The "common word" which provides "the dominant of my range and state" (line 13)

is "love" — caritas, not eros — and the speaker also has found a dominant poetic action: "Love, O my God, to call Thee Love and Love" (line 14).

The following poem, "The Half-way House," enacts that "call," and the relief at being able to express openly a love of Christ is palpable: the word "love" is repeated eleven times in eighteen lines. As he had in "He hath abolished the old drouth" the speaker connects the theme of the language of love with that of looking toward a beloved. As in "Where art thou friend" the beloved is absent, but with the critical difference that he is heavenly, not earthly. The problem is stated and then resolved through a "paradox" which in the light of Hopkins's belief in the Real Presence is in fact not one at all:

Hear yet my paradox: Love, when all is given,
To see Thee I must see Thee, to love, love;
I must o'ertake Thee at once and under heaven
If I shall overtake Thee at last above.
You have your wish; enter these walls, one
said:
He is with you in the breaking of the bread.
(85, lines 13-18)

The poet must "see" Christ in the present if he is finally to see him in heaven, to love him in the present if he is to love him eternally. However, as we have seen, "The Half-way House" may have caused a "doubtful" physical reaction, perhaps not only because of the visual theme, but also because suggestiveness and temptation reside in love-language, no matter what

its object, so that the force of poetic language can bring caritas firmly down to eros: despite their new "purport" the only words available to the poet are "old."

The early fragment of "Floris in Italy" cited above was an innocently staged portrayal of secret looking. By Fall 1865, when the final fragments were entered, "Floris" as well combined the dual concerns of "looking" and of the problematic language of love, taking the latter theme one step further. Floris puzzles about the nature of beauty, which "has one term and part / Beyond, and one within the looker's eye" (36, lines 5-6) after which his friend Henry comments on the deceptiveness of the perception of human beauty:

Thus he ties spider's web across his sight
And gives for tropes his judgment all away,
Gilds with some sparky fancies his black
 night
And stumbling swears he walks by light of
 day.
Blindness! (lines 21-25)

Both perception and language are insubstantial. Floris's "sight," his perception of beauty, is obscured by the web of metaphoric language which "gilds" his "black night" with what appear to be stars but are actually no more than subjectively projected "sparky fancies." His own language has blinded him and he is unaware that his attempt to analyze the nature of Giulia's beauty is of necessity falsified by his tropes.

Similar themes also occur in the uncompleted "A Voice from the World." The first fragment was entered into Hopkins's notebook in the summer of 1864 and, although no versions later than May 1865 have survived, the confession notes indicate that under its original title it was causing the poet repeated scruples as late as November and December. The poem was intended as "An answer to Miss Rossetti's Convent Threshold," in which Christina Rossetti detailed the feelings of a penitent woman who urges the lover, with whom she had "sinned . . . a pleasant sin" (qtd. in Poetical 208, line 51), to turn his eyes upward to heaven, where they "shall meet as once we met / And love with old familiar love" (210, line 148). However, the lover continues to look earthward at the glad young men and women with "love-music warbling in their throat" (208, line 36).

Hopkins's reply is in the voice of the male lover who is still earthbound in his desires. The speaker hears the voice of his unseen beloved and although he realizes that she is beyond his reach he presses his suit: "I know I mar my cause with words: / So be it; I must maim and mar" (48, lines 30-31). The lover suffers "phrenzy" (49, line 52):

I fall, I tear and shower the weed,
I bite my hands, my looks I shroud;
My cry is like a bleat; a few
Intolerable tears I bleed. . . .
Alas! I rave, where calm is due; . . .
I storm and shock you. So I fail. (49-50,
lines 64-73))

He begs his beloved to teach him the way to repentance, but he then tries to bargain with God so that he be able to retain the "remembered sweetness" (52, line 152) of his illicit love, repeating Rossetti's line, "Knowledge is strong but love is sweet" (line 167). He finds that the places where he and she used to meet are now "waste" (line 179) and, as the final fragment ends, asks "How shall I turn my passion-pastured thought / To gentle manna and simple bread?" (53, lines 187-88).

Hopkins again considers the problems both of dealing with an absent beloved and of the confrontation between eros and caritas. However, this poetic consideration exhibits the strain of that confrontation, for the text storms and shocks as well as the lover. The speaker himself is aware that his language may "maim and mar" his cause, and that he "fails" because of his loss of verbal control, in which the eye becomes a "clammy ball" as, raving, biting, bleating, he "shower[s] the weed" with tears, which become "intolerable" indeed to the reader. The speaker's language is as "passion-pastured" as his thoughts. In an 1867 letter to his college friend Rev. E.W. Urquhart, however, Hopkins did not feel the poem's diction to be excessive to the subject, for it is rather the supposedly repentant lover's desire to retain the "remember'd sweetness" of his past love which he criticizes:

I have ceased to care for Beyond the Cloister being put into a magazine. Too many licenses are taken for a beginner, but the objection is on the score of morality rather than of art, and as the licenses in themselves I still think justifiable I need not alter what I cannot publish. (Further 36)

But no danger to Hopkins would lie in publication where the veil of poetic reserve could assure protection against any unwanted exposure of feelings. Indeed, Hopkins also unsuccessfully submitted at least two of the three sonnets which make up "The Beginning of the End," on other aspects of relinquished love, for publication. Some danger, perhaps, could lie in reading poetry with intimates, those initiates who could penetrate the meanings of language, for "Hopkins usually practiced poetry within the context of the exchange of poetry among young male writers" (Dellamora 48). Yet the most serious danger of temptation came not only from what he saw around him, but from the poet himself in reading or reciting the words created by his poetic imagination, as well as from what he saw around him.

In his Oxford confession notes, Hopkins recorded numerous temptations resulting from looking at young men, but he does not seem to have been strongly attracted by any one young man, with the single exception of Digby Dolben. His interest in Dolben was in part religious, and after his death Hopkins wrote to Bridges that "I looked forward to meeting Dolben and

his being a Catholic more than to anything" (Bridges 16). The religious aspect gave a typically Oxford form to what appears to have been a homoerotic attraction, for the intense Oxford atmosphere encouraged romantic friendships and "stimulated homoerotic feeling, valorized it, and provided it with a convenient alibi. Friendships in Christ also provided a defense against a specifically sexual expression of desire by stimulating intimacy in a somewhat disembodied way" (Dellamora 46). Critics have also connected the confused "Where art thou friend whom I shall never see" to Dolben (Journals 325, note 55.8), and what was later titled "A Voice from the World" also had some connection in Hopkins's mind with the young man, as we have seen ("Dangerous scrupulosity ab[ou]t finishing a stanza of Beyond the Cloister for Dolben. . . . Repeating to myself bits of Beyond the Cloister"). There may have been some identification with a frenzied earthbound lover who first tries to win an absent beloved away from heavenly love and then, while vowing repentance, bargains with God to retain the memory of carnal love. Dolben was intending to enter a monastic order, and "remembered love" might well have been on Hopkins's mind in 1865. Yet even disembodied friendships in Christ might present obstacles to purity for, indeed, as Humphry House maintains, "There seems little doubt that Dolben was closely bound up with the religious crisis of that

March [1865] which led to GMH's 'day of great mercy of God' (12 Mar.), . . . and daily notes for confession" (Journals 325, note 55.8).

Hopkins had one final word on the emotion of longing which is so often associated in the Oxford poems with a beloved who is beyond the range of vision. After giving up poetry, Hopkins discussed this longing and the way in which sensuous stimulation arouses it in an essay which he wrote for his tutor T. H. Green about 1867:

We say for instance there is a want of something, I cannot tell what it is, and we have longings and cravings -- children especially do, and we do in seeing a pathetic landscape or hearing such music -- which we do not know what will satisfy: the pain is in fact in not knowing what to wish.

The emotional pain stimulated by paintings and music may perhaps lie in not knowing what to wish, but Hopkins nevertheless gives as an example a situation which, significantly, involves recreating the appearance of a beloved in the mind's eye:

There is an instance of all that one can say about longing and wishing in Wordsworth's poem The Forsaken. What the man's craving is for is the dead Barbara, but the impossibility of her return is so full that he does not shape a wish for it. Yet since a blind craving is always engendering a wish, he does utter his prayer for the cottage to move 'from behind yon oak', because although the thing is impossible yet the cottage and tree being before his eyes he can manage to picture them otherwise and thus give in this thought the conditions to the impossible. Then since the sense that there is no power to move the cottage cannot be kept out of

sight for long, he passes from one wish to another, because their existence is only possible by not dwelling on them. (qtd. in Schmidt, 174)¹²

The wish engendered by "blind craving" is for what the eye can "picture . . . otherwise," however briefly, as a displacement of the hopeless desire for the visual reappearance of "the dead Barbara." Something similar may well have been occurring in the Oxford poems which had been so troubling three or four years earlier.

At the end of 1865 the problem of looking at human beauty, and of separating caritas from eros, remained unresolved. Fragments and brief poems from the December 1865 and January 1866, show an obsessive preoccupation with vision. One fragment reflects the desire to escape the past and to see and be seen by God:

Moonless darkness stands between.
Past, the Past, no more be seen!
But the Bethlehem-star may lead me
To the sight of Him Who freed me
From the self that I have been. (Poetical
86, lines 1-5)

¹² Hopkins "mistakes the title of Wordsworth's poem. 'The Forsaken' is in fact the poem numbered XII in the sequence of 'Poems founded on the Affections' The immediately following piece, no. XIII, which begins "'Tis said that some have died for love,' is the poem intended; since it has no title, Hopkins presumably confused it with the preceding piece (in which the words 'wish' and 'pain' occur)" (Schmidt 184, note 25). Perhaps feelings of being forsaken, as well as wishes and pain, inevitably accompany the act of imaginatively conjuring up an absent beloved during the Oxford period.

Other fragments express a sense of being looked at by the natural world, for example "In the staring darkness" (87) and "The stars were packed so close that night / They seemed to press and stare" (88, lines 1-2). A Journal entry for 23 January 1866 vows, among other stringencies during Lent, "No verses in Passion Week or on Friday"; just below it, a second entry dwells on the organ of sight: "Cups of the eyes. Gathering back the lightly hinged eyelids. Bows of the eyelids. Pencil of eyelashes. Juices of the eyeball. Eyelids like leaves, petals, caps, tufted hats, handkerchiefs, sleeves, gloves" (Journals 72).

Hopkins's sense of general corruption in society has grown. The theme of the contaminated and contaminating city, first developed in "The Alchemist in the City," becomes more insistent and in one of his last Oxford poems Hopkins returned there. But in "Summa" there was no imagined area of purity as there had been in the earlier poem, and it sounds a note of weariness over the corruption of the beauty of both the soul and the body:

For souls that might have blessed the time
And breathed delightful breath
In sordidness of care and crime
The city tires to death,
And faces fit for leisure gaze
And daylight and sweet air,
Missing prosperity and praise,
Are never known for fair. (Poetical 94,
lines 9-16)

Human beauty is now unfit "for leisure gaze" or for the gaze of the poet, and Hopkins's unsteady poetic vision is dimming.

Hopkins wrote several short works in Latin on secular themes toward the end of his Oxford poetic career, among them "Elegiacs: after The Convent Threshold ('Fraterno nobis')," which is a translation of two sections of the Rossetti poem (98-9). Latin continued to be used as a spoken scholarly language well into the nineteenth century; Keble's lectures on poetry, for example, were delivered in that tongue, as were all others by Oxford Professors of Poetry until Matthew Arnold broke with tradition at mid-century. As we have seen, Hopkins would write preponderantly in Latin after he entered the Society of Jesus until 1876. Recourse to the language of his church may have relieved some of the anxieties which he had experienced in writing in English while he was at Oxford.

The use of Latin verse had a different advantage for John Keble, however:

Certainly the early Fathers of the Church who were specially fitted to be defenders of pure religion insisted that every care must be taken lest opponents and mockers should attain knowledge of sacramental mysteries and the key-words of the faith. . . .

There was no prohibition, as far as I know, scriptural or ecclesiastical, against open speech concerning these things. Nor was there need; Nature herself was a sufficient check. Did she not plainly indicate that many things connected with religious worship are wisely concealed from general view, I

cannot conceive what should have led to the custom, long established among Christians over a large portion of the world, of reciting prayers in Latin. (Lectures 1: 74)

Latin, then, is the natural language for religious Reserve, the concept from which the parallel notion of poetic reserve derived in Tractarian poetics. Hopkins used Latin in at least one other circumstance for reasons of discretion, for he recorded his wet dreams in his notebooks in that language, although this may have been no more than an elementary precaution against discovery by the very young or the uneducated. However, evidence of reserve occurs in his first Latin poem, "Inundation Oxoniana," probably written some time in 1866, which concerns the same theme of the dangerously contaminating city. The poem describes the aftermath of flooding in Oxford:

Tum saepe marinus
Fertur odor campo et madidas levis occupat
 auras,
Urbem qui subeat mediam lustretque domorum
Intima; tristem adeo non usquam averteris
 algam.
Hinc quota vis morbi, quoties adiiisse
 querentur,
Tecta petis nostri vicinam obnoxia febrem.
At vicibus vertisse solum est, aegrosque
 calores
Jam fugere: his non perpetui versamur in
 umbris. (96, lines 16-23)

[Often a smell as of the sea drifts across the plain and, light though it is, takes possession of the damp air, a smell to creep into the midst of the city and visit the inmost parts of houses; so little do you anywhere escape the nasty scum. Hence arise how many a severe attack of sickness! how people will complain how often it has attacked them!]

If [for instance] you come to visit our house, you find it exposed to the fever next door. But you can go elsewhere for a change and get away at once from the unhealthy heat waves (or fever): we need not hang about permanently amid these shadows.] (293-94; trans. CGH)

W. H. Gardner comments, "Classicists whom I have consulted are not unanimous about this poem; but the majority think that the style, in parts involved and obscure, is not due to metrical difficulties: 'it seems deliberate, and is therefore of interest in any study of the writer's development'" (Hopkins, Poems 319). As Hopkins's early poetic career ended, it would seem that writing openly about the contamination which he so feared was not to be possible, even when the theme was couched in such neutral metaphors as the "city," or in such a hallowed language as Latin.

Hopkins would soon leave the secular Victorian city, site of such wicked beauty as Kay's, of "Priapeian Museums and Public Lectures," of seductive Oxford friends, of suggestive paintings and poems, of his own "shame." Only a more intense religious commitment could combat the "sordidness of care and crime" of that "city," as Hopkins wrote in a discreetly worded letter to his Oxford friend Baillie in September 1865 about a year before his conversion:

the difference the apprehension of the Catholic [i.e., Anglican] truths one after another makes in one's views of everything, beyond all others those of course of the blessed sacrament of the altar. You will no

doubt understand what I mean by saying that the sordidness of things, wh[ich] one is compelled perpetually to feel, is perhaps . . . the most unmixedly painful thing one knows of: and this is (objectively) intensified and (subjectively) destroyed by Catholicism. If people c[oul]d all know this, to take no higher ground, no other inducement w[oul]d to very many minds be needed to lead them to Catholicism and no opposite inducement c[oul]d dissuade them fr[om] it. I ought perhaps not to say this as you c[oul]d have said it just as well, but it is a view I have had in my thoughts lately, and I can speak of it as confirmed or excited by certain things possibly more detailed and definite than the subjects wh[ich] it is likely have been more especially present to your mind. (Further 226-27; emphasis in original)

Hopkins's crisis in the mid-60's could find no resolution the sordid secular world. In January 1866 Hopkins wrote "The Habit of Perfection," with its address to his senses to control themselves and to turn inward to thoughts of the divine: "Be shellèd, eyes, with double dark / And find the uncreated light" (Poetical 90, lines 9-10). However, "The Habit of Perfection" shares the dates of its creation, 18 and 19 January 1866, with "The Nightingale," a poem of earthly love which occasioned a reaction which was "possibly physical." In a final pair of poems, both of which probably date from Lent 1866, Hopkins turns his eyes entirely toward divinity although with very different results. In "Nondum" the speaker despairs of God as the "unseen King" (92, line 13), for "abysses infinite / Surround the peak from which we gaze" (92, lines 25-26). The tone of "Easter," on the other hand, is one

of a youthful delight which had not been apparent in Hopkins's poetry since "She schools the flighty pupils of her eyes," written in 1864. Here the beloved God's absence brings joy, not despair: "Build His church and deck His shrine, / Empty though it be on earth," cries the speaker (93, lines 7-8). The joyous tone looks forward to Hopkins's later poetry even as the early poetic career is drawing to a close, as silence falls. Hopkins's confession notes and the poetry itself show that by now poetry, like the visual arts, has put a "strain upon the passions" which Hopkins found it "unsafe to encounter." Both human and divine beauty have become unsuitable as poetic subjects. Hopkins's thoughts were being led into dangerous channels by the force of his own words. The result might be termed an aesthetic of non-arousal, which derived from the same troubled efforts to avoid temptations expressed in other instances in the confession notes.

In the face of attractions and desires which conflicted with his all-important ethical and religious beliefs, including his commitment to celibacy, Hopkins had taken several actions. He practiced mortification of the flesh. He relinquished all attempts at creating the aesthetic beauty which he found "dangerous," first by renouncing his early ambition to be a painter, and then, for the poetic turn from mortal to divine beauty had failed, by laying down his pen. By 17 July 1866 he

had decided to convert to Roman Catholicism (Journals 146), and he was brought into the church by Henry Cardinal Newman on 21 October. Finally, he withdrew bodily from the secular world. By 5 May 1868, six days before the "slaughter of the innocents," Hopkins "resolved to be a religious" (165), and he entered the Jesuit novitiate at Roehampton that September. Notebook C.ii ends at Lent 1866. An entry in a subsequent Journal shows that in May Hopkins "wandered about S. Hinksey . . . with most sad distracting scruple, as bad as any single one almost ever was" (133), but no further references to temptations or scruples occur. It is nevertheless reasonable to assume that Hopkins's religious and sexual crises had persisted, and it would be difficult not to conclude further that his religious decisions were affected by the years of sensuous temptations and the sexually charged "evil thoughts" which they occasioned.

The chastity to which Hopkins pledged himself in affiliating with the Jesuit community was an active principle, a positive way of fulfilling God's work in the world. In Hopkins's short poem "St. Thecla" (1864-65), for example, that virgin renounced marriage after listening to St. Paul, who "praised the lovely lot of continence: / All over, some such words as these, though dark, / The world was saved by virgins, made their mark" (Poetical 70, lines 28-30; emphasis in

original). The order both demanded the control of fleshly impulse and provided authoritative support for the effort to gain that control. Equally important, entering the Jesuit priesthood provided a means through which "looking" could be rid of its dangers, one which had not been available to Hopkins the Anglican. As Richard Dellamora observes, "Oxford Catholicism offer[ed] Hopkins not only a genuinely religious but also an alternative masculine ideal, in which Christ embodie[d] Hopkins's aspirations in a form not only ascetic or mortified but also physical and radiant," and one which enabled him to "use Christ as an analogue of masculine life energizing the world" (50-1). Adopting Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's term Dellamora emphasizes the "homosocial" basis for entering the Jesuit order: "Life as a religious promised to valorize masculine desire by focusing it on Christ while folding Hopkins into a range of 'safe' male homosocial relations" (47).

Christ's body was also to act as an example of purity toward which to aspire, as an aid to conquering temptations. In the troubled spring of 1865 Hopkins had made a note to obtain a copy of the sermon which his Anglican confessor E. B. Pusey had given a few years earlier "On the Remedy for Sins of the body" (Journals 60; 333, note 60.iii). In the sermon Pusey preached that temptation to such sins arose from "imagination, corrupted by corrupt reading, corrupt

speaking, corrupt hearing, corrupt sight" (Pusey 12). Sins of the body show ingratitude for Christ's physical agonies on the cross, which invested human bodies with sacredness, and the only effectual remedy, Pusey maintained, was prayer. Hopkins would continue to use "The sight of our Lord's body as a remedy for temptation" (Sermons 255), but as the continuing intense sexual anxiety evident in the confession notes makes clear, Anglican remedies alone failed in Hopkins's case. The Society of Jesus, however provided a different remedy.

Jesuit training and discipline centers upon the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, which aim to train the "three powers," memory, understanding and will, with the objective of unifying the exercitant's desires and choices in conformity with God's will; and for Hopkins, as Christopher Devlin observes, "the irremediable divorce between desire and choice is the state of the damned in hell" (Sermons 118). While Jesuit ascetic discipline teaches contempt for the body, the training emphasizes at the same time the process of imaginative visualization in ways which responded directly to Hopkins's spiritual and psychic needs. For example, in the second week of the Long Retreat, which Hopkins undertook in September and October 1868, soon after arriving at Roehampton, the Spiritual Exercises direct that "first point" in the First Meditation on the Incarnation

is to consider all the persons involved in this event. Imagine what the men dwelling all over the earth look like, so different from one another in their social relationships, manners, clothing and occupations.

. . . Next consider the three Divine Persons observing from their royal throne all sorts of people walking the earth like blind men, sporadically dying, and going down to hell.

(Loyola 58)

In his retreat notes on this passage Hopkins emphasized the role of seeing "with the eyes of the imagination" (Sermons 175). As Roland Barthes has observed, "the eye becomes the prime organ of perception" in the Spiritual Exercises. The visually conceived images are above all of the human or divine body, located within an imagined physical location:

The most abstract things . . . must find some material movement where they can picture themselves and form a tableau vivant: if the Trinity is to be envisioned, it will be in the form of three Persons in the act of watching men descending into hell; however, the basis, the force of the materiality, the immediate total of desire, is of course the human body; a body incessantly mobilized into image by the play of imitation which establishes a literal analogy between the corporeality of the exercitant and that of Christ, whose existence, almost physiological, is to be rediscovered through personal anamnesis. The body in Ignatius is never conceptual: it is always this body: if I transport myself to a vale of tears, I must imagine, see this flesh, these members among the bodies of the creatures. (Barthes 62; emphasis in original)

Hopkins the Oxford Anglican had practiced an ascetic discipline of avoidance of either real or fantasy "looking." Within the Jesuit discipline, not only was sensuous experience, including "looking" imagina-

tively at human and divine bodies permitted: the process of visualization, the "composition of place," was in fact demanded as a necessary part of training, a means for achieving the self-control and sanctity which would permit admission to the priesthood through the sacrament of Holy Orders. The methodology of the Spiritual Exercises, with its emphasis on "filling the spirit with images," says Barthes, results in a "culture of fantasy" of bodily images (69); this could redirect and purify eroticized visual desire.¹³

The body of Christ which Father Hopkins adored, then, was fully imagined in all its physical beauty, as a sermon which he preached in 1879 at Bedford Leigh indicates:

There met in Jesus Christ all things that can make man lovely and loveable. In his body he was most beautiful. . . . They tell us that he was moderately tall, well built and tender in frame, his features straight and beautiful, his hair inclining to auburn, parted in the midst, curling and clustering about the ears and neck as the leaves of a filbert, so they speak, upon the nut. (Sermons 35)

Having given his own detailed description, Hopkins urged his congregation to visualize Christ:

¹³ Barthes argues further that fragmentation of the body is a central technique for contemplation, part of the "articulation" which is "the continuing basis of Ignation discourse" (52). It is a technique which would hold appeal for Hopkins for, as Murphy remarks, "even a partial listing of his poetic references to various parts of the body sounds like the table of contents to Gray's Anatomy" (5).

[P]icture him, in whom the fulness of the godhead dwelt bodily, in his bearing how majestic, how strong and yet how lovely and lissome in his limbs, in his look how earnest, grave but kind. In his Passion all this strength was spent, this lissomness crippled, this beauty wrecked, this majesty beaten down. But now it is more than all restored, and for myself I make no secret I look forward with eager desire to seeing the matchless beauty of Christ's body in the heavenly light. (36)

Hopkins has moved his eyes from the beautiful human body which had caused such dangers and temptations when it met his gaze in the 1860s to the redemptive, divine body of Christ, which becomes a legitimate object of loving vision and glorification.¹⁴ Indeed, Christ had not only a beautiful body, but "beauty and perfection in the mind" (36), and a third important characteristic: "far higher than beauty of the body, higher than genius and wisdom the beauty of the mind, comes the beauty of his character, his character as man" (37). The sexual panic which had accompanied looking at human bodies during his Oxford days is gone. His vision firmly secured within the body of Catholic

¹⁴ Dellamora does not see Hopkins's turn to Christ's body as a substitute or a sublimation of desire for the human body: "Hopkins's Catholicism has to be reckoned with on its own terms as the most powerful and determining commitment of his life. This conviction is not a substitute for an unrealized sexual desire; but neither is it simply a sublimation. There is little reason to believe that Hopkins's sense of loss in personal relations was not conscious. In the meantime, Christ's beauty authorized priest and poet's continuing devotion to an embodied selfhood and to the poetic celebration of desire for other men" (47).

belief, there was no need for Hopkins to make a secret of the "eager desire [for] seeing the matchless beauty of Christ's body" as it appears transformed after the redemptive pain and deformity of the Passion, which is a permitted subject of adoration as well. Further assurance derives from the controlling reciprocity of the godhead's gaze, for as James Finn Cotter has observed, "Christ first inscapes mankind before they inscape him; he is their aim and mark because he already holds each one fast in his living sight" (Inscape 78).

Hopkins cited the Roman Catholic emphasis on the Passion as a factor in his conversion in writing to his father on 17 October 1866: "[A]t least for once — if you like, only once — approach Christ in a new way in which you will at all events feel that you are exactly in unison with me, that is, not vaguely, but casting yourselves into His sacred broken Heart and His five adorable Wounds. Those who do not pray to Him in His Passion pray to God but scarcely to Christ" (Further 94-5). However, in his emphasis on Christ's body Hopkins went beyond current Roman Catholic theology: for example, he was "[t]otally eccentric to assume that the anger of rebel angels was focused on a pre-lapsarian encounter with the body of Christ in its eucharistic manifestations under the form of bread and wine upon the altar," a view which had more in common with the

"non-scholastic protocols reported by visionaries" such as Sister Catherine Emmerich and Marie Lataste than with Scotus (Kenny 115-16). However, the sense of struggle against temptation apparently did not end. Devlin questions "whether Hopkins was right in sometimes taking from granted the inevitable opposition between" desire and choice. While Hopkins adhered to the "deliberate refusal to allow" the two to be separated, "every now and then, both in his sermons and spiritual writings, there are signs of a dark opposing presupposition which he seems unable to exorcize wholly: the presupposition of the lone will struggling grimly against all that is most attractive to his higher nature" (Sermons 116, 118).

Nevertheless, the effects of Jesuit training and the priesthood itself were largely positive. Once Hopkins's gaze had turned to Christ, Roman Catholicism also provided him with a strategy for relief from what the Oxford poems indicate was a primary stimulus for unwanted erotic desire: invoking, imaginatively, the presence of an absent beloved. The central inspiration for Hopkins's religious belief was what he called "the great sacrifice" through which the Incarnate Christ assumed a human body. The sacrament of the Eucharist reenacts that Incarnation. As an Anglican Hopkins had emphasized the importance of the doctrine of the Real Presence, the belief that Christ's body and blood are

mysteriously present in the Eucharistic elements, term-
ing it "[t]he great aid to belief. . . . Religion
without that is sombre, dangerous, illogical, with that
it is — not to speak of grand consistency and
certainty — loveable" (Further 17; emphasis in
original).

There is a strongly visual element in Hopkins's
perception of Christ's presence in the Mass, evident,
for example, in the Eucharistic poems of the Anglican
Oxford period. The move to Catholicism, however,
permitted Hopkins to place even greater stress on the
physicality of Christ's presence in the Eucharistic
sacrifice, entailing as it did "a logical leap from an
incomplete definition of eucharistic presence to the
more fully articulated doctrine of transubstantiation.
. . . Hopkins presse[d] for a tangible manifestation of
Christ -- His ability to thrust Himself through the
natural elements of bread and wine" (McNees 86-7).

There is no need to invoke imaginatively and yearn
after an absent beloved when that beloved is in fact
divinely present. Further, in the reenactment of the
mystical Eucharistic union of human and divine, Christ
the God-man is also united with the worshiping human,
and the mingling of man with Christ in the sacrament is
as complete as the mingling of the deity's human and
divine natures: as Hopkins put it, "It is as if a man
said: That is Christ playing at me and me playing at

Christ, only that is no play but truth; That is Christ being me and me being Christ" (Sermons 154; emphasis in original). After the ordered repetition of confession, penitence, and absolution from sins Hopkins partook in communion of the mystically, physically, present body of Christ. In addition, as a priest Hopkins was himself the agent for the sacramental transformation. He himself brought about the presence of the body of Christ, as the accidents of bread and wine became His body and blood, through the words which he repeated during the Prayer of Consecration.

The Roman Catholic church had a third recourse to offer, one which applied directly to Hopkins's role as a poet. The poetic theory of High Church Anglicanism had proved as inadequate to Hopkins's needs as its theology had. Neither the concept of reserve, religious, poetic, and social, nor the discipline of verse were adequate to contain and direct the force of "overpowering but impeded feelings" which related both to the love of God and the love of man, to caritas and eros. In entering the Roman Catholic church October 1866, however, Hopkins gained more than its religious authority, for he also affiliated himself with an attitude toward poetry which would sustain him in his years of silence, as he searched for a more serviceable poesis.

During his own Tractarian days John Cardinal Newman, who had received Hopkins into the Church, had been closely associated with John Keble and he wrote feelingly of the older man's influence on a generation of Oxford students in an article written in 1873 on the occasion of his death. Newman also discussed Keble's poetry, through which he had influenced a large audience as well, and in the process defined poetry in relation to the Catholic church:

[Keble] did for the Church of England which none but a poet could do: he made it poetical. . . . Poetry is the refuge of those who have not the Catholic Church to flee to and repose upon, for the Church herself is the most sacred and august of poets. Poetry, as Mr. Keble lays it down . . . is a channel through which emotion finds expression, and that a safe, regulated expression. Now what is the Catholic Church, viewed in her human aspect, but a discipline of the affections and passions? What are her ordinances and practices but the regulated expression of keen, or deep, or turbid feeling, and thus a 'cleansing,' as Aristotle would word it, of the sick soul? She is the poet of her children; full of music to soothe the sad and control the wayward, -- wonderful in story for the imagination of the romantic; rich in symbol and imagery, so that gentle and delicate feelings, which will not bear words, may in silence intimate their presence or commune with themselves. Her very being is poetry; every psalm, every petition, every collect, every versicle, the cross, the mitre, the thurible, is a fulfilment of some dream of childhood, or aspiration of youth. ("Keble" 442-43)

Fleeing to the poetic being of the Catholic church, Hopkins could express through the church itself those "gentle and delicate feelings which will not bear

words," while relying on her "discipline of the affections and passions" for his more unruly ones. Turning now to prayer, he would find himself protected from the temptations and "dangerous talking" of poetry. When he returned to writing poetry it was under new circumstances, as he explained to Canon Dixon in 1881:

I destroyed the verse I had written when I entered the Society and meant to write no more; the Deutschland I began after a long interval at the chance suggestion of my superior, but that being done it is a question whether I did well to write anything else. However I shall, in my present mind, continue to compose, as occasion shall fairly allow, which I am afraid will be seldom and indeed for some years past has been scarcely ever, and let what I produce wait and take its chance; for a very spiritual man once told me that with things like composition the best sacrifice was not to destroy one's work but to leave it entirely to be disposed of by obedience. (Dixon 88)

Hopkins's "state" in the mid-1860s to which writing poetry had contributed was the uncertainty whether he could resist the dangerous sensuous temptations of the world, particularly of human male beauty. Everywhere his eye fell contamination threatened and through the process of confession he grew increasingly aware that the source of that contamination was also within himself, in his unformed but insistent sexuality. In his poetry he had attempted to resolve the problems with "looking" and with the language of love by directing his looks and his words only toward God, but the actions had proved inadequate. As a Jesuit, Father

Gerard Manley Hopkins would achieve a measure of relief from the agonies of temptation occasioned by dangerous beauty. He was shielded from the sexually stimulating verbal and visual images of youthful virility which had assaulted him in the sectarian world by the protective body of belief of the Roman Catholic Church and by necessary obedience. The body of Christ was his permitted ideal. Hopkins would manage to return to dangerous beauty, but in a different poetic way. The resolution was to be neither through a denial of human beauty, nor the denial of his poetic gift, but through a modification of both poetry and the theory which lay behind it. In the process, Hopkins would make considerable use of the poetry of Algernon Charles Swinburne.

In time, Hopkins became able to praise the generative splendor of his God and the body of Christ not only in itself but as it was reflected in the human body, for the

just man . . .
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. (Poetical 141, lines 9-14)

And, if mortal beauty were later prove to some degree "dangerous," it was nevertheless possible to "Merely meet it . . . / then leave, let that alone" (183, lines 12-13). Most important, it also became

possible for one of the great poets of the nineteenth century to return to the writing of intensely visual poetry, secure in the belief that both humankind and the natural world could reveal the presence of Christ and express His beauty, and in the poet's ability to figure forth that presence through his words.

Chapter 3

Two Poets at Oxford: "a simple remedy — the
authority of the Church"

Gerard Manley Hopkins began the active contention with Algernon Swinburne which would later have an effect upon his poetry as an Oxford undergraduate. The two men were near contemporaries. Swinburne entered Balliol in 1856 and left, without a degree, in 1860, three years before Hopkins, who graduated in 1867, came up to enter the same College. Swinburne's work was first published in Undergraduate Papers at Oxford. His two undergraduate plays, The Queen Mother and Rosamund, were published in 1862 and went unremarked, but the same year "Fratricide" (later "Bloody Son") appeared in Once a Week, and other works continued to appear regularly there and in the Spectator and the Fortnightly throughout Hopkins's Oxford years. Ironically, given their relative fame in the nineteenth century, Hopkins's own "Winter in the Gulf Stream" was published in Once a Week in 1863, so that he, unlike Swinburne, entered Balliol as a published poet.

Atalanta in Calydon appeared in 1865, Hopkins's second year at Oxford, followed by Poems and Ballads First Series and Notes on Poems and Reviews, both in the year of Hopkins's conversion, 1866. By then,

"undergraduates of Oxford parade[d] through the cloistered courts chanting 'Dolores'" (Rosenberg 395). In 1867, when Hopkins took a double First at Oxford, Swinburne published A Song of Italy, Dolores, and An Appeal to England Against the Execution of the Condemned Fenians.

Swinburne's Oxford academic career was considerably less successful than his poetic one: he was twice removed from Oxford to protect him from temptations to dissolution, just as he was to be forcibly removed from London's temptations and sequestered in Putney in 1879. Swinburne successfully passed the first Oxford examinations, called Responsions and Moderations, but when he faced Final Schools he faltered. After failing the Classics section he was sent to the country for tutoring and managed to pass on his second try, but he then either failed, or failed to sit for, the section on Law and Modern History, and he left without a degree in June 1860, "rusticated and all but expelled" as he would later write (Lafourcade 1: 150-55). Lafourcade attributes Swinburne's academic disgrace not only to the increasing disorder of his life but also to the fact that, ever "fortement blasé sur l'atmosphère dogmatique et ecclésiastique," he failed to prepare for the theological questions on the Greats examination (1: 117, 161). Swinburne proved, in any event, that he was first and foremost a poet and

critic, not an academic; Benjamin Jowett's declaration that "no good can be expected from him scholastically unless he can be hindered from writing poetry" (qtd. in Lafourcade 1: 151), was, within the academic context of an Oxford education, perfectly just, for Swinburne devoted increasing amounts of time to his poetry. He was to express enmity toward Oxford for the rest of his life, perhaps in part, as Lafourcade speculates, because of his failure to win a prize for his poem on "The Death of Sir John Franklin" in 1860 as well as because of his academic failure (1: 152-54).

Hopkins's experience at Oxford differed dramatically from Swinburne's. By every account a brilliant student, he graduated with a double first in classics after achieving firsts in the earlier examinations (Allsopp). Like Swinburne, Hopkins wrote a considerable amount of poetry as an undergraduate, but unlike Swinburne he refrained from writing for considerable periods of time to prepare his academic work. Again unlike Swinburne, Hopkins's often intense friendships were with other equally high-minded young men.

Despite their many differences in background, as Balliol men Swinburne and Hopkins were embedded in a network of relationships which involved a number of the same people; they were exposed to the same faculty and to the same currents of ideas. However, Algernon Swinburne and Gerard Hopkins attended Oxford at a critical

moment in the ancient University's history, when the Oxford atmosphere was strikingly contentious, and the lives of both poets were to be fundamentally affected by those contentions.

Edward Said cites the university experience as an important example of the affiliative process, one which "more or less officially consecrat[es] the pact between a canon of works, a band of initiate instructors, [and] a group of younger affiliates; in a socially validated manner all this reproduces the filiative discipline supposedly transcended by the educational process" (21). Victorian Oxford, where students read the prescribed classical curriculum with a series of tutors in company with a circle of like-minded friends, represents the university experience at its most intense. In the mid-Victorian period a series of challenges to established philosophical and religious positions prompted particularly powerful affiliations, within opposing factions which were so intensely committed to their positions that the Oxford history of the period is often described in the language of warfare. Earlier battles between the clerical party and the empiricist, utilitarian tradition, continued. There was fierce warfare as well between contending branches of the Anglican Church, the High Church Tractarian party and the somewhat less orthodox Broad Church faction, and between the Anglicans and the Roman

Catholic Church, whose members had been allowed admission to Balliol only in 1859, four years before Hopkins came up (Kenny 58-59). By mid-century, however, members of the contending clerical parties were also fighting against a joint enemy, a group of new philosophical, religious, and aesthetic ideas introduced at Oxford by followers of Hegel and others of the German school. Despite the differences among them their approach shared one hallmark, a rationalistic scepticism which was perceived by the clerical groups to strike at the foundation of any faith.

Both Swinburne and Hopkins had arrived at Oxford as adherents of High Church Anglicanism. Ironically, Hopkins had come up with the intention of becoming a poet or an artist; Swinburne may originally have considered taking Orders after receiving his B.A. (Lafourcade 1: 159). Swinburne's family was a religious one, and he later described his own early devotions as including "well-nigh to unaffected and unashamed ecstasies of adoration when receiving the Sacrament" (Letters 3: 13). Each poet was to reject Anglicanism and move to an extreme position during his undergraduate years, Hopkins to the dogmatic certainties of Roman Catholicism, Swinburne to an aggressive atheism; he later wrote that the loss of his old faith "left nothing to me but a turbid nihilism: for a Theist I never was" (3: 13).

The convulsive factional religious disputes, however, left Swinburne unmoved: during a reading of a paper on "Christian Dogma," Edmund Gosse was told, Swinburne's "face wore an expression compounded of unutterable ennui and naïf astonishment that men whom he respected could take interest in such a subject" (Gosse 40). In contrast, Hopkins's interest centered on religious belief and, like many other Oxford undergraduates, he was directly affected by doctrinal contention for the souls of promising students (Sul-loway, Hopkins 9-63). The intensity of the fight reflected the high stakes involved, since a wrong choice could, in the view of the losing side, condemn a human soul to eternal damnation.

The High Church Anglicans, represented most prominently by Dr. Edward Pusey and Canon Henry Parry Liddon, continued to engage in a prolonged and ferocious battle against representatives of the Broad Church faction, notably Benjamin Jowett, Professor of Greek and later Master of Balliol (196-99). Before his conversion Hopkins was in confession to both Liddon and Pusey; Jowett was one of his tutors. Liddon made continuing efforts to influence Hopkins away from the Professor of Greek (Higgins 150-53), and even stronger efforts to prevent Hopkins's conversion (Further 400-04), one of several defections from the High Church party which occurred in the mid-1860s. On the Roman

Catholic side, although he had resigned his Oriel fellowship at the time of his own conversion in 1845, John Henry Newman's influence at Oxford remained powerful, and it was he who took Hopkins into the Roman Catholic Church at the Birmingham Oratory in 1866 (Mallet 275).

Hopkins and Swinburne were confronted by the new sceptical ideas throughout their undergraduate years as well. Here, Hopkins's faith was untouched; in contrast, Swinburne reacted vigorously against Anglicanism as he embraced both the politics and the philosophical and moral positions implied by the new thought. The possible dangers of "Germanism" were sketched by Dr. Edward Pusey in a deposition before the University Commission which was considering structural changes at Oxford. Reacting to the proposed incorporation of elements of the German university system, Pusey warned that "we have no facts of its having produced any but evil traits" (qtd. in Mallet 319), chief among them "atheism." Pusey was prescient as he envisioned the godlessness which could characterize a future marked by relativism:

All things must speak of God, refer to God, or they are atheistic. History, without God, is a chaos without design, or end, or aim; . . . Ethics, without God, would be a varying rule, without principle, or substance, or centre, or regulating hand; Metaphysics, without God, would make man his own temporary god, to be resolved, after his brief hour here, into the nothingness out of which he proceeded. (318-19)

All Christian factions fought back against the new scepticism. Canon Liddon was described in the thinly disguised memoirs of Hopkins's Balliol friend Ernest Geldart in A Son of Belial as having "a sweet, somewhat sickly smile, especially when indulging in sarcasm at the cost of the Neologians. . . . I liked his style and manner, and enjoyed his hard hits at Pantheism, Atheism, German scholarship, and the like" (168-9). The Roman Catholic faction of course also feared and condemned the new thought, and with considerable reason. Jesuit convert Richard F. Clarke, for example, writing in 1885 in The Month about Catholics at Oxford during the period, explained that frequently students came up to Oxford "full of religious enthusiasm and High Church notions and practices," all of which left them, however, "when they began to read for Greats, and modern philosophy imbued them with ideas directly or indirectly subversive of the opinions of their early days"; he included "Agnosticism, Buddhism, Comtism, Hegelianism" among the "fashionable" forms of new thought (qtd. in Zaniello, Darwin 90).

Clarke might well have been describing Swinburne's intellectual journey. Hopkins's faith, on the other hand, was protected by his adherence to authoritative dogma, as Geldart makes clear:

Gerontius Manley [the pseudonymous Hopkins] and I had many talks on religion. He was quite at one with me on the hollowness of

Protestant orthodoxy, but he had a simple remedy — the authority of the Church. The right of private judgment must in the long-run inevitably lead to Rationalism, as historically it had done, meaning by Rationalism not that of Paulus, technically and properly so called, but Neologian theories generally.
(167-68)

But if relativism in all its forms proved to be no threat to Hopkins's own faith, he considered that it was an offense to his God and to the Roman Catholic Church, which represented God's truth on earth, as well as a danger to his fellow men, shaking their faith and thereby corrupting their souls.

When Father Richard F. Clarke listed the "fashionable" forms of new thought he named only the Oxford reformer Mark Pattison as a proponent of subversive opinion, but Zaniello remarks that "alert readers familiar with Oxford might venture to guess that he also meant tutors like Walter Pater and T. H. Green and Professors like Max Müller" (Darwin 90). Zaniello then goes on to summarize Gerard Manley Hopkins's "philosophical contacts." It is striking that the names on both lists of subversives apply equally well to Swinburne:

[Hopkins's] philosophical contacts at Oxford fall roughly into three groups: the Platonists, specifically those in Jowett's domain at Balliol; antiempiricists like Green (regarded by many as a sceptic); and aesthetes like Pater (with his atomist metaphysics). (91)

All of these proponents of various new ideologies played roles in the Oxford lives of both Hopkins and

Swinburne: more as friends for Swinburne, as teachers for Hopkins. Walter Pater of Brasenose and T. H. Green of Balliol were contemporaries and friends of Swinburne's; Pater and Green were two of Hopkins's tutors. The German philologist Max Müller instructed Swinburne in modern languages (Lafourcade 1: 117-18) and was one of his examiners (Dowling, Decadence 176-77); Müller was a friend of Hopkins's father, and from the evidence of his journals, letters, and poetry, Cary Plotkin infers the strong "likelihood" that Hopkins knew Müller's "works and views on language" (42-70). Despite his own disclaimers, Benjamin Jowett absorbed and promoted many Hegelian ideas in his teaching of Plato (Turner 418); he was the tutor of both Swinburne and Hopkins, and he later became Swinburne's friend.

The dangerous ideas were so broadly defined by contemporary commentators that as we have seen they resorted to lists, "Pantheism, Atheism, German scholarship, and the like"; "Agnosticism, Buddhism, Comtism, Hegelianism"; or, as Hopkins put it, "Rationalism," meaning not only the positivism with which the term is usually associated, but "Neologian theories generally." Certainly there was much that was not clear-cut in the swirl of new ideas: positions which now seem mutually exclusive were held in tandem, as assumptions remained unexamined. Broadly, neo-Hegelian thought rejected the idea of a transcendent God in a stable universe,

proposing instead a model of ever-changing flux in which an immanent Absolute could be achieved by man himself, through self-making. The effect was to place the locus of divinity within the natural world, in the body of man. History became entirely human history as the model of a providential order was discarded. Various versions of pantheism, holding that what exists is a divine unity, but denying the possibility of a personal divine or of an external creator, were developed as correlatives ("Pantheism" 34-35).

By its nature the new thought was sceptical of established religious ideas and rejected clerical authority to various degrees. This could lead not only to religious doubt, but also could eventuate in a denial of immortality, of the divinity of Christ, of the possibility of divine revelation and of the literal truth of the Bible, even of the existence of God. Politically, a number of the British neo-Hegelians tended to stress the importance of freedom of thought and action and, at the political extreme, supported the idea of democracy and called for an assault on the European established order of kings and prelates in the interest of the future ("Hegelianism" 452). From the point of view of High Church Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism, although not of many Broad Church adherents, neo-Hegelian views were of course dangerously heretical, in method as well as in results,

for in their vigorous rationalism the philosophers denied a role for faith as well as for other concepts important to traditional Christian belief. When philosophy absorbs religion and claims absolute truth, "all that is left is the infinity of dialectical self-unfolding"; Hegel's Absolute is "Absolute Mind alone, not Absolute Will, Causality, and Love" ("Hegel" 436).

These attitudes informed the thinking of the subversive men. Like other Neo-Hegelians, for example, T. H. Green "saw in history the self-development of an eternal spirit"; he was on the political left and opposed dogmatic religion, feeling that the moral claims of all individuals deserved consideration. Indeed, "the idea of a free personality, exercising its freedom under conditions which it has itself created, formed the meeting-point for his political and religious aspirations" (Nettleship 3: xxv, xxix).

Green's focus on politics was influential for Swinburne as well as for many other Oxford men, and it was because of that focus, as well as his strong anti-Catholicism, that Green deplored his former student Gerard Hopkins's entrance into the Jesuit order. His reactions illuminate some areas of difference between Hopkins and Green, which might well have made their tutorial sessions combative ones.

Hopkins had apparently at first disapproved of Green for his "rather offensive style of infidelity"

(Further 83), but at his death Hopkins wrote that he "always liked and admired poor Green. . . . His fortune fell first on Knox [Green came from an Evangelical Protestant background] and then on Hegel and he was meant for better things" (249). In December 1868 Henry Scott Holland, a mutual friend of Green's and Hopkins's, visited the latter at the Jesuit Seminary at Roehampton. After learning of the visit Green wrote to Holland in an inverted echo of Hopkins's comments, for each saw the other's life as controlled by a subversive ideology: "It vexes me to the heart to think of a fine nature being victimised by a system which . . . I hold to be subversive of the Family and the State, and which puts the service of an exceptional institution, or the saving of the individual soul, in opposition to loyal service to society." The "monastic form of co-operation," Green wrote in a second letter, results from "the wrong principle . . . of the antithesis between Church and the World" which Catholicism embodies "in its most objectionable form, inasmuch as it fixes the Divine, falsely opposed to the human, in a definite institution . . . and represents the 'objective presence' of the incarnate God as a sensual presence in the sacraments instead of a moral one in the Christian society" (qtd. in Richter 30-31). Similar ideas, part of the "radical" affiliation at Oxford, are reflected in Swinburne's poetry, essays,

and letters. They affronted Hopkins in both Green and Swinburne.

Other forces, also represented by the men who were Swinburne's and Hopkins's friends and teachers, were at work at Oxford. In his influential 1857 article "Pre-Raphaelitism," John Ruskin had opposed "Modernism," "Classicism," and "Medievalism" (Works 12: 139), but the two latter movements could claim adherents whose views in fact overlapped with modernism at Oxford. Swinburne himself would combine Ruskin's categories in his poetry, for example using a medievalist style for the promotion of pagan morality, as in his 1861 "St. Dorothy," or through injecting modernist anti-theism into the Greek-inspired "Atalanta in Calydon."

The classicists at Oxford of course derived inspiration from Greek drama, art, and philosophy, but their studies and teaching were marked by the new thinking in ways which led to reappraisals. Benjamin Jowett stated clearly in the introduction to his influential 1871 translation of the Dialogues of Plato that he aimed "to represent Plato as the father of Idealism" (qtd. in Turner 417). As a leader of the Broad Church movement and proponent of a rationalist approach to the Bible, Jowett came under heavy fire from the Tractarians during Hopkins's time at Balliol, called before the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford on charges of heresy for his contribution to Essays and Reviews at

Edward Pusey's instigation, for example, and fighting a long war for an adequate salary as Regius Professor of Greek (Sulloway, Hopkins 197-98).¹

Swinburne, a close student of Greek poetry and drama as his poetry attests, absorbed much of Jowett's Hegelian theory, but rejected Platonic metaphysics; Hopkins reversed Swinburne's experience, embracing and adapting the Platonic theory of Ideas to Christian belief, and rejecting the modernism. In an affectionate memoir Swinburne remarked on Jowett's patience,

¹ Martin Geldart devoted a passage to the warfare between Jowett ("Professor Jewell") and Pusey ("Professor of Hebrew"):

[Professor Jewell] was a heretic and an apostate from the orthodox creed of Bosphorus [Oxford]. . . . He had, in addition to his questionable notes on the Pauline Epistles, in these latter days contributed an essay on the interpretation of Scripture to a volume by Broad Church divines The Professor of Hebrew argued that as the New Testament was written in Greek, a Professor of Greek whose views were unsound might easily find means for insinuating his heresies while expounding Thucydides and Plato; that, moreover, the University, by endowing the professorship, was virtually endowing the professor for the time being; and that since the professor for the time being was a heretic, this would be the virtual endowment of dangerous doctrine on the part of the University. . . . The controversy . . . was further complicated by the fact that a large number of the most orthodox members of the University regarded the Professor of Hebrew, who was said to practise and encourage confession, as on the whole a rather worse heretic than the Professor of Greek.

(154-55)

"nerve," and physical energy, and, in an obvious self-reference, described the "naturally Spartan" don as having "for the most affected of sensualists and the most pretentious of profligates a sort of tender or admiring weakness" (Works 15: 247). Their friendship outlasted Swinburne's troubled undergraduate years, when Jowett tried to encourage him to lead a less flamboyant life, and in the late 1860s and '70s the poet frequently visited the Master of Balliol, who gathered around himself promising young men and the leading writers of the day (Thomas 166); and Swinburne, who had an encyclopedic knowledge of scripture, assisted Jowett in compiling The Children's Bible, as well as in his translation of The Dialogues of Plato.

Hopkins's relationship with Jowett remained that of teacher and pupil. He found Jowett's legendary silences daunting (Further 73), but he was struck by the Master's equally legendary charm, as Geldart noted: "Even my Ritualistic friend, Gerontius Manley, acknowledged what he called the 'purity' or our hero — what had he been but a Catholic, he would have called his 'saintliness' — as something which struck him more in Professor Jewell than in almost any other" (156). Jowett was reputed to be struck in turn by the brilliance of Hopkins as a classical scholar (Mariani, Commentary xi), and the undergraduate essays which Hopkins

wrote for the Master show a meeting of the mind on the subject of Plato.

The most prominent representatives of Ruskin's Medieval school were the members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, notably Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris, and Edward Burne-Jones, all of whom became close friends of Swinburne's while they were at Oxford in 1857 attempting to decorate the Union with murals (Lafourcade 1: 133-148; Thomas 38-41). Swinburne also knew Richard Watson Dixon, who later became a close friend of Hopkins's and who had been a minor member of the Oxford enterprise (Gosse 37; Sambrook 27-30). Swinburne's early works display a strong affinity with the medieval themes and dreamy suggestiveness of Pre-Raphaelite style, and indeed Hopkins would later include him among the "medievalists" in categorizing British poets (Dixon 99). Jerome Bump argues convincingly that in certain respects Hopkins should be affiliated with the group as well, particularly through the influence of the poetry of Christina Rossetti, whose work Hopkins admired ("Hopkins, Christina Rossetti") and, in "A Voice of the World," replied to, and whom he had met (Packer). Swinburne also admired Christina Rossetti, and he dedicated his A Century of Roundels to her.

The influential Brotherhood was by no means cohesive stylistically. Artists like William Holman

Hunt used the typological symbolism associated with High Church beliefs, but others held that art became not only an end in itself but in fact served as a substitute for religion. As a result, the element of religious belief was often missing from a body of poetry concerned with religious subjects. The ideas of his Pre-Raphaelite friends were critical to the religion of art which Swinburne developed in the 1860s, as were the Symbolist poetics of such French poets as Charles Baudelaire, whose works Swinburne himself first brought into notice in Great Britain, and whose horror of "l'heresie d'enseignement" led to the position that moral or religious content had no place in a work of art. It was Swinburne who first clearly defined the aestheticist creed in England in his essay on William Blake in 1868: "Art for art's sake first of all, and afterwards we may suppose all the rest shall be added to her . . .; but from the man who falls to artistic work with a moral purpose, shall be taken away even that which he has" (Works 13: 245). Swinburne would moderate his position, however, finding the doctrine to be "true in the positive sense, false in the negative; sound as an affirmation, unsound as a prohibition" (qtd. in Buckler 232). Despite his admiration for the Pre-Raphaelites Hopkins rejected both art-for-art's sake and the excision of religious belief; indeed, the first poem of Hopkins's that shows a Swinburnian

influence, although only a slight one, "St. Dorothea," stresses his intention to combat the misreadings of aestheticist medievalizing.

Walter Pater, Swinburne's acquaintance and Hopkins's tutor, was to extend the implications of aestheticism well beyond those of the Pre-Raphaelites. Swinburne and Pater were on friendly terms, although Swinburne was later to deny any significant relationship, very possibly because of Pater's support of Simeon Solomon after the latter's conviction for homosexual activity, at which point Swinburne had dropped Solomon (Levey 107). Swinburne explained in 1873 to John Morley, editor of The Fortnightly Review, that he felt "somewhat shy" about showing admiration for Pater's work since Pater had acknowledged that Swinburne's style had influenced his own (Letters 2: 240-41).²

As had been the case with Green, Hopkins was initially unenthusiastic about Pater because of his ideas; a journal entry for spring 1866 reads "Coaching with W. H. Pater this term. Walked with him on Monday evening

² There is clear textual evidence that this is so, particularly in the case of the famous description of Mona Lisa in Pater's essay on Leonardo da Vinci in which similarities of approach and imagery show how closely Pater had read "Notes on Designs of the Old Masters at Florence." As Cecil Lang remarks, "one can only say 'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau'" (Letters 1: xvii).

last, April 30. Fine evening bitterly cold. 'Bleak-faced Neology in cap and gown' [a line from a sonnet by Charles Turner] no cap and gown but very bleak" (Journals 133); on 31 May, "Pater talking two hours against Xtianity" (138). The two clearly became closer and Pater was one of the few University men whom Hopkins saw during the unhappy period in the 1870s when he served as a priest at St. Aloysius (Mariani, Commentary xiii). Pater has properly been described as "both mentor and foil" for Hopkins (Robinson 19), for, despite their many differences, his influence on Hopkins's thought was significant (Bump, "Hopkins, Pater").

During Hopkins's undergraduate years Pater, by then a fellow at Brasenose, was developing a distinctive model of the human condition. In his view, man's physical body is no more than the confluence of random, and impermanent forces; his psyche, of the confluence of fragmentary, transient impressions. Underlying the flux and the solipsistic individual self, however, is a neo-Hegelian Absolute Self: it is "an unseen core of spiritual relationships, and the visible person is simply the shell of an infinite companionship of like-oriented spirits (or Spirit) that pervade and shape the personality" (Monsman, "Self" 2). Pater, who had a pronounced interest in the arts of pagan Greece, held that the Absolute manifests itself most completely in

the human form, so that "the art of each period — . . . poetry in modern times — chose the human image as its preeminent subject because it is the ultimate manifestation of the Absolute in the culture of an age" (3).

Pater may have figured in the single occasion on which Hopkins reported having any personal acquaintance with Swinburne, however slight. According to his journals Hopkins "saw Swinburne" on 29 May 1868, the day he took his degree and the day he met the artist Simeon Solomon, who was also an acquaintance of Pater's. It seems likely that Pater himself made the introduction, for two weeks later Hopkins was in London, where he went "[t]o lunch with Pater, then to Mr. Solomon's studio and the Academy," most likely in Pater's company (Journals 167). The awareness of Swinburne, at the height of his notoriety, would have hung over that afternoon, for at the Royal Academy they would have found exhibition notes written by Swinburne and W. M. Rossetti (Works 15: 196-216).

The web of friendships and relationships which enmeshed Swinburne and Hopkins is hardly significant in itself. However, Benjamin Jowett, T. H. Green and Walter Pater were forces within the Oxford community, Jowett and Green sufficiently powerful to effect changes in how and what was being taught. Curriculum inevitably has an effect upon a university man who is

also a poet. For example, the strong emphasis on the classics in Victorian public schools and universities resulted most obviously in the production of numerous poems on classical themes by Victorian poets. It led also to concern with classical meter and its application to poetry written in English, which is seen strongly in much of Swinburne's work and was of concern to Hopkins as well, as the prosodic discussions in his letters indicate. A number of the positions represented by the tutors, as well as by the Pre-Raphaelites, carried with it significance for poetry and poetic theory.

Temperamental differences between Swinburne and Hopkins were marked. Swinburne's need to doubt, and to revolt against the power of established institutions and individuals in a drive for a self-liberating freedom from religious, moral, and social restraints, contrasts with Hopkins's equally strong drive for certainty, orthodoxy, and constraint. Both impulses, however, arose from an oddly similar conception of the visible world, one which combined the apprehension of an overwhelming multiplicity of forms, events, sensory experiences with a strong sense of their inherent contradictions.³ For Swinburne, life brought mixed gifts,

³ The relationship between philosophy and poetry is not a matter only of intellectual "influences," for "affinities between philosophers and poets are less a matter of conscious influence than of temperamental preference. . . . Poets do not borrow the philosophers'

of "Pleasure, with pain for leaven; / Summer with flowers that fell" (Poems 4: 258), and his response could range from a celebration of the divinity of man to a nihilistic denial of meaning; for Hopkins, things "counter original, spare, strange; / . . . With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim" (Poetical 144, lines 7-9) prompted praise of their creator: "Glory be to God for dappled things" (line 1). In each case, the poets felt "the theoretical need to unify experience" which Shaw sees as typical of "holistic" philosophies and aesthetics (273).

The Tractarian poetics developed by Oxford don John Keble revived biblical typology as a method of representation, and historical analogy developed as a correlative technique. Typology operated "as a kind of bifocal lens" permitting a representation of the analogy between divine and human history that could hint at the nature of the divinity perceived dimly through a "lucid veil" (1-3; 189-194). Swinburne's High Church background provided him with the detailed knowledge of belief and techniques which permitted him to reshape typology for his own purposes (Louie 9-14), as did Hopkins's in interpreting Swinburne's usages.

methods but find different ways of satisfying the same needs," adapting their aesthetic practice in the process (Shaw 272-3).

Despite their continuing use of typology both Swinburne and Hopkins moved away from High Church belief and its poetic presuppositions, in Swinburne's case to neo-Hegelian and aestheticist positions, in Hopkins's, first to a version of Platonism and then, after his long silence, to a sacramental model of language in which the typological images came to represent an actual union of human and divine, not simply to symbolize it (Loomis 17-38).⁴ Both Swinburne and Hopkins connected the unifying principle with some form of divinity. Each attempted to break down the dualistic notion of a divine separate from the human, but they placed the source of that divinity very differently. For Swinburne it was found in mankind itself, and in mankind's poetry; for Hopkins, only in a God who manifested Himself on earth through his creation and, preeminently, through the Word: both the revelations of

⁴ As an Oxford undergraduate, Hopkins worked to develop a Christianized Platonic "realism." Shaw observes that the Hegelian model and the Platonic model in Hopkins's version, both of them "univocal" in contrast to Tractarian bifocalism, are the Victorian era's "two most ambitious axioms of cognition":

For Hopkins, the Platonic realist of the early undergraduate essays, the world is conceived as a diatonic scale of nature, with hierarchically fixed intervals that prevent any promiscuous merging or blending. All this is changed in the Hegelian model, where the static scale of nature is turned into an escalator, a moving altar-stair that slopes through darkness up to God. (5)

Scripture and the Word made Flesh, Christ. Swinburne maintained, with Baudelaire, that the universe is held together by echoing correspondences manifest in its infinite number of forms (McGann, Swinburne 54), and the redemptive promise of the Incarnation, the core of Hopkins's religious belief, is unnecessary and absent. Swinburne's poetry in the 1860s can reflect a sometimes bleak recognition of this absence, despite the saving power of poetry. In his later work, however, Swinburne would develop his own saving personal myth, in "On the Cliffs," for example, where Apollo, Sappho, and the nightingale displace the Christian trinity, and he would see apostolic succession as being one of poets, not of priests (Riede 148-70).

Swinburne's poetic practice reflected a refinement of the Hegelian concept of self-making. Fichte and Schelling considered poets and artists as the means for making men aware of the Absolute, and the idea grew in both neo-Hegelian and aestheticist thought that works of art could supplant the works of God. For Hopkins, on the contrary, man-created myths were anathema, not only as examples of an anti-Christian egoism, but as dangerously powerful counter-myths to Christianity. Swinburne treated the idea thematically in "Hertha." The poem reflects the "spiral journey of Hegel's Idea from Being into Non-Being, then back into Becoming," and the doctrine of self-making connects with "the doc-

trine that God is the eternal self" so that "[m]an is not to make an idol of his present self, but is invited to worship a truly godlike self which is still in the process of being made" (Shaw 247). Margot Louis makes a similar observation, pointing to Oxford's leading Hegelian as Swinburne's philosophical source: "Perhaps the closest analogue to the final stanza of 'Hertha' is T. H. Green's 'idea of God as an object to himself' in his early essay on the development of Christian dogma" (211, note 53). Despite this having been the essay which had prompted the reaction of "unutterable ennui and naïf astonishment" which Green himself later reported to Gosse, Swinburne appears to have absorbed the ideas it contained.

T. H. Green's teachings seem to have had other effects. If some aspects of neo-Hegelian thought tended to define Swinburne and Hopkins against each other, others resulted in similar poetic techniques. Green advocated the holistic position that "the whole precedes the parts and maintains the parts in living connection" (Shaw 100). For example, in a way which typifies univocal Hegelian thought in general, Green makes an analogy between the process of reading the book of nature and of reading a sentence, where "the consciousness that the sentence has a meaning as a whole" exists throughout the time in which we read the words successively. From that analogy he argues for

the existence of God, the ideal reader, as a unifying principle. Since the whole precedes the parts, unity of perception "resides in a consciousness of simultaneity which takes place in the perceiving mind itself," for "whenever we imagine or perceive, meaning is present to our consciousness not as a sequence of successive parts but as a simultaneous whole" (qtd. in Shaw 100-04).

Shaw links Green's concept of simultaneity to the fact that in Hopkins's poetry "effects of temporal and spatial simultaneity are . . . striking" (102). Swinburne is also remarkable for his "kaleidoscopic shifting" of words and images (Johnson, Hopkins 50-51, note 2), and Green's ideas could have contributed here as well, with the important difference that the kaleidoscope was more nearly that of self-contained forms which Shaw identifies as a hallmark of the agnostic imagination (4). Hopkins could scarcely have agreed with Green's description of God as an ideal reader, but Green's univocalism has some affinity with Hopkins's notions of instress and inscape, where an explosion of meaning occurs in apprehending the underlying unity of God's individuating creation. Hopkins would more consciously derive his own univocal vision from Roman Catholic philosophers, most prominently Duns Scotus (Shaw 149-53; Devlin, Sermons 338-51).

A related development at Oxford was to have an important effect upon poetry. Under the leadership of German scholar Max Müller, another of the subversive men with whose work both Swinburne and Hopkins were familiar, the new field of philology was developing. Müller argued that "phonetic types" evolved as man in his primitive state expressed different sensations, perceptions, and rational conceptions through sound. Types exist "by nature," that is, "by the hand of God," and they carry an original "root" meaning, which becomes "the mystic nexus between mind and matter" (Dowling, Decadence 71). In Müller's theory,

Language and thought are inseparable. Words without thought are dead sounds; thoughts without words are nothing. To think is to speak low; to speak is to think aloud. The word is the thought incarnate. . . .

There is a law which runs through nearly the whole of nature, that everything which is struck rings. Each substance has its peculiar ring. Gold rings differently from tin; wood rings differently from stone; and different sounds are produced according to the nature of each percussion. (qtd. in Plotkin 38-9)

As in other instances of the new thought, Müller's ideas carried conflicting underlying assumptions. On the one hand, his argument enforces the belief in an inseparable link between the word and the external world which it represents; on the other, it implies that since language creation and change is constituted originally by sound, not by reason, then language is organized on its own linguistic principles, independent

both of human control and of the demands of representing an external reality (Dowling, "Oxford" 166).

Müller's ideas had some effect on both Hopkins and Swinburne, or at any rate reinforced their "temperamental preferences." Both in their poetry stress the importance of the phonic over the semantic, Hopkins "valoriz[ing] the power of words to convey meaning by the quality of their sound" (Plotkin 140-41), Swinburne pushing the emphasis so far that critics continue to deplore what they see as a resulting loss of meaning. Linda Dowling remarks of Swinburne that in his "appeal to a notion of sound as constituting the essence or 'soul' of things there is a striking echo of his old Oxford examiner Max Müller and Müller's peculiar theory of 'phonetic types'" (Decadence 178), and Cary Plotkin has demonstrated the importance of Oxford philology in Hopkins's case.

Each poet also was confronted with the implication that the model of the word as tightly linked to an external reality which it represents may be a false one. The reality of Christ as Logos, the Incarnate Word, was an unshakeable and central belief for Hopkins. Logos associates with the concept of "logos," the close identity both between thought and word and between the word and the world.

Shaw isolates the dangers to Hopkins in neo-Hegelian theory: "Paradoxically, Hegel seems to pose a

double threat to Hopkins. As the leading philosopher of 'Historical Development', he propounds a doctrine of pure atomic flux like Hume and Pater. But as the philosopher of Absolute Spirit, Hegel is also the great advocate of indiscriminate merging." Each position threatens language's ability to carry meaning. In considering the implications of atomism, "Hopkins grasps that language provides him with differences according to which one word or unit of discourse cannot be anything but itself." Promiscuous merging holds "the opposite error of trying to sink all defining differences in an undifferentiated unity":

No matter which direction language faces,
toward the isolated atoms of discourse or
toward the undifferentiated kind of utterance
which contains within itself all that can be
said, Hopkins find he confronts two different
forms of emptiness. (226)

Swinburne's song is most often created on the model of music, and so his texts generally stop short of displaying that "sense of linguistic autonomy written or literary language possessing a dangerous life of its own" which typifies Hegelians like Pater (Dowling, Decadence 163). In other cases, however, for Swinburne,

as for Pater, the music of syntax ceases to represent a world external to itself. It presents instead a self-contained kaleidoscope of repeating forms that diffuse as well as concentrate Swinburne's meanings. Swinburne retains only that side of Victorian Platonism which redeems the world of sense by dethroning the archetypes. (Shaw 172)

Within Swinburne's poetry lay an unsettling possibility: a threat that the words of a poem, rather than representing the world as a separate, external original, were simply a system of internal relationships, a complex and fluid formal network which served as its own justification for existence. If this were the case, words could no longer reflect the Word. While Hopkins would have remained untouched by any doubts concerning Logos, he would have recognized these linguistic implications in Swinburne's poetry.

Given his lifelong preoccupation with the nature of the self, Hopkins might well have recognized another extreme implication of neo-Hegelian thought. For Swinburne, Snodgrass argues, the illusory nature of the logos is related to the illusory nature of the self:

Just as the Victorians in general saw man's sense of self to be informed by his sense of the divine, so Swinburne also perceive[d] the state of man's internal psychic 'centre' to be inextricably related to his sense of the external and sacred logocentre. The dilemma which becomes so manifest in Poems and Ballads is that, in a world so desperately organized around a central Absolute, the 'absence' of the one implies, if not precipitates, the 'absence' of the other.

(80)

Swinburne's poetry, then, may have carried a double threat for Hopkins. Whatever the source of anxiety about logos, Hopkins's approach to language, notably his later attempts to imbue poetic language with sacramental power, reflects the overriding need for

authoritarian control which marked all aspects of his life. The very intensity of his beliefs would indicate Hopkins's awareness of the dangers of the freedoms, in language as in life, typified by Swinburne, the poet of letting-go.

To gain some sense of the pattern of Hopkins's thinking during his critical years at Oxford it is useful to look briefly at his undergraduate essays, which are presently available, however, only in scattered and fragmentary form, for in them he considers a number of the philosophical attitudes under discussion. Hopkins's essays for Benjamin Jowett show that he had absorbed the spirit of "Jowetry," an historicist point of view which held that Plato had lived "in a culture in which the classical spirit was yielding to the romantic, the objective to the subjective world view" (Higgins 156). They focus to a considerable degree on these opposing positions. Hopkins made several efforts to develop adequate definitions of "realism" and "idealism," which represented the objective and subjective impulses in art, which he saw as characteristic of his own times and as deriving from opposing Platonic and neo-Hegelian positions. "On the rise of Greek Prose-writing" (1864) declares that the early stages of a civilization are characterized by idealism, for "no art is content to work out its materials completely or perfect its realism, but aims early at idealism. And

one of the dangers to intellectual progress comes from the tendency to dwell on the first attained idealisms. Healthy art is always breaking from them, forming new ones, and then again advancing. . . . [H]istory seems to show that the final triumph of idealism is the ruin of art" (qtd. in Higgins 155-6).

Hopkins develops his thinking further in "Health and Decay in the Arts," which inquires "what Art ought to be doing and pursuing." Here, he equates Realism with "the pursuit of Truth in Art," Idealism with "deliberate Beauty." In a period of decadence, conventionalism "degenerates into mere touch, trick and mannerism," and realism is "undermined": "Art slips back while bearing, in its distribution of tone, or harmony, the look of a high civilisation, towards barbarism. Recovery must be by a breaking up, a violence, such as was the Preraphaelite school" (Journals 79). Hopkins would of course advance, violently, well beyond the Pre-Raphaelite techniques as he pursued Truth and opposed "deliberate Beauty"; the enemy, however, would remain "idealist views," and aestheticist "deliberate Beauty."

In the essays written for Jowett Hopkins was largely concerned with those areas of Greek thought in which he was in agreement with the Master. In contrast, he expressed his opposition to several aspects of the new thought in many other essays written for the

very tutors who promoted the uncongenial ideas. Gerard Hopkins did not avoid disputation although there is sometimes a hint that he found philosophical speculation as unproductive as Swinburne found theological speculation. In "The Autonomy of the Will," written for T. H. Green, for example, Hopkins remarks that "unchecked analysis is wearisome and narrows and dies away into unimportance" (qtd. in Schmidt 167).

Nevertheless, in a series of other papers written for Green Hopkins is preoccupied with the importance of achieving unity of meaning, belief, and personality, and he makes it increasingly clear that this is possible only through an authoritarian dogmatic theology.

In "The Position of Plato to the Greek World" in 1865 he notes that Plato's writings "are found to be full of thoughts which are not reconciled and have since acquired definiteness in opposite systems," as indeed they had in contemporary Oxford, but observes nevertheless that Plato's works lead to "methods going much more to the root [than the Sophists]," by means of which one can discover "a few first principles by which systems might be properly drawn" (Journals 116).

A similar search for a "root" meaning had drawn him to Müller's language theories, in the pursuit of the structural unity which he saw as a necessary prerequisite for beauty in poetry (97-8). Here it led him to a broader search for "methods going . . . to the

root," and in this essay he proposed the "new religion of the Ideal Good to fill the place of the old." Hopkins appears to have had some temperamental self-identification with Plato: "Plato himself was able to feel the sadness of complex thought running freely to different conclusions when the old unity of belief which gives meaning to every subordination of thought and action was gone"; he felt as well, writes Hopkins, "despair at the multiplicity of phenomenon unexplained and unconnected, the inconsistency of current speculations on the side of enquiry," all of which led to the philosopher's "habitual melancholy" (116).

In Hilary Term 1867 Hopkins read Hegel's Philosophy of History with Green (Higgins 164) and he expands further on his theme of unity in "The Probable Future of Metaphysics." The present age suffers from the two most recent of the "three great seasons in the history of philosophy": "the second that of Bacon and physical science and Positivism, the third that of Hegel and the philosophy of development in time." The third era "is led by the ideas of Historical Development, of things both in thought and fact detaching and differencing and individualising and expressing themselves, of continuity and of time." To this philosophy of "flux," of "continuity without fixed points, . . . of species having no absolute types and only accidentally" Hopkins again opposes Platonism or Realism,

where "forms have in some sense or other an absolute existence," and where knowledge moves "from the whole downward to the parts," rather than in the opposite direction (Journals 119-20). Hopkins appears to have used the term more loosely in the essays than it had been used in scholastic philosophy, where "realism" was the "doctrine of the objective existence of universals, advocated by Aquinas and refined by Scotus" (MacKenzie, Poetical 400).

Hopkins turns in "The relation of Aristotelian phronesis to modern moral sense" to the theme of self-unity. He rejects the Greek notion of morality, which he sees as an attempt to reach an external ideal of behavior, for an internalized psychology based on Christian theology, where "merit lies in the energies themselves and turns upon their strength so that the outer life must not indeed contradict the forces within but can only rudely register them and will become less and less their adequate expression" (qtd. in Schmidt 169). Hopkins argues for the subjective nature of proper morality, like his Roman Catholic mentor Newman, as Schmidt points out: "Hopkins' concern [is] with a man's inward spiritual disposition, his motive, his conscience, known in their fullness to God alone, authoritative for the individual but incapable of being rendered 'objective'" (172). Art must not be created solely from the subjectivity of the artist, for that is

a denial of God's presence, and indeed of God's role in its creation. By the same token, the moral sense must emanate from the individual conscience, which in this instance also reflects God's presence, within man.

Hopkins deals with morality again in "The Life of Socrates," probably written for Green in 1865, and which, as Schmidt notes, takes a position directly opposed to that which Green expressed in his 1858 attack on Christian dogmatists. In his "Essay on Christian Dogma," Hopkins describes Socrates as "what the Romans meant by vir sanctus et fortis. Yet his goodness was without sanctity." Socrates's "belief in his mission witnessed to by his familiar spirit was medieval, but without the depth and the grace," rather like Dante Rossetti, perhaps. Hopkins adds, in a restrained recognition of Greek sexuality, "Alcibiades and Critias were not the companions of a saint" (qtd. in Schmidt 171). Hopkins wrote these essays during the period of his conversion to Catholicism. The search for a unifying root would lead him to a dogmatic form of Christianity; indeed, as Geldart had said, Hopkins had "a simple remedy — the authority of the church," to combat the time's neologisms, and he embraced that remedy to the fullest.

As he had with Green, Hopkins also engaged Walter Pater directly. In "The pagan and Christian Virtues," one of three essays written for Pater on moral topics,

Hopkins again rejects Greek morality, which he sees as based on relations to others, while Christianity bases its own on "the all-important relation . . . to God." Writing for Oxford's leading "pagan," he locates "almost all the peculiar forms of Christian morality" in "Catholicism," and concludes by contrasting Christian with pagan humility, to the latter's detriment (qtd. in Schmidt 169). "The Origin of Our Moral Ideas" counters Pater's celebration of the fragmented and impermanent with the notion of self-unity, and emphasizes the role of vice, or sin, in its destruction:

All thought is of course in a sense an effort an [sic] unity. . . . It seems also that the desire for unity, for an ideal, is the only definition which will satisfy the historical phenomena of morality. . . . But why do we desire unity? . . . [T]he ideal, the one, is our only means of recognising successfully our being to ourselves, it unifies us, while vice destroys the sense of being by dissipating thought. (Journals 83)

In another essay on a subject associated with Pater, although written about 1868 for Robert Williams, "Connection of the Cyrenaic Philosophy with the Cyrenaic Morals," Hopkins observes that "happiness" is the ultimate goal of Sophist thought, but under a "psychology" in which "we can be sure of nothing but of having our own sensations," and in which only "pleasure and pain are ultimate and fixed" The result is a diminution of that goal, for "[e]xactly as

sensationalism destroys the unity of thought so happiness is made to be . . . simply a name for a succession of moments of similar sensations" (qtd. in Zaniello, "Epistemology" 19).

The overriding need for a unifying force in perception, morality, and art, then, forms a major theme in Hopkins's undergraduate essays. Two points should be made. The academic essays show that Hopkins did not consider that the unifying force is simply a philosophical abstraction; it is also of central importance in developing the subjective sense of a unified self. The self must be a morally pure one, for it is the dissipation of vice, of sin, which in turn dissipates the subjective sense of being. Purity results from an internalized ideal, not the external models of Greek thought. The need for such an ideal, one which can promote the necessary purity because it contains in itself full divinity, leads Hopkins to Christ, and more specifically to the Roman Catholic Church, for Christ is taken to be literally present during the sacrament of the Eucharist, where He is literally internalized in the taking of the communion wafer and wine. Secondly, we should note Hopkins's continued willingness, perhaps need, to contend with Oxford's neologists. The essays written for Green and Pater are pointed attacks on positions with which they themselves are associated. Hopkins's dialogue with Swinburne was informed by the

same spirit, and it would involve an extension of the same issues.

The undergraduate essays were matters between Hopkins and his various tutors. However, the differing philosophical, moral, and aesthetic positions which Hopkins was examining had a more public place at Oxford in the essay societies which typified the Victorian university: as Gerald Monsman points out, when the clerical parties became "locked in mortal combat with the new 'Germanism', . . . [t]he battlegrounds were the printed word, the pulpit, and the essay societies" ("Fichte" 365). The primary battlegrounds for those affiliated with the neo-Hegelian and the clerical positions at Oxford were two essay societies, one begun by Swinburne and his friends, the second by Hopkins and others to combat the earlier group. Through the Hexameron Hopkins could contend with Swinburne and his ideas directly.

The Old Mortality Society, founded in 1856, was the undergraduate center of new radical thought for ten critical years. A. C. Swinburne was among the charter members, along with his friend John Nichol, and he became its most famous member. T. H. Green was elected in 1858, and Walter Pater and J. A. Symonds sometime between 1862 and 1866, during Hopkins's undergraduate years (Monsman, "Old Mortality" 360). Monsman observes

that the influence of Balliol was decisive in setting the Society's tone:

Continental metaphysics and Arnoldian liberalism joined to make Balliol the leading intellectual force in Oxford At this crucial moment, the Old Mortality took root. In literature, art, politics, and religion the Society was avowedly 'radical.' . . . [Members] were fiercely dedicated to social amelioration, liberty of thought, and the ultimate validity of human reason in things secular and sacred [T]he group is a perfect microcosm of the intellectual ferment of the era. (366)

During his years at Oxford Swinburne read more papers at Old Mortality than any other member, and he never missed a meeting. His literary topics included Wuthering Heights, Old English ballads, and the plays of Marlowe and Webster, and he introduced members of the club to the works of both Morris and Browning (363-64). At other meetings he would have discussed with other members the propriety of nude statues, or the disappointing aspects of Matthew Arnold's Oxford lectures on poetry, or Gibbon on the origins of monasticism and asceticism; he defended Ruskin's "Views Regarding Greek Mythology" when it was attacked (369). There was a strong Pre-Raphaelite influence on the group, since several members in addition to Swinburne had formed friendships with the Brotherhood.

In Oxford affairs the Old Mortals supported abolition of the University Tests, which discriminated against all but Anglican adherents. In international

politics, in which they took a great interest, members of the society supported Swinburne's great hero Mazzini and the cause of freeing Italy from the tyrannous rule of its kings and the Vatican, and were violently opposed to Louis Napoleon, against whom Swinburne delivered a "vehement denunciation" at the Oxford Union, later defending tyrannicide at the same forum (Thomas 37). Indeed, Swinburne hung over his mantel "a portrait of the would-be regicide Orsini, in front of which he would dance solemn and solitary gavottes, raising his hands from time to time 'with gestures of adoring supplication'" (Nicolson 43). Swinburne argued for intervention in Italian affairs in his essay "On Foreign Intervention" (Monsman, "Old Mortality" 372), and an essay on "Church Imperialism," in which he attacked ultramontaniam, appeared in 1858 in the club's short-lived organ, the Undergraduate Papers (Lafourcade 2 : 218-20). Edmund Gosse described it as "a perfectly amazing blast of scorn (in prose) against the Emperor of the French and his horde of servile priests" (Gosse 44).

Swinburne's first published poem, "Queen Yseut," which owed a large debt to his friend William Morris, also appeared in the Undergraduate Papers, as well as literary spoofs. In addition, the Old Mortality apparently played a role in Swinburne's loss of religious faith. Gosse recounts that

Professor [T. E.] Holland remembers that he first heard of [Swinburne] as 'a most promising young fellow,' who, it was feared, had developed an admiration of Charles I, and a tendency toward High Church practices, 'a brand, as it were, to be plucked out of the fire by the Old Mortality'. (35)

A number of other leading undergraduates also participated in the society's activities, Swinburne's friend T. H. Green, for example, who contributed papers on topics such as "Political Idealism" (Monsman, "Old Mortality" 365) and the "Essay on Christian Dogma." The latter was the paper that bored Swinburne but from which he took ideas for "Hertha," as well as that with which Hopkins took issue in "The Life of Socrates." In time, however, the discussion at the society became increasingly abstract: "T. H. Green prêchait Hegel avec des intonations puritaines, et l'imagination spéculative de Water Pater faisait bleuir les flammes des lampes" (Lafourcade 1: 126). Swinburne was eventually to find the serious intellectualism of Old Mortality as stifling in its way as the religious preoccupations of Oxford, and to devote increasing amounts of his time to the company of the Pre-Raphaelites and to writing poetry and plays, as well as to outrageous behavior. Nevertheless, the Society provided the poet with the closest friendships which he would form at college, for Swinburne was an anomaly in other Oxford surroundings. Gosse writes that "it is not to be doubted that his contemporaries of Old Mortality alone, with the pos-

sible exception of Jowett, understood him. To the other dons and undergraduates he seemed half-mad and a little dangerous" (60). Swinburne would continue to reflect the Society's radical positions in poetry and prose and, as its most famous member, he was closely identified with the group in Oxford circles.

Like Swinburne, Hopkins became a founding member of a literary society, which was established in his case precisely to combat Old Mortality's radical positions. The immediate impetus for founding the Hexameron Essay Society in 1864 was a paper read by Walter Pater before the Old Mortality Club in February of that year, which has been identified as Diaphaneité (Monsman, "Fichte" 372-73). In it, according to S. R. Brooke, a fellow Old Mortal but one who found its extreme Germanic rationalism unpalatable, Pater advocated "self-culture" and put forward the "infidel" idea "that a future state is impracticable"; the following week Brooke read an essay intended as a "direct refutation" (qtd. in Monsman, "Old Mortality" 379-80). Apparently Brooke mentioned the event to Hopkins for on 7 March 1864 Canon Liddon, at that time Hopkins's confessor, noted in his diary: "Walk with Hopkins of Balliol. He told me about Pater's paper on Fichte's Ideal Student at the Old Mortality Club, in which he denied the Immortality of the Soul"; on 11 March the Canon wrote, "Hopkins mentioned to the [me?] the project of

an essay club, of a church character, as a set-off against the Old Mortality" (qtd. in Monsman, "Fichte" 367).

According to Liddon, the object of the new club was "to promote discussions upon subjects of interest so far as may be consistent with adherence to the doctrines of the Catholic Faith" (qtd. in Monsman, "Fichte" 369). Further, the Hexameron was formed to protect its members from atheistic fates similar to Swinburne's: as Hopkins's close friend W. Addis wrote on 16 March, the aim was "To preserve men who come up with good church feeling and a disposition to lead from the snare of such societies as the 'Old Mortality' which almost avowedly formed themselves on the denial of much which is dear to all of us" (qtd. in Monsman, "Fichte" 368). Swinburne himself was of course proof of the strength of the "snare," a former High Church "brand" which had indeed been "plucked out of the fire" by the essay society.

Hopkins took an active role in Hexameron, which numbered "at least a dozen . . . intimate friends or close acquaintances" of his among its members, including S. R. Brooke, who usefully also retained his membership in Old Mortality (Journals 328, note 58.3), and proposed several "new names" as well (307-08, note 19.8). On 23 May 1864 a meeting was held in Hopkins's Balliol rooms in which the possibility of printing the

Hexameron papers was discussed but rejected, on the grounds that they were "not sufficiently connected in purpose to form a series" and lacked "a sting," according to S. R. Brooke (qtd. in Monsman, "Fichte" 370). At least one other meeting was held in his rooms, as it happened on the same day on which he walked with Pater, "'Bleak-faced Neology in cap and gown'. . . . Same evening Hexameron met here: Addis read on the Franciscans: laughter. Thought all the next day of the terrible history of Fra Dolcino" (Journals 134).

Hopkins read at least one paper for the Hexameron, and planned several more, which apparently he never wrote. On 10 September 1864 he wrote his Oxford friend A. W. M. Baillie, "I am meditating an essay, perhaps for the Hexameron, on some points of poetical criticism, and it is with reference to this a little that I have composed my thoughts on Tennyson" (Further 215-16). The letter continues with the well-known discussion of poetic styles, "Parnassian," "Castilian," and "Olympian." By 5 January 1865 Hopkins was working on another topic:

I am now toiling through an essay for the Hexameron, but can you tell me what in music answers to realism in painting? The other arts seem to depend on truth (no: Truth) as well as Beauty. What then answers to, I mean what is, Truth in music? Blow me an answer from thy wreathed horn. (224)

The essay on Truth in music was clearly planned as an expansion of the Platonic realist position which

Hopkins was developing in essays written for Old Mortal T. H. Green. There is no record that it was read, however. S. R. Brooke's diary for 20 February 1865 records: "Hexameron at 9 in Muirhead's rooms. Hopkins read an Essay on 'Science of Poetry.' Very crowded attendance" (qtd. in Monsman, "Fichte" 375-6). This may have been the discussion of poetic styles which Hopkins had sketched for Baillie; "On the Origin of Beauty: a Platonic Dialogue" (Journals 86-114) may also have been written for presentation to the club. The Dialogue echoes some of the anti-Hegelian positions developed in Hopkins's academic essays, opposing the "diatonic" model, with its absolute permanency of fixed types, to the flux of a "chromatic" model which "like a stiffness or sprain seems to hang upon and hamper our speculation; it is an overpowering, a disproportioned sense of personality" (Journals 120). Jerome Bump also suggests that the never-written essay on "Some aspects of Modern mediaevalism" for which Hopkins made notes (26), "was not an academic assignment, and thus was probably intended for the Hexameron" as well ("Hopkins, Pater" 15).

The members of the Hexameron may have felt that its papers were insufficiently connected in purpose and lacked a "sting," but Hopkins, like the others, clearly had the intention of confronting the radical ideas of Old Mortality. The fear was that the counter-attack

was not sufficiently effective. Certainly, Hopkins's were not, since they appear largely to have remained unwritten, or unremarked by the members whose diaries are the only records of club activities. Bump's speculation that Hopkins intended to rebut Pater's paper on William Morris's poetry, opposing a devout and ascetic medievalism to Pater's sensuous and aesthetic version, is suggestive, but like so much of the work which he planned later in his life, Hopkins left this and other Hexameron paper uncompleted. Nevertheless, Hopkins's intention to counteract the positions associated with the society founded by Swinburne is clear.

A final, important Oxford issue remains to be looked at briefly. The philosophical positions which have been discussed tended to have specifically sexual identifications associated with them. The German scholars, with a reputation for masculine serious-mindedness, attracted no notice, but both High Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism were associated with homoeroticism in many minds (Hilliard). This was also the case of classicism, which was at the core of "a debate about the meaning of masculinity that took place in papers, lectures, essays and poetry by men associated with Oxford University during the mid-1860s," in which, specifically, "Pater and Swinburne reenvision masculinity by broaching in different ways the forbidden topic of sexual attraction and relations between

men" (Dellamora 58). Greek pederasty as evidenced in Plato caused Benjamin Jowett very considerable discomfort, and in his translation of Plato he at first ignored the issue and later attempted to explain it away by arguing unconvincingly that if Plato had lived in Victorian times he would have said that "loves of men must be transferred to the loves of women" (qtd. in Turner 425). The pederastic aspects of Greek love were acknowledged by other Oxford men, however, among them Walter Pater and Addington Symonds, both Old Mortals, and the brilliant evocations of the Greek past by Algernon Swinburne, for all that he called Symonds "the Platonic amorist of blue-breeched gondoliers" (Works 5: 250), were encoded with references to a variety of "pagan" sexual practices. Indeed, Dellamora argues, "the context of Greek philosophic culture is itself pederastic, however idealized that relation is in . . . Victorian [poetic] renderings" (73-74).

Walter Pater's "Diaphaneité," which provided the impetus for the founding of the Hexameron society by Hopkins and others, discusses an ideal of selfhood, an "entire transparency of nature that lets through unconsciously all that is really lifegiving in the established order of things" (251). German idealism, especially that of Fichte, was "crucial" to Pater's work (Monsman, "Fichte" 372), but beyond the philosophical content lies a sexual one. Michael Levey contends that

when S. R. Brooke criticized Pater's ideal of "self-culture" in describing it to Hopkins and others he seemed to use it almost as a synonym for self-abuse (101), and Dellamora suggests that the concept, as well as that of a male elite, connect in the essay with "a positive approach to the body and its pleasures, to art, and in particular to the enjoyment of sexual practices associated with close male friendship and the admiration of male form" (60). Identifying Hopkins as "a male sexually attracted to other males" (43), Dellamora argues further that Hopkins's Platonic essays for Pater have a concern with the "erotic character of Plato's thought" so that "When Hopkins was Pater's student in 1866, the pedagogic moment permitted them to share a sense of masculine desire informing one's perception of organic existence" (49).

I have argued that the beautiful male body was a source of intensely troubling feelings for Hopkins, ones which influenced both his abandonment of poetry and his choice of entering the Jesuit order. The description of a feminized, diaphanous male, reputed to have been based on the reality of Pater's handsome young Oxford friend Charles Shadwell, would have attracted him, but the attraction itself was one which he would have resisted, for during his Oxford years he felt that his attraction to males, and indeed to women as well, threatened the purity of mind essential to his

self-unity and his religious commitment. The philosophical content of "Diaphaneité" prompted Hopkins and his friends to take action against the Oxford "neologies" and, in the light of his personal crises at just this period, it can be seen as an uneasy step in engaging the veiled sexual content as well.

If Hopkins's first target in his Hexameron essays was Pater, behind that aesthete lay the influence of Algernon Swinburne, and it would be toward Swinburne and his as yet unpublished poems that Hopkins will direct his aim in the future. Their dialogue was not entirely on aesthetic or philosophical territory. In both his Hellenic and medieval poems Swinburne adverts subtly to homosexuality, lesbianism and bisexuality, as well as to a variety of sexual practices, cunnilingus, necrophilism, sadism, and masochism among them, which had previously remained largely undiscussed in Victorian society. Beyond that, it was felt that the suggestive, dreamy language characteristic in general of "decadent" writing had the "power . . . to seduce its readers in a specifically sexual sense" (Dowling, Decadence 165). That ability was ascribed directly to the language of Swinburne by critical commentators in the 1860s, who saw his poems as "epicene" and "unmanly" admissions of the powers of passion over the body

(Morgan, "Mixed Metaphor").⁵ Hopkins's contention with Swinburne was also an argument on sexual morality and self-definition.

Swinburne and Hopkins, then, arrived at Oxford with their family's High Church beliefs intact. By the end of their undergraduate years their new affiliations led them to diverge to the extremes of the existing margins of belief, one to atheism, the other to Roman Catholicism. Hopkins marginalized himself further by entering the priesthood. Swinburne, on the other hand, outrageous, transgressive, dangerous, disruptive, heretical as he was for the majority of the Victorian reading public, moved to the center of their interest, if not of their opinion.

Oppositional as Swinburne's Hegelian positions and Hopkins's version of Platonism were, these ideologies were drawn from a mutual Oxford background, sometimes from different elements in the thinking of the same teachers. Academic positions were "found to be full of thoughts which are not reconciled and have since

⁵ Morgan describes such views as reflecting a "determinedly heterosexual and masculinist" tradition, which believed "that social control depends on control of the body and on control of language as representation of the body" (17). For Swinburne see also Harrison, "Aesthetics of Androgyny." For a consideration of gender issues in Hopkins's poetry see Lock, Loomis ("Birth Pangs"). Carol Christ identifies the relationship of gender and authorship as one of the central concerns of Victorian literature ("Feminine Subject" 385).

acquired definiteness in opposite systems," as Hopkins remarked of Plato. However, mutualities of interest, for example the need for a unifying factor in life and the related impulse to break down dualities, emerged from undergraduate periods of ferment.

The early poetic practice of the two poets exhibited many points of similarity, in part because of the poetic techniques which the philosophical positions involved, in part because of the strong interest in Pre-Raphaelite style and subjects which each had developed at Oxford. Swinburne would move from the Pre-Raphaelite-influenced "Queen Yseut," and the plays written while he was supposedly studying for examinations, The Queen Mother and Rosamund, to the world of high Greek tragedy in Atalanta in Calydon, and then to the brilliant varieties of style which characterize Poems and Ballads First Series.

Hopkins, however, stopped writing poetry almost entirely for eight years, and the reasons for the silence bear upon his future poetic considerations of Swinburne, and upon the incorporation of Swinburnian texts into his own poetry. After his entry into the Jesuit order removed Hopkins from the secular arena he transferred his interest in philosophical disputation to theological matters, where the certainty which he had craved was to be found. Benjamin Jowett, T. H. Green, and Walter Pater no longer figured as adver-

saries. Swinburne, the outstanding example of the heresies and dissipating vices to which the new thought could lead, however, was a different matter. Alone among the neologists, Swinburne was a poet. Hopkins would continue the contention with him, first apparent in the prose essays of his Oxford undergraduate days, in poetic language.

Chapter 4

Hopkins as a Swinburne Critic: "This song of
Lucifer's"

Gerard Manley Hopkins's critical remarks as well as his poetry show that he was closely familiar with much of Swinburne's work. Atalanta in Calydon and Poems and Ballads First Series, as well as A Song of Italy, Dolores, and An Appeal to England Against the Execution of the Condemned Fenians, had been published while Hopkins was at Oxford. Hopkins entered the Jesuit novitiate in Fall 1868. Swinburne continued to write prolifically, for example reviews and criticism including William Blake (1868) and articles on Shelley and on Rossetti's Poems in the Fortnightly. Songs Before Sunrise, which reflected Swinburne's interest in the cause of Italian republicanism, appeared in 1871. In the face of continuing critical outrage Swinburne mounted another defense of his themes in Under the Microscope a year later. Eighteen-seventy-five, the year Hopkins began work on The Wreck of the Deutschland, saw the publication of Songs of Two Nations, which contained slashing direct attacks on the Pope and on Roman Catholic monarchs, and Essays and Studies, in which Swinburne praised Hugo, Rossetti, Morris, Shelley, and others of his heroes. These

volumes were followed by, among others, Erectheus: A Tragedy (1876), and Poems and Ballads Second Series (1878), and, in 1880, A Study of Shakespeare, Songs of the Springtides, Studies in Song, and The Heptalogia. Locrine appeared in 1887, Poems and Ballads Third Series in 1889, the year of Hopkins's death. Many of Swinburne's poems also continued to appear in periodicals throughout the period (Works 20: 437-68).

As we have seen, Hopkins mentioned Swinburne only once in his Journals: "Saw Swinburne. Met Mr. [Simeon] Solomon," a note entered on the day he received his degree from Oxford in May 1868 (Journals 166). However, the notebooks for the critical period between July 1866 and July 1867, when Swinburne was establishing himself as a public figure, and when Hopkins was most likely to have read Atalanta in Calydon (1865) and Poems and Ballads First Series (1866), have been lost. Hopkins's letters, on the other hand, contain comments referring to Swinburne scattered from September 1867 to a few months before his death in 1889. Two of these are simply reminiscences of Swinburne's public persona, like that referred to in a letter to Hopkins from his friend Canon Richard Watson Dixon, who had known Swinburne at Oxford:

In one letter you speak of Kingsley & the sort of corruption that he brought in: the bullying tone, the 'stand no blasted nonsense.' . . . I have been wont to know it in my own mind long enough by the name of 'the

stink': which I got from Swinburne, whom I heard read a bitter satire on one of the school named Ludlow, whom he compared to the stink 'where the Thames had laid the mud low,' or something like that. (Dixon 81-82)

Hopkins himself reported a second-hand recollection in a letter to Robert Bridges: "Measure for Measure is a lively piece of work, but it was a blot, as Swinburne raving was overheard for hours to say, to make Isabella marry the old Duke" (Bridges 237).

Other passages contain more revealing critiques which show that Hopkins's life-long awareness of Swinburne prompted reactions which veered widely, among admiration and attraction, exasperation, anger, and repulsion. Hopkins's comments are both general strictures on morality, poetic technique, and "character," and specific critiques in reaction to identified works, the latter occurring only in the final decade of his life. Brief and guarded as they are, the references nevertheless permit a further essay in establishing mutual referential systems.

Hopkins, still an Oxford undergraduate and a recent convert to Roman Catholicism, first mentioned Swinburne in 1867, a year or so after Atalanta in Calydon and Poems and Ballads First Series had appeared:

With regard to . . . morality it is true no doubt . . . that any subject may be chosen for its art value alone and so will not, or rather need not, be any scandal in the writer or reader. The question however is the prac-

tical effect, and is of course one of degree, where no line can be drawn. I mean for instance that it is impossible not personally to form an opinion against the morality of a writer like Swinburne, where the proportion of these subjects to the whole is great and secondly where the things themselves are the extreme cases in their own kind. Another thing is that what is innocent in a writer, if it must cause certain scandal to readers becomes wrong on that ground. This too is a question of degree for perhaps we are not bound to consider those who will take scandal from everything: it is required that the number only sh[oul]d be small. (Further 228-9)

Hopkins did not condemn Swinburne on the basis of his championship of art-for-art's sake: "any subject may be chosen for its art value alone." It is rather a matter of "proportion," of choosing, for example, a considerable number of excessively immoral subjects — in the case of Poems and Ballads First Series homosexuality, lesbianism, sadism and masochism, in addition to the blasphemous treatments of Christian subjects. In seeing Swinburne's poems as "extreme cases" Hopkins shared in the moralizing atmosphere of the times (Buckley 161-84); yet his strictures are mild when compared with the general critical reaction.

Atalanta in Calydon had been published the year before to generally favorable reviews. However, the appearance of Poems and Ballads First Series did cause a scandal (see Hyder 22-48). An anonymous reviewer in the London Review found such poems as "Anactoria" and "Dolores" to be "raving blasphemy," "a mere deification of incontinence," and "utterly revolting" (qtd. in

Hyder xix). In a review in the Saturday Review John Morley, who was himself a free-thinker, excoriated "the libidinous laureate of a pack of satyrs" for "grovelling down among the nameless shameless abominations which inspire him with such frenzied delight," in particular for his

attempt to glorify all the bestial delights that the subtleness of Greek depravity was able to contrive. It is a good thing to vindicate passion, and the strong and large and rightful pleasures of sense, against the narrow and inhuman tyranny of shrivelled anchorites. It is a very bad and silly thing to try to set up the pleasures of sense in the seat of the reason they have dethroned. And no language is too strong to condemn the mixed vileness and childishness of depicting the spurious passion of a putrescent imagination, the unnamed lusts of sated wantons, as if they were the crown of character and their enjoyment the great glory of human life.
(qtd. in Hyder 23-24)

Swinburne, said Morley, "would scorn to throw any veil over pictures which kindle, as these do, all the fires of his imagination in their intensest heat and glow."

In his own restrained comments Hopkins did not attempt to speak for the public, only "personally," but nevertheless he was sensitive to the "practical effect" of poetry on the moral standards of the majority culture. Hopkins repeatedly equated Swinburnian character and poetic style with faults already present within the Victorian culture, faults which his works both reflected and intensified. The awareness that the attitudes expressed so powerfully in Swinburne's

polemics would exacerbate these societal faults lies in the background of Hopkins's later pronouncements.

Hopkins's comments on Swinburne's poetic craft often employ the vocabulary of morality; as, for example, "Swinburne's dactyls and anapaests are halting to my ear. . . . In fact all English verse, except Milton's, almost, offends me as 'licentious.' Remember this" (Bridges 44-45). Several letters written to Robert Bridges in 1879, a year after the appearance of Poems and Ballads Second Series, make broader charges, particularly of disjunctions between the poet's "character" and his poetry. In February Hopkins praised the future Laureate's work to the detriment of Swinburne:

[I]t does me good, the freshness and buoyancy and independence I find in your poems, marked with character throughout and human nature and not "arrangements in vowel sounds," as Mallock [William Hurrell Mallock, author of The New Republic (1877)] says, very thinly costuming a strain of conventional passion, kept up by stimulants, and crying always in a high head voice about flesh and flowers and democracy and damnation. (72-73)

In April he remarked:

I think I have seen nothing of [Andrew] Lang's but in some magazine. . . . It is in the Swinburnian kind, is it not? (I do not think that kind goes far: it expresses passion but not feeling, much less character. This I say in general or of Swinburne in particular. Swinburne's genius is astonishing, but it will, I think, only do one thing). (79)

A third letter is more specific about the failings:

Since I must not flatter or exaggerate I do not claim that you have such a volume of imagery as Tennyson, Swinburne, or Morris, though the feeling for beauty you have seems to me pure and exquisite; but in point of character, of sincerity or earnestness, of manliness, of tenderness, of humour, melancholy, human feeling, you have what they have not and seem scarcely to think worth having (about Morris I am not sure: his early poems had a deep feeling). (96)

To charge another poet with lack "of character, of sincerity or earnestness, of manliness," let alone "of tenderness, of humor, melancholy, human feeling," and to further charge him with the failure even to recognize that these qualities are "worth having," is a serious accusation indeed. Hopkins maintained that Swinburne was incapable of "feeling," and so there was no possibility of unity between his language and the emotions it purported to express. This lack of "character," the absence of a unified self capable of "sincerity [and] earnestness," is such a fundamental flaw that, clearly, no "volume of imagery" can do more than costume over the artificially maintained "conventional passion" which replaces "feeling." Lack of self-unity was a concern which first surfaced in Hopkins's work at Oxford, where he also first entered into contention with Swinburne. Hopkins would perceive that through work and example Swinburne threatened several relationships which he believed to be central to man's moral life, creativity and religious salvation: of the poet to his own emotions and his own words; of poetry

to its age; of men's actions to their principles; and, in the larger view, of man to God.

Lack of character, as well as the fatally easy flow of poetical language, is seen not only as Swinburne's individual fault but also as typical of much Victorian poetry, as an 1883 letter discussing the poetry of Coventry Patmore's son makes clear:

What first strikes in the poems [of Henry Patmore] is the spontaneous thoughtfulness, the utter freedom from the poetical fashion and poetical cant of this age and all that wildness of words which one is lost in every copy of magazine verses one comes across. . . . But if the poems have a shortcoming beyond points of detail it would be in flow, in the poetical impetus, and also in richness of diction: they are strong where this age is weak — I mean Swinburn[e] and the popular poets and, I may say, Tennyson himself —, in thought and insight, but they are weak where the age is strong. (Further 336-37)

Despite such shortcomings as "that wildness of words" which marked the fashionable poetry of the age Hopkins nevertheless felt strongly that poetic diction must be "modern," a part of its own age. Hopkins repeatedly called Swinburne and others to task for their use of archaisms, for example in a moralizing letter to Canon Dixon:

I always hold that your archaism is the most beautiful (as also I believe the most learned) archaism of any modern poet's, the only one that is of itself a living beauty in the style, still I cannot think even so that it is right: I look on the whole genus as vicious. (Dixon 156)

Hopkins drove home the evils of the "vicious" genus in several letters. "There is a real fault in

the diction [of George A. Simcox's Prometheus Unbound]
 . . . which Swinburne's Atalanta too had: it is too
 full of untos and thereafters and -eths, an ineffective
 archaism reminding one of translations from the clas-
 sics," he remarked to Coventry Patmore (Further 229),
 with whom he also discussed Canon Dixon's Mano in 1883:

The style is more archaic than I approve; I
 look on archaism as a blight; but it is a
 better one than Swinburne's or Morris's,
 mastered, made his own, and in fact a style
 and not a trick[.] (296)

Hopkins's well-known definition of ideal poetic
 diction as "current language heightened" begins with a
 discussion in a letter to Robert Bridges of the
 weaknesses of archaic language:

By the by, inversions -- As you say, I do
 avoid them, because they weaken and because
 they destroy the earnestness or in-
 earnestness of the utterance. . . . So also
 I cut myself off from the use of ere, o'er,
wellnigh, what time, say not (for do not
say), because, though dignified they neither
 belong to nor ever c[ould] arise from, or be
 the elevation of, ordinary modern speech.
 For it seems to me that the poetical language
 of an age sh[oul]d be the current language
 heightened, to any degree heightened and
 unlike itself, but not (I mean normally:
 passing freaks and graces are another thing)
 an obsolete one. This is Shakespeare's and
 Milton's practice and the want of it will be
 fatal to Tennyson's Idylls and plays, to
 Swinburne, and perhaps to Morris. (Bridges
 89)

And again writing to Bridges, Nero's author, Hop-
 kins made a similar criticism: "Whenever I read . . .
Nero I am more struck by its mastery and perfect nature
 . . .; but in my opinion, though not archaic compared

with Swinburne, Morris, and so on, it is sicklied o'er a little with an Elizabethan diction, and this is its defect" (275).

Obsolete usages separate poetic language from its own times. Their overuse can also signal the same failed unity of self which Hopkins detected in Swinburne's absence of feeling and character, for if the poet has not made words "his own" he destroys the "earnestness or in-earnestness of the utterance." Further, archaisms can interfere with the development of a poetic style.

In 1880, making a distinction between individual mannerisms and style conceived more generally, Hopkins suggested, in a letter to Bridges, that Swinburne had no style at all in the latter sense: "What fun if you were a classic! So few people have style, except individual style or manner — not Tennyson nor Swinburne nor Morris, not to name the scarecrow misbegotten Browning crew" (111). It would seem that a proper style must not only employ the diction of its own age, but also must encompass characteristics typical of more than individual idiosyncrasy, that is to say of elements in the predominant cultural discourse. There is a nationalist tinge to these strictures: Hopkins championed the revival of native British usages from the Anglo-Saxon, while Swinburne's diction was often marked by Latinate usages.

However, by 1888 Hopkins had changed his mind on the relationship between Swinburne's diction and the formation of a style, to judge by a letter to the poet Katharine Tynan:

[T]he rich and decorative style of diction which you, like the Rossettis, Swinburne, and the modern school in general, employ is never so advantageous and in place as where applied to matter which may be taken as lying at a certain distance from you rather than when it comes as if embodied in the thought from the first. This last manner (which was Wordsworth's manner for instance) is more spontaneous, it is true, but it is not compatible with a formed style and the free use of a style: we want matter to treat and it is fresher when it is not of our own making.
("Six New Letters" 270)

Richly artificial diction combines badly with an attempt at lyric immediacy. Nevertheless, decorative-ness contributes to a formed style when the subject matter is distanced from the writer.

Swinburne worked in an exceptionally wide range of genres and styles, which obviously evoked different reactions at different times, and the variety of his work in itself might be taken as a lack of "earnestness." Swinburne himself parodied the style with which he was most closely associated: ". . . meek as a mother whose bosom-beats bound with the bliss-bringing bulk of a balm-breathing baby, / As they grope through the grave-yard of creeds, under skies growing green at a groan for the grimness of God" (Poems 5: 422-23). At another extreme he was "the supreme master in English

of the bleak beauty of little words" (Rosenberg viii). In part because of Swinburne's range and variety, Hopkins is unsure about whether he had only "individual manner" or possessed a style reflective of a broader English poetic tradition. In the well-known letter in which he classified the schools of English poets he included Swinburne, along with the Pre-Raphaelites Rossetti and Burne-Jones, as a member of the "modern medieval school" and did indeed grant him a style, of which archaism itself was the defining characteristic:

Swinburne is a strange phenomenon: his poetry seems a powerful effort at establishing a new standard of poetical diction, of the rhetoric of poetry; but to waive every other objection it is essentially archaic, biblical a good deal, and so on; now that is a thing that can never last; a perfect style must be of its age. In virtue of this archaism and on other grounds he must rank with the medievalists.
(Dixon 99)

For Hopkins, Swinburne typified several excesses of Victorian poetics — immorality, lack of feeling and character, too great facility, rampant archaisms. He was typical of the culture in another negative way, one which had less to do with poetry than with moral character. In 1877 Hopkins excoriated Victorian reviewers:

Crying up great names, as for instance the reviews do now Swinburne and Hugo, those plagues of mankind, is often wicked and in general is a great vanity and full of impious brag and a blackguard and unspiritual mind.
(Bridges 39)

He sounded the same note of anger in a letter to Baillie three years later:

What do you think of Wagner? I heard a concert of his music in the winter. He loses greatly, I fancy, off the stage. The Germans call him the Master of Masters and Hartmann the greatest of philosophers and the last new thing everywhere the greatest that ever was. This is a barbarous business of greatest this and supreme that Swinburne and others practise. What is the thing that has been? The same that shall be. Everything is vanity and vexation of spirit. (Further 246)

The outburst over "impious brag" was not a passing fit of anger, for it went to the heart of Hopkins's structure of belief and the way he lived his life and regarded his own poetic creation. The "wicked" and "barbarous" elevation of a creative human being — poet, musician, philosopher — as a supreme Master represented a major sin of the age in going against a primary imperative for living the Christian life, which is following the example of Christ, particularly in his humility.

As Christopher Devlin comments, the "central inspiration" for Hopkins's religious belief was "the great sacrifice" of the Incarnate Christ in assuming a human body. Hopkins stressed the importance of the Word made Flesh and, in distinction to the mainstream of Catholic theological opinion, he considered the Incarnation to be independent of the Fall:

[H]e did not see God the Son's descent into creation merely or primarily as the reparation for sin. He saw it as an act of love

which would have taken place in one form or another whether or not there had been any sin. Since He was God himself He could not perform the act of an inferior nature; so from all eternity He willed to become a creature so as to express that aspect of his love which was impossible to him as God alone. This is 'the great sacrifice': a sacrifice of joy and adoration, which only incidentally, as it were, became one also of sorrow and reparation. (Devlin, Sermons 109)

Rather than existing for the redemption of humankind, the "worlds of angels and of men were created as fields for Christ in which to exercise his adoration of the Father, fields for him to sow and work and harvest," Devlin adds. For all the joy, however, original sin did occur in the garden of Eden (Sermons 62-68), and Christ's sacrifice was both sorrowful and redemptive (170).

In his letters and spiritual writings Hopkins tended to emphasize both Christ's great purpose of adoration of His Father, and the humility of His Incarnation. As he explained to Bridges in 1883, Christ "annihilated himself":

[I]nstead of snatching at once at what all the time was his, or was himself, he emptied or exhausted himself so far as that was possible, of godhead and behaved only as God's slave, as his creature, as man, which also he was, and then being in the guise of man humbled himself to death, the death of the cross. It is this holding of himself back, and not snatching at the truest and highest good . . . which seems to me the root of all his holiness and the imitation of this the root of all moral good in other men.

(Bridges 175)

The belief in the saving necessity of man's imitation of the Son of God inflected every attitude expressed by Hopkins, whose own life was led within an affiliation which stressed Christ-like humility and obedience. "Impious brag" was particularly deplorable if it marked a poet's attitude toward his own calling. Famously, Hopkins's mature poetry is dedicated to the celebration of God, who is both transcendent and immanent, and the role of the poet-speaker is most often the joyous and humble recognition of God's unifying presence in the natural world. In a very different stance Swinburne celebrated the poet-maker (of necessity including his own creativity) as, "crying always in a high head voice about flesh and flowers and democracy and damnation," he hymned his outrageous themes. For Hopkins it was indeed "wicked" to "cry . . . up great names" and elevate human beings and their creations to a position of supremacy which only God the Father could assume. This arrogant and corrupting failure to perceive the proper relationship between God and man was the most critical disjunction represented by Swinburne, and it was a damning one. It is perhaps useful to remember that underlying Hopkins's strictures on Swinburne was the firm belief that as an atheist the formerly Christian poet was among those who were to be literally damned, subject to the eternal punishments of

Hell so vividly imagined in Hopkins's spiritual writings (Sermons 241-44).

Four letters which Hopkins wrote between 1885 and 1889 in his last years discuss specific works of Swinburne and touch on these and other issues. The texts which Hopkins mentions are all obscure ones: the verse drama Locrine (1887) and four occasional poems written for widely disparate events, i.e., Victor Hugo's completion of his epic La Légende des Siècles; death sentences for Irish revolutionaries; William Gladstone's introduction of a bill on Irish Home Rule; and the 300th anniversary of the defeat of the Spanish Armada.

In an 1885 letter to Robert Bridges Hopkins brought up the subject of Swinburne's "A New-Year Ode: To Victor Hugo" which had appeared in A Midsummer Holiday and Other Poems (1884). Several stanzas of the ode refer to the effects of a violent eruption in August 1883 of Krakatoa, an island in the Dutch East Indies. As volcanic ash was carried over England in the fall and winter of 1883-84 it produced a series of extraordinary sunsets, and the optical effects were widely commented upon: a descriptive letter by Hopkins himself was published in Nature in January 1884, and descriptions were incorporated into poems by Robert Bridges and Tennyson as well as by Swinburne (Altick

252-60). This is Hopkins's reaction to Swinburne's efforts:

Swinburn[e], perhaps you know, has also tried his hand — without success. Either in fact he does not see nature at all or else he overlays the landscape with such phantasmata, secondary images, and what not of a delirium-tremendous imagination that the result is a kind of bloody broth: you know what I mean. At any rate there is no picture. (Bridges 202)

Hopkins, whose own prose description of the phenomena was detailed and precise, was correct in finding Swinburne's landscape overlaid with "secondary images," as for example the trope of roses:

And where the fine gold faded all the sky
Shone green as the outer sea when April
glows,
Inlaid . . .
With large live petals, broad as love bids
lie
Full open when the sun salutes the rose,
And small rent sprays wherewith the heavens
most high
Were strewn as autumn strews the garden-
close
With ruinous roseleaves whirled
About their wan chill world[.]
(Poems 6: 39-40)

Clearly, this is not a straight-forward account of natural effects. Words, suggestive and imprecise, whirl about like the rose leaves themselves. In Hopkins's aesthetic, nature when properly represented by the poet's crafted words mirrors forth the recognition of God's presence, not, as here, the presence of the poet's own imagination. Even so, why should Swinburne's failure to provide an exact description of a

phenomenon of nature elicit such contemptuous anger from Hopkins?

There are a number of reasons, having to do with Swinburne's themes, his use of language, and his view of his role. The elderly Victor Hugo had just completed and published his vast poem cycle, the culmination of 30 years of work. For Hopkins the "morality" of Swinburne's salute to Hugo — Hopkins had ranked them together as "those plagues of mankind" — could rightly be judged as one of those poetic instances which "are the extreme cases in their own kind," as Hopkins had put it eighteen years earlier. Swinburne explained in a letter to his mother that he intended the representation of the brilliant optical effects of the Krakatoa sunset as an "allegory . . . on the still increasing glories and varying beauties of [Hugo's] work, which if possible grows more splendid and wonderful as the sunset draws near" (qtd. in Altick 257).

From the 25 stanzas of Swinburne's tribute Hopkins singled out for comment the three where the Krakatoa sunset references occur, and where natural phenomena are indeed subordinated to a dominant image, the light in the sky becoming the broad petals of a fully opened rose, with smaller sections of faded color like that of leaves which have already fallen — an adequate image of the still splendid work of an aged poet. However, the image of the rose occurs throughout the poem, and

Swinburne employs two characteristic strategies in handling it. Swinburne "likes to work the meaning of words" (McGann, Swinburne 137), for example by varying their grammatical function; the word "rose" serves variously as a noun, "life's very rose of love" (Poems 6: 40), and as a verb: "A great light rose upon my soul" (29), "the chant of Paradise and Hell / Rose" (30), "And like a ghost and like a God mankind / Rose" (31). By the time the Krakatoa-related description is reached a descriptive phrase employing the word "rose" as either verb or noun ("Rose two sheer wings of sundering cloud" [39]; "Full open when the sun salutes the rose" [39]) indeed carries many "secondary images," with the grammatical variations acting to disperse and undercut precise meaning, as so often in Swinburne's work (Harrison, "Craft" 19-20).

Swinburne repeats words and further inflects their meaning through the volume and diversity of modifiers, as in the case of "song": "The heavenly song of earth / Sprang" (Poems 6: 31); "fell / Too far for song, though song were thousand-tongued, to tell" (33); "Springs of reiterate song" (33); "indissoluble song" (34); "wide-winged spirit of song resurgent" (36); "sunbright song" (34). This is not to say that there are no stable referents intended, however. Throughout the poem "light" and "rose" are associated, and in stanzas 20 and 21, just after the sunset section, the two images

are brought together with "song" to coalesce as a representation of Hugo's poetry, the "very rose of song / Song visible, whence all men's eyes were lit" (40-42).

Swinburne then celebrates the power of that song. Hugo's poetry works a fundamental change in mankind:

No face so mean whereon that light abode,
 But as with alien pride
 Strange godhead glorified
 Each feature flushed from heaven with fire
 that showed
 The likeness of its own life wrought
 By strong transfiguration as of living
 thought. (41)

The light of Hugo's poetry shines everywhere: "none might say, / Of all things visible in the wide world's eye, / That all too low for all that grace it lay" (41). Following stanzas acclaim the "mystery, whence to one man's hand was given / Power upon all things of the spirit," through which "at last wrong [was] reconciled with right / By death divine of evil and sin forgiven!" (42-43). Hugo is finally hailed as "one heart benign, one soul supreme, one conquering name."

Hugo's works brings about a "transfiguration" of man through its "light" and "grace"; through the power of "one conquering name" evil dies and sin is forgiven. The stanzas are openly blasphemous in several ways, most obviously in the substitution of the power of Hugo and his poetic "song" functioning in the world for that of Christ the Logos and his scriptural word. Swinburne exults in the creative and unifying power of the human

imagination, "delirium-tremendous" or not, as the replacement for the divine. It is an extreme example indeed of the "impious brag" which so infuriated Hopkins.

Further, in an inversion of Christian doctrine, it is mankind who becomes godlike, not Christ, who in the Gospel of Matthew is "transfigured before" three of his disciples, "and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Then a voice spoke out of a cloud, saying "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17.1-8). Swinburne glorifies sinful, sensual mankind, seeing it as redeemed through the poetic power of Hugo, "for whom sensuality in nature and in divinity was a natural assumption" (Houston 115), and he replaces with fallen bodies the divine body of Christ, whose sacrifice alone redeems mankind, and who alone can be glorified, through human faith and prayer. Indeed, at Oxford Hopkins had turned his eyes away from sinful man toward Christ in that belief.

The blasphemy is intensified through the use of language associated with glorification of the Incarnate Christ, Light of the World, and through repeated parodic use of Biblical events and imagery, as again, for example, of the moment of creation in Gen. 1.2-3: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God

satyr who lives on Olympus as the pivotal figure. Swinburne expressed unbounded admiration for Hugo's work, and in the twelve central stanzas of the "New-Year's Ode" he enacted his own poetic re-creation of La Légende, retelling the counter-history of the world by weaving together translated phrases and images from Hugo's "magnificently accumulated fragments" (13: 115) to form his own poem. Swinburne underscored his technique by providing "Notes" at the end of his Ode which identify the thirty poems in Hugo's cycle to which he refers, and give the stanzas and lines in which the echoes occur.

Formal appropriations from other poets are another prominent feature of the Swinburne's style, and they have an ideological intention, for through the "recurrent use of standard forms . . . designed to echo the songs of earlier poets" Swinburne "self-consciously harmoniz[es] with the eternal voices of Apollonian song" (Riede 209), and so emphasizes the preeminence of imaginative creation. Customarily, however, "Swinburne's allusions and quotations are . . . completely submerged and unrecognizable in what Swinburne himself calls his 'multiform unity of inclusion'" (Dowling, Decadence 126). Here, however, he elected to emphasize the multiform nature of the homage to Hugo. He cites chapter and verse of Ode and Legend as though they were, in fact, a new scripture.

"A New-Year Ode" has as its primary referent, then, the work of another poet, not the beauties of nature. The representation of the Krakatoa effects is embedded within the framework of Hugo's themes and language, and the central images of rose, light, and song, common to both Hugo and Swinburne, are thereby intricately inflected. The point of the Krakatoa sunset passage is not to "see" nature; it is to integrate the representation of natural phenomena into echoing song. In a celebration of the power of humanity freed from conventional notions of divinity, Hugo created a myth in which poetic creativity itself plays the central role. In turn, Swinburne echoed the Apollonian song in his own re-creation. The Christian god was doubly supplanted by the god of poetry.

A final aspect of Swinburne's Ode needs comment. Like much of Hugo's work La Légende is pointedly anti-clerical and anti-royalist, and inevitably Swinburne chose to echo some of those passages in his compressed homage, opening, for example, with a line referring to Hugo's own opening section on Eve, "Le Sacre de la femme," which had been "a deliberate criticism of the 1854 Papal Bull on the Immaculate Conception" (Houston 115). It is highly unlikely that a reader of the "New-Year's Ode" would recognize a topical reference to the Immaculate Conception without having read Hugo's original, and perhaps not even then. More obvious,

however, was Swinburne's addition to his poem. He included a stanza echoing Hugo's historical drama "Torquemada," which was not a part of La Légende, depicting a protagonist "whose withering rage / Made earth for heaven's sake one funereal pyre / And life in faith's name one appointed stage / For death to purge the souls of men with fire" (Poems 6: 37). Through the Torquemada addition Swinburne introduced one of his familiar themes, that the tyranny of Popes, priests, and kings brings non-redemptive suffering and death, and that freedom for the people brings life, and he thereby made the specifically anti-Catholic temper of his Ode more apparent.

Then, through another familiar anti-Catholic reference, Swinburne further modified the rose-light interplay of imagery. In his prose critique Swinburne described the section in La Légende entitled La Rose de l'Infante as "a crowning flower of song . . . with its parable of the broken Armada made manifest in a wrecked fleet of drifting petals" (Works 13: 123). His own echoing words in the Ode read:

Loud as the blast that meets
The might of marshalled fleets
And sheds it into shipwreck, like a rose
Blown from a child's light grasp in sign
That earth's high lords are lords not over
breeze and brine. (Poems 6: 36)

The rose and light imagery of the Krakatoa passage grows more complicated through the further word play of

"reiterate song," as the rose blown from a "light grasp" becomes a simile for the scattering of the Catholic Armada by Protestant England. The buried Armada reference is clear within the historical flow of the "New-Year's Ode" and it was a poetic subject over which Hopkins was to lose his temper a few years later.

Swinburne's "New-Year's Ode," then, avoids certain of the faults with which Hopkins customarily taxed the poet: the language is not archaic, and there is no logorrheic "wildness of words" — in fact, Swinburne compressed a poem cycle of several hundred pages into 25 16-line stanzas. Its problem is more fundamental. In re-creating through echoed language a poetic cycle which consciously countered the Christian myth, Swinburne took part in Hugo's blasphemous myth-making. Hopkins made his abhorrence at such "heathen" myth-making clear in an 1886 letter on Greek mythology:

For myself literally words would fail me to express the loathing and horror with which I think of it and of man setting up the work of his own hands, of that hand within the mind the imagination, for God Almighty who made heaven and earth. (Dixon 146)

Hopkins's technical comments on the Krakatoa sunset description can be seen in part as distaste at the results of poetic strategies which disperse meaning. However, Swinburne's stanzas are part of the "reiterate song" through which he made meaning in his reiterate myth. And Hopkins's comments also represent

a displacement of the loathing and horror which Swinburne's myth-making effort aroused, onto the technical means through which he accomplished his ends.

Significantly, Hopkins chose to comment on a poem in which Swinburne used several techniques which Hopkins himself had employed a decade or so earlier to work a poetic conversion on earlier instances of Swinburne's blasphemies. Word-play, parody, Biblical references, and the incorporating the language of another poet, in Hopkins's case that of Swinburne himself, all served his purpose then. In "A New-Year Ode: To Victor Hugo," however, Swinburne was proving his poetry to be unredeemable, and Hopkins makes no attempt at conversion.

Two letters which follow the 1885 letter on the Krakatoa sunsets take up texts which exemplify two extremes of Swinburne's style, topical polemic and arcane closet drama. In the first, Hopkins was surprised to find himself on the same political side as the fiery poet:

Swinburne has written for the Times an ode on the crisis [the fight over Irish Home Rule]. Somebody called it a rigmarole and I c[oul]d not say it was not: on the contrary everything he writes is rigmarole. But I wonder how he finds it suits him to be clerical, as this ode with appeals to conscience and declaiming against assassination is. Moreover there was an earlier ode of his in honour of the "Manchester Martyrs", as the Irish call them: so then he has changed as much as Gladstone. As they neither of them have any principles it is no wonder. But the

passage about Gordon and so on is to the point. (Dixon 135-36)

The "earlier ode" was "An Appeal to England" (Poems 2: 211-14), published in The Morning Star on 20 Nov. 1867 as well as in pamphlet form and "copied extensively by the contemporary press" (Works 20: 440), and later included in Songs Before Sunrise. It had reference to the Fenians, the "physical force" Irish Nationalists who had among other things attempted an abortive invasion of Canada in 1866 and a general "Rising" in March 1867 (MacManus 616-19), in the aftermath of which several Irishmen were condemned to death. Swinburne, on the side of the revolutionaries, appealed to England to commute the death sentences and so remain "in the tempest of things / As a rock for a refuge . . . / A safeguard, a sheltering land" (Poems 2: 211) as she had for other "exiles." Setting up the oppositions of purity and "poisonous" blood, freedom and the "pollution of slaves," Swinburne argued that "Freeman he is not, but slave / Whoso in fear for the State / Cries for surety of blood, / Help of gibbet and grave" (213). He held up the American North's treatment of its defeated enemies as an example: "Thy mighty daughter, for years / Who trod the winepress of war; / Shines with immaculate hands" (214).

The letter to Canon Dixon indicates that Hopkins had retained a sense of Swinburne's attitudes over a

period of twenty years. During that period Swinburne had indeed "changed," for in "The Commonweal: A Song for Unionists," which appeared in the Times on 1 July 1886, he reversed his sympathies and attacked both Charles Stewart Parnell, the Irish Nationalist, and William Gladstone, who had introduced an Irish Home Rule bill after wrestling with the Irish problem for twenty years, sometimes through coercion, sometimes through liberalizing legislation (Hall and Albion 753-62). Although he supported Home Rule, Hopkins had moderated his own position during the same period. In May 1866 he had "brought forward [a] motion in defence of the Fenians at the Balliol Debating Society" (Journals 134); twenty years later, although he continued his support, it was with reluctance: "Home Rule of itself is a blow for England and will do no good to Ireland. But it is better than worse things. . . . [W]e are approaching a state of things which must be put an end to either by the sword or by Home Rule," he wrote his friend A. W. M. Baillie from Dublin in 1887, adding, "Gladstone is a traitor. But still they must have Home Rule" (Further 281, 283). Like Swinburne and many other Englishmen Hopkins felt that Gladstone lacked principles — that "[P]lace and time decide the right and wrong of thought and word and action" as Swinburne put it in "The Commonweal" — and in this indication of lack of character Gladstone was of course like that

poet.

Hopkins felt that he was "accustomed to speak too strongly" of Gladstone, at one point agreeing with his friend Baillie that it was "profoundly true" that the Prime Minister "ought to be beheaded on Tower Hill" (Further 257). However, Swinburne's polemic against the Prime Minister went beyond anything Hopkins would have been capable of expressing: "See the long tongue lick the dripping hand that smokes and reeks of slaughter! / See the man of words embrace the man of blood!" (Poems 6: 357).

The one note of approval sounded by Hopkins was for Swinburne's ironic lines on General Charles George Gordon, who had been killed in the siege of Khartoum in 1885 two days before the arrival of a British relief column which had been delayed by the anti-imperialistic Gladstone (Hall and Albion 718): "Let but England trust [in Irish Home Rule] as Gordon trusted, soon shall come upon her / Such deliverance as our daring brought on him" (Poems 6: 358). Hopkins, the Tory supporter of British imperialistic action (see Roberts), would compare Gordon's sacrifice to that of Sir Thomas More, and then both of those sacrifices to that of his greatest hero: "Did they then make no sacrifices? And if their modesty shrank from that word . . . is the word not true? And do we not speak of Christ's sacrifice? and they were following him" (Further 388).

The two political polemics are far from the elevated style and cosmic concerns of Swinburne's homage to Hugo. "The Commonweal" can fairly be called "rigmarole," or, in fact, doggerel (" . . . mocks and charms the gazing gaper — / . . . what is union, sirs, but paper?") (Poems 6: 355). But once more the problem goes beyond technique or the failure of "character" for again in "An Appeal," as he had in "A New-Year Ode," Swinburne uses Biblical and liturgical language while omitting the Christian context, for example in the reference to the "winepress of war" which the American North had "trod." The winepress allusion appears a number of times in the Bible, carrying with it several important significances for Christian readers, primarily as prefiguring Eucharistic wine and therefore Christ, whose blood the wine becomes in transubstantiation. One citation, from Deut. 15.12-15, connects the image to God's freeing of Hebrew slaves, and so to both slavery and political liberation (Landow, Victorian Types 182). This is clearly Swinburne's intended allusion in the Civil War reference, with the Eucharistic reference removed. In this, as in many other instances, typological references are modified to express the elevation of human over divine actions.

Swinburne also writes that any Englishman who cried for the execution of the Fenian prisoners is a

"slave" calling for "surety of blood." Again, he is modifying Christian positions. As Hopkins had explained to Bridges, Christ in his Incarnation, through which he gave surety of blood, emptied himself of godhead and "behaved only as God's slave" as he "humbled himself to death." Indeed, from all the "wildness of words" in the two polemics Hopkins commends only the passage on General Gordon in "The Commonweal," for there Swinburne lauds a sacrificial hero who follows the pattern of Christ, although Swinburne would have refused to recognize the fact.

Another of Swinburne's topical poems attracted Hopkins's attention in 1889. A letter written a few months before his death shows that Poems and Ballads Third Series, which had been published earlier that year, did not gain his approval:

Swinburne has a new volume out, which is reviewed in its own style: 'The rush and the rampage, the pause and the pull-up of these lustrous and lumpophorous lines.' It is all now a 'self-drawing web'; a perpetual functioning of genius without truth, feeling, or any adequate matter to be at function on. There is some heavydom in long waterlogged lines (he has no real understanding of rhythm, and though he sometimes hits brilliantly at other times he misses badly) about the Armada, that pitfall of the patriotic muse; and rot about babies, a blethery bathos into which Hugo and he from opposite coasts have long driven Channel-tunnels. I am afraid I am going too far with the poor fellow. Enough now, but his babies make a Herodian of me. (Bridges 304)

Poems and Ballads Third Series includes Scottish ballads and brief lyrics, among them "The Inter-

As he had in the "Torquemada" stanza of the "New-Year's Ode" Swinburne stresses the cruelty of Catholic belief, and again in long stanzas on "murderous" Catholic Ireland, where survivors of the Armada were "hacked, harried, and mangled of axes and skenes" (205). Direct vitriolic invective against the Spaniard's God is also plentiful: "God the Devil, . . . God the Liar, . . . God the Accurst" (208).

In other sections of "The Armada" Swinburne employs a mode parody to intensify the invective. The "winepress" allusion, which had connected mildly with the American Civil War in "An Appeal," becomes an allusion to the bloodthirsty God: "Though ever his lips wax thirstier with drinking, and hotter the lusts in him swell; / For he feeds the thirst that consumes him with blood, and his winepress fumes with the reek of hell" (201). Here, more clearly than in other examples which drew Hopkins's attention, Swinburne employs a demonic parody which manipulates sacramental imagery in a criticism of sacramentalism, particularly the ritual of the Eucharist: "in Swinburne's eucharists of violence, the eaten God is transformed into a diabolical maw, a consuming fire that sheds darkness visible rather than light" (Louie 3-4). The imagery, which Hopkins himself for example had used so devoutly in "Barnfloor and Winepress" (Poetical 26-27), reverses the meanings of the sacrament which he considered central to Christian

belief, the reenactment of the mysterious union of the human with the divine in "the great sacrifice" of the Incarnation, and which was the keystone of own religious practice and, indeed, of his later poetic practice.

Elsewhere in the poem Swinburne employs a political typology, as always stripping it of Christian context. The bruising of the serpent in Gen. 3.15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," became for Christian exegetes a "commonplace type that was always taken to announce a universal battle between good and evil which would eventually end in the complete triumph of Christ over Satan" (Landow, Victorian Types 153). Swinburne replaces Christ with England and he omits the idea of sacrificial atonement, telling his country:

Freedom lives by the grace she gives thee,
 born again from deathless youth:
 Faith should fail, and the world turn pale,
 wert thou the prey of the serpent's
 tooth.
 Greed and fraud, unabashed, unawed, may
 strive to sting thee at heel in vain[.]
 (Poems 3: 209)

Like many other poetical usages the political type serves an ideological purpose, for through its use Swinburne "assigns moral and spiritual value" to the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and, more important, "Swinburne's replacement of Christ by England as

saviour makes the triumph of the English fleet over the Armada one of those centers to human history analogous to that provided for Christians by the appearance, earthly ministry, and sacrificial death of Jesus" (Landow, Victorian Types 153).

There would have been other resonances for Hopkins in a poem on the subject of shipwreck, of course. The Wreck of the Deutschland celebrates the reality of God's presence and mercy behind the appearance of natural disaster (and concluded with a prayer for the conversion of England). "The Armada" presents a different cosmic picture. The Spaniards believe that their God is actively on their side, but they are proven wrong, and it is rather the pantheistically conceived god of England who reveals his presence. His saving action requires no divine intervention for he is already "one with the sea, the sun, the land that nursed us, the love that saves / . . . Sweet and free as the circling sea, sublime and kind as the fostering air" (Poems 3: 193).

The closet drama Locrine (1887) was also the subject of Hopkins's strictures. It is as far removed from "An Appeal" and "The Commonweal: A Song for Unionists," as well as from "The Armada," as they were from "A New-Year's Ode: To Victor Hugo." Hopkin's comments on the play were prompted by the mention of the word "archaism" in a letter to Dixon:

Which reminds me of Swinburne's Locrine. I read very little modern poetry, however I read that. It is scarcely to be called a play and the characterisation is youthful (Madan for instance is quite cousu avec de fil blanc [easily seen through]; he makes his points like the Governor of Tilbury Fort or Sir Christopher Hatton in the Critic): but for music of words and the mastery and employment of a consistent and distinctive poetic diction, a style properly so called, it is extraordinary. But the diction is Elisabethan or nearly: not one sentence is properly modern, except where there could in no case be any difference to be made. I should think it could only be in Persian or some other eastern language that a poetical dialect so ornate and continuously beautiful could be found. But words only are only words. (Dixon 156-57)

Unlike the case of the political polemics, only the language of Locrine attracted Hopkins's strictures, although even with its inevitable flaws Hopkins grants that Swinburne's decorative, archaic words make up a distinctive style. The subject of the play is the violent overthrow of a mythic British king, the descendent of Troy's survivors, whose love for a Scythian captive leads his jealous wife Guendolen to enlist their son, Madan, in a successful revolt. Revolution against established authority was an action with which Swinburne had in the past had considerable sympathy, although only against foreign Roman Catholic kings, never British ones, and so making the usurpers of a British king the villains represented no change of position. It was a position with which the reactionary patriot Hopkins would agree. There is no allusion to

contemporary politics, and the plot is fashioned on the Christian pattern of sin and retribution. Nothing in the subject matter draws Hopkins fire.

However, Hopkins is critically acute in his estimate of Locrine: "it is scarcely to be called a play." Sabrina is the eight-year-old daughter of Locrine and his paramour Estrild. Locrine dies from wounds received in battle with the usurpers, and Sabrina dies by leaping into a river to escape them. In the following death speeches the two names, "Locrine" and "Sabrina," could easily be exchanged, for it is only the mention of "child and wife" in the next lines of Locrine's passage that serve to distinguish his language from that of the child herself:

Locrine: . . . Yea, I know
Our fate is fallen upon us, and its woe.
Yet have we lacked not gladness — and this
 end
Is not hard. We have had sweet life to
 friend,
And find not death our enemy. . . .

Sabrina: Darkness and death are come on us,
 and thou [the usurpers],
Whose servants are they: heaven behind thee
 now
Stands, and withholds the thunder: yet on me
He gives thee not, who helps and comforts
 thee,
Power for one hour of darkness. Ere thine
 hand
Can put forth power to slay me where I stand
Safe shall I sleep as these that here lie
 slain. (Tragedies 5: 118, 120)

Swinburne is here the poet of "the bleak beauty of little words." With a minimal plot and almost no

effort at characterization, the play proceeds by a series of set pieces through which the "consistent" language runs unimpeded. Locrine presents to the reader a self-enclosed, lapidary world of verbal surface. Hopkins had taken archaisms as the defining element in Swinburne's "powerful effort at establishing a new standard of poetical diction, of the rhetoric of poetry" and Locrine is a preeminent example of that effort. The play takes its strength from the consistency of its artificiality.

In its non-representational aesthetic the language of Locrine could be connected to the complex Euphuistic dialect which Linda Dowling identifies with the Decadent style. However, Swinburne is to be distinguished from the practitioners of an entirely written, learned language, since he conceived of poetic speech as elemental sound, and in contrast to them "embraces song as the only adequate remaining model for literary language" (Decadence 126). Divorced from its own time by an archaic style, literally lacking any "character" to define, the play's "continuously beautiful" language appears almost to be an autonomous force.¹ The words

¹ As Dowling observes, however, Swinburne never embraced the Euphuistic dialect completely: "there could be no appeal for Swinburne to any ideal of written language like Pater's. For in Swinburne's view the language of the book implicitly derived its power from the Bible" (Decadence 177). His attitudes toward that "type of repressive authority" against which he framed his poetic language caused his aestheticist texts to stop short of displaying the "mysterious, disruptive,

are so abstracted from reference that it is sometimes difficult to catch the meaning, as for example in a conversation between the ignoble Camber and his rebellious nephew Madan in Act 3, Scene 3. For Hopkins, the repellent quality of Swinburne's song lies in its partial denial of logos, that unity of word, meaning, and referent without which "words only are only words," no matter how musical. However, perhaps such abstraction from meanings, insofar as it gave relief from insistently distasteful attitudes, was a necessary condition for Hopkins's recognition of the beauty of Swinburne's verse.

The works of Algernon Swinburne comprise one of the referential systems for an understanding of Hopkins's poetry. By the time of Hopkins's comments in the 1880s Swinburne had worked in a multiplicity of styles and had expressed changeable attitudes toward a wide variety of subjects. The comments on Locrine help an understanding of the differences between the aesthetics of the two poets. However, the play provides an exception in Hopkins's discussions of Swinburne's work, for in all other instances Hopkins selected texts in which certain persistent themes and

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evil" force of the "fatal book," that "sense of linguistic autonomy of written or literary language possessing a dangerous life of its own" (161-63).

techniques emerge. The other poems discussed by Hopkins involve the subjects of religion and politics. And, again with that exception, they are works which either support or condemn, praise or blame. As such they serve an important function:

Western literature over a very long period of time has been one of the great institutions for the enforcement of cultural boundaries through praise and blame. This is most obvious in the kinds of literature that are explicitly engaged in attack and celebration: satire and panegyric. Works in these genres often seem immensely important when they first appear, but their power begins quickly to fade when the individuals to whom the works refer begin to fade, and the evaporation of literary power continues when the models and limits that the works articulated and enforced have themselves substantially changed. The footnotes in modern editions of these works can give us the names and dates that have been lost, but they cannot in themselves enable us to recover a sense of the stakes that once gave readers pleasure and pain. (Greenblatt 226)

The very fact that Hopkins chose to comment negatively on "A New-Year's Ode: To Victor Hugo," "An Appeal," "The Commonweal: A Song for Unionists" and "The Armada" can help us "recover a sense of the stakes," or at least a recognition that there were in fact stakes.

Hopkins, Swinburne, and Swinburne's readers operated within the same symbolic economy in which Swinburne's myths, as a reordering of the Christian narrative of redemption, were easily comprehensible. For example, political typology, which now requires

explication, provided Swinburne with a clear and useful shorthand:

Such secularized types, which can only be employed when many in one's audience have a knowledge of biblical typology . . . permit the Victorian writer to communicate with his audience in terms of a recognizable, culturally acceptable narrative or structure which has many powerful associations attached to it. Types, which have the power to generate the entire Gospel scheme, also provide a particularly economical way of assigning moral and spiritual value to various political figures, conditions, or events. (Landow, Victorian Types 152)

Swinburne systematically empties typological imagery of traditional Christian meaning. He hymns the divinity of man as he calls for the destruction of the man-made concept of a cruel God. As he writes poem after poem of praise and blame, substituting the creative power of the imagination for that of God, Swinburne claims preeminence for the poet, and for humanly-derived meaning. Like Hugo, he constructs a vigorous counter-legend to the Christian myth in support of his views. Hopkins's comments on Swinburne's poems touch on a number of current concerns: the decay of "character" in Victorian society, Irish politics, the Roman Catholic presence in England, as well as the impoverishment of meaning in current poetry, through debased diction, superficial "flow," and a non-representational aesthetic. The comments reflect a deep concern over the possible effects of Swinburne's poetry upon the Victorian public.

Hopkins was preternaturally sensitive to the possible effects which verse might have upon its readers, if we are to judge by his correspondence with Coventry Patmore. On the one hand, Hopkins was extravagantly pleased with the bulk of Patmore's work: "Your poems are a good deed done for the Catholic Church and another for England, for the British Empire," he wrote in 1886 (Further 366). However, he found fault in more than one case. For example, Hopkins took Patmore to task over a passage in "The Angel in the House." The poem is now perceived as a high water mark of Victorian phallocentrism, but Hopkins detected a "lurking error" in Honoria's attitude toward her future husband, and such errors, Hopkins says sternly,

convey, it seems to me, though in small
quantities, a poison. And may be quoted in
support of evil and do mischief commended by
the lustre of your name (I hope it will be
illustrious then) years after you are dead.
(Further 310)

If even Patmore raised Hopkins hackles, so much the more so Swinburne.²

² The lines are:

Because, although in act and word
As lowly as a wife can be,
Her manners, when they call me lord,
Remind me 'tis by courtesy;
Not with her least consent of will,
Which would my proud affection
hurt,
But by the noble style that still
Imputes an unattain'd desert.
(Patmore, Poems 138-39)

Hopkins complained:

Hopkins perceived the world on the Christian cosmic model, with certain idiosyncratic modifications. He found in Duns Scotus support for his curious notion that Christ's Incarnation occurred during angelic time, before the creation of the world: in effect, this is "like distinguishing two events in the great sentence of John: 'The Word was made flesh — and came to dwell among us'" (Devlin, Sermons 114). Scotus maintained that at the time of his incarnation Christ appeared in the flesh to Lucifer, whose jealousy at seeing the hypostatic union between Christ and God prompted him to lead the angelic revolt. Lucifer then tempted newly-created humanity and the ensuing fall of man brought sin into the world, thereby disrupting the unity of being which sinless and obedient Adam and Eve had experienced before their expulsion from Eden. Sinful flesh became separated from soul, and the result for mankind was a yearning desire to move back toward God as well as an insatiable yearning for self-completion.

Hopkins described Lucifer's revolt in a sermon preached in 1881 during the Long Retreat. During angelic time, Christ called the angels into being by

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But he is her lord. If it is courtesy only and no consent then a wife's lowliness is hypocrisy and Christian marriage a comedy, a piece of pretence. (Further 310)

leading off an angel choir to worship God the Father. In defiance, Lucifer raised a song to the glories of his own nature, rather than to God:

This song of Lucifer's was a dwelling on his own beauty, an instressing of his own inscape, and like a performance on the organ and instrument of his own being; it was a sounding, as they say, of his own trumpet and a hymn in his own praise. Moreover, it became an incantation: others were drawn in; it became a concert of voices, a concerting of selfpraise, an enchantment, a magic, by which they were dizzied, dazzled, and bewitched. (Sermons 201)

Lucifer's sin of pride, which led to his revolt and expulsion from heaven, expressed itself in a seductive song of self-exaltation. As a result, the angel chorus became "a counterpoint of dissonance and not of harmony." Hopkins would sternly deny himself such a song of dangerous self-expression, for the song of self takes away from man's service to God and can cut him off from God's grace (Miller, Disappearance 333). However, Algernon Swinburne was a poet whose song, like Lucifer's, instressed its own inscape and that of its maker, and which, again like Lucifer's, enchanted, drew in, dizzied and dazzled many of its Victorian listeners.

There was a Luciferian cast to Swinburne's attacks on the Christian God. Hopkins preached in an 1880 Liverpool sermon that Satan "resolved that through pride and selflove man should be brought to fall" through disobedience to his sovereign Lord (Sermons

63). By speaking "studied words of double meaning," Satan encouraged Eve to complain of God's ban on the forbidden fruit, and thereby Eve

gave her tempter the clew to his temptation — that God her sovereign was a tyrant, a sullen lawgiver; that God her lord and land-lord was envious and grudging, a rackrent; that God her father, the author of her being, was a shadow of death. (65-66)

The story could easily serve for Hopkins as an exemplum of the relationship between Swinburne and his public. Satan might well have been preparing to write the third Chorus of Atalanta in Calydon, or poems such as "The Armada," with Eve as his seduceable audience.

Next, said Hopkins in the same sermon, the serpent preached self-sufficiency: "Be as a God yourselves, be divinely independent, why not?" In encouraging the sin encouraged by the Swinburnian poet, the serpent reinterpreted the significance of the fruit on the tree of knowledge:

God like a fatherly providence found them food and forbad them poison: the Serpent told them the deadly poison was life-giving food. It was enough: Eve would judge for herself. She saw that the tree was good to eat, that it was not poison, it was the food of life — and here was pride of life; that it was beautiful to the eyes, a becoming object to covet and possess — and here was the desire of the eyes; and that it was delightful to behold, that is / sweet and enjoyable in imagination even and forecast, how much more in the eating and the reality! — and here was the desire of the flesh; she freely yielded herself to the three concupiscences; she took and eat of this devil's-sacrament; she rebelled, she sinned, she fell.
(66; emphasis in original)

Eve's desire to "judge for herself" led to visual temptation, the "desire of the eyes," which in turn led to the "desire of the flesh." The devil brought about her fall through "studied words," a persuasive misreading of natural beauty. Like all nature, the tree was there to render praise to its maker, not to fulfill the individual desires of a disobedient subject. From the moment of the fall, then, the natural world was a pharmakon, both poison and "life-giving food." Whether it became the latter depended upon a proper interpretation of the laws of God, which for Hopkins came only from the certainties of dogmatic religion. Again and again however Swinburne, like Lucifer, misinterpreted the evidence of mortal beauty because of his insolent insistence on judging for himself.

Swinburne denied God and His grace, insisting instead upon the divinity of man and the primacy of his works. Poetic creation was preeminent among these works, and it bestowed a secular version of grace, attempting to empower men to see clearly the false gods which held them captive, and to act to free themselves. As he had written of Victor Hugo, powerful poetry was "Song visible, whence all men's eyes were lit"; "none might say, / Of all things visible in the wide world's eye, / That all too low for all that grace it lay" (Poems 6: 42). Swinburne's song, as well, was a powerful force within Victorian culture, carrying a message

of revolt. Such a project placed Swinburne in the devil's camp.

Morse Peckham has defined a counterculture as "an effort to change by negation and inversion the conventionalized instructions for performance as redundantly uttered in the public culture" (270). He identifies three romantic countercultural traditions, all of which are exemplified by Swinburne's texts: attempts to create new redemptive explanations of the world, aestheticism, and eroticism. Indeed, Hopkins himself can be seen to share these characteristics to some degree. At the same time, however, Hopkins is also part of what Peckham designates as a Platonic-Christian counterculture characterized by "behavioral repressiveness" (273).

From Hopkins's point of view, by the 1880s Swinburne was not a member of a marginal counterculture but was rather a powerful force within the dominant culture. In the 1860s and 1870s Swinburne presented the danger of an outsider whose outrageous opinions could have a pernicious effect upon the public: as John Morley put it in his 1866 review of Poems and Ballads First Series, one who was "firmly and avowedly fixed in an attitude of revolt against the current notions of decency and dignity and social duty" (qtd. in Hyder 22). Hopkins showed, through his choice of poems on which to comment, that he saw Swinburne's work as

having a capacity "for the enforcement of cultural boundaries through praise and blame" — and they were boundaries far wider than those which he would have drawn himself. Hopkins's reactions were evoked by the continuing threat to the power of the truth of the Christian originating myth and to an ordered stability in both politics and religion, for he saw what we are unable to see, that the texts had political force, in that they both reflected currents of opinion within the culture and helped to create or modify them.

In several of his own poems Hopkins reacts to Swinburne's heresies. But just as we have lost the ability to read Swinburne's occasional poems without explication, we have in part lost the ability to read the poems in which Hopkins entered into contention with Swinburne. In the 1870s, ten years before Swinburne wrote the poems which have been discussed here, some of Hopkins's poetry changed the context of Swinburne's texts. In taking on a poet whom he saw as reflecting many of the faults of Victorian society Hopkins also engaged in an attempt to "change by negation and inversion the conventionalized instructions for performance" uttered in the public culture. Hopkins's desire was for the conversion of England to Roman Catholicism, and there was no more fitting place for him to undertake his own effort at conversion than with the powerful texts of England's most notorious atheist.

Chapter 5

Poetic Vocation and the Dorothea Poems:

"Monstrous miracles of conversion"

The question of the place of a poetic vocation within the Jesuit affiliation was the subject of an exchange of letters between Hopkins and his friend Canon Dixon in 1881. In response to Dixon's "expressions of high regard" for his poetry, Hopkins replied that he regretted "the backward glances I have given with my hand upon the plough, for the waste of time the very compositions you admire may have caused":

I have never wavered in my vocation, but I have not lived up to it. I destroyed the verse I had written when I entered the Society and meant to write no more; the Deutschland I began after a long interval at the chance suggestion of my superior, but that being done it is a question whether I did well to write anything else. However I shall, in my present mind, continue to compose . . .; for a very spiritual man once told me that with things like composition the best sacrifice was not to destroy one's work but to leave it entirely to be disposed of by obedience. (Dixon 88)

Dixon replied, expressing his hope

that you will find it consistent with all that you have undertaken to pursue poetry still, as occasion may serve: & that in so doing you may be sanctioned & encouraged by the great Society to which you belong, which has given so many ornaments to literature. Surely one vocation cannot destroy another: and such a Society as yours will not remain ignorant that you have such gifts as have seldom been given by God to man. (90)

In turn, Hopkins explained himself further, framing his reply as a discussion of the "dangerous and dazzling attraction" of fame:

When a man has given himself to God's service, when he has denied himself and followed Christ, he has fitted himself to receive and does receive from God a special guidance, a more particular providence. This guidance is conveyed partly by the action of other men, as his appointed superiors, and partly by direct lights and inspirations. . . . Now if you value what I write, if I do myself, much more does our Lord. And if he chooses to avail himself of what I leave at his disposal he can do so with a felicity and with a success which I could never command. And if he does not, then two things follow; one that the reward I shall nevertheless receive from him will be all the greater; the other that then I shall know how much a thing contrary to his will and even to my own best interests I should have done if I had taken things into my own hands and forced on publication. This is my principle and this in the main has been my practice: leading the sort of life I do here it seems easy, but when one mixes with the world and meets on every side its secret solicitations, to live by faith is harder, is very hard; nevertheless by God's help I shall always do so.

Our Society values, as you say, and has contributed to literature, to culture; but only as a means to an end. Its history and its experience shew that literature proper, as poetry, has seldom been found to be to that end a very serviceable means. (93-94)

It has been a critical commonplace that Hopkins the poet was hampered by the stringencies of Jesuit life, including in particular the need for unquestioning obedience to his superiors. Undeniably his letters show a sense of strain between the demands of the religious and the poetic vocations. At the same time, they testify to his life-long need to reconcile the drive to

create poetry with his responsibilities to his order and to his God, for Hopkins's first loyalty was always to his role as a priest. In writing poetry, as in all other aspects of his life, he stressed the need for obedience to the dictates of his faith and his priestly vocation. Hopkins's superiors in the Society of Jesus provided the necessary guidance. Christ Himself was the deciding critic. A poet had recourse to his own "direct lights and inspirations," but inspiration was to be used, not primarily to create a poem, but to find how best to pursue the priestly vocation. It can be argued that surrendering himself to what he considered God's will, as determined by the dogmatic authority of the Roman Catholic Church, provided a welcome relief from the subjectivity out of which he had written his Oxford poetry.

Still, as Hopkins himself pointed out, the Society of Jesus valued literature "only as a means to an end." The sole end of poetry for a Jesuit must be to serve his God, and the challenge was to write poetry which would provide the "serviceable means" (Dixon 93). However, in the first years after he began study for the priesthood Hopkins, "it appears, was lacking a theory of the 'serviceable' work that poetry may do" (Salmon 181).

There was a second vocational problem. In referring to the "secret solicitations" of the world in his

letter to Canon Dixon Hopkins was speaking of the dangers of individual fame. However, the Oxford crisis had shown that the world held other powerfully dangerous and secret solicitations. In particular, Hopkins became aware, after his Oxford fall into knowledge, of the power of visual desire. After the years of Jesuit training, and with the assurance of continued discipline within the order, Hopkins permitted himself once again to look at his fellow human beings and the natural world with intensity, and he was also able to look at works of art and read imaginative literature without crippling guilt, for his journals show that as a priest he did all of these. The whole end of his being was the service of God, in part through the preservation of his own purity of body and mind. If any of the things of the world upon which he gazed had presented dangers to his immortal soul, Hopkins would have avoided them, as in fact he did at least once during his years as a novice. Clearly, Jesuit discipline had trained Hopkins to look around him with the eyes of faith.

Through the process of confession Hopkins experienced not only an increasing awareness of his sexuality but also a growing, and related, self-consciousness about practicing either painting or writing. In February 1868 Hopkins had written, of the act of painting, "the fact is that the higher and more attractive parts

of the art put a strain upon the passions which I sh[oul]d think it unsafe to encounter." As I argued in Chapter Two, writing poetry also "put a strain upon the passions," and Hopkins wrote in the same letter that he was prepared to give up the practice of poetry if necessary. Nevertheless, as he admitted, "I want to write still and as a priest I very likely can do that too, not so freely as I sh[oul]d have liked, e.g. nothing or little in the verse way, but no doubt what w[oul]d best serve the cause of my religion" (Further 231).

The question which remains to be answered is not why Hopkins stopped writing poetry, but rather how he was able to devise a poesis which would permit his return as a poet. This would involve developing both an idea of the serviceable work which poetry could do, and a theoretical ground which would assure that the strain upon the passions experienced in writing poetry during the Oxford crisis would not recur.

In attempting to serve these two needs the young Jesuit had recourse to the poetry of Swinburne. As an Oxford undergraduate Hopkins had entered into philosophical, religious, and political contention with Swinburne and other "neologists," in an effort to combat the new secularism which was opposed to all that he believed. Once removed from his Oxford affiliation, Hopkins ended the verbal warfare in all but once

instance. Swinburne alone among his fellow sceptics was an active poet and a powerful poetic presence within Victorian discourse. Hopkins continued the argument as one method for making poetry "best serve the cause of [his] religion," by converting elements of Swinburne's texts to serve the cause of Roman Catholicism. In addition, however, Swinburnian themes and usages appear in contexts which have less to do with points of religious and philosophical contention than with Hopkins's need to reconcile sexuality, religion, and poetic practice. Hopkins would manage to return to the dangerous beauty of poetry, not through a continued denial of his poetic gift, but through a modification of both the poetry and the theory which lay behind it, and with the dangerous Swinburne's help. During his years of "silence" Hopkins attempted to develop a new poetics. It was to prove to be an elusive goal, and indeed one which Hopkins never solved adequately. The conversion of Swinburne was a first effort, and it was one which was to prove in many ways abortive, for Hopkins's practice quickly took him beyond the directly reactive purpose which he first devised.

The poetic worlds which the Victorian readers of Swinburne's Atalanta in Calydon (1865) and Poems and Ballads First Series (1866) entered are startling ones even now. The realities of existence are forbidden

passion, erotic dreams, cruel pain, violence, perversity, lost hope, sorrowful memory, barrenness, and bleak despair. The inhabitants of Calydon live in a condition of "blind desire" (Poems 4: 259), which Swinburne anatomized more fully in his second volume a year later. Many of Swinburne's speakers in Poems and Ballads yearn: for erotic fulfillment, for beauty, for pain, for relief from the yearning itself. Intense and insatiable, desire is the defining element:

Hermaphroditus suffers "A strong desire begot on great despair, / A great despair cast out by strong desire" (1: 79); Tannhäuser desires to be "satiated with things insatiable" (16). Human beings attempt some sort of unity with other human beings to overcome the sense of distance and incompleteness: through love, as imagined by the spurned speaker in "The Triumph of Time"; or through death, as represented in "Les Noyades" or "The Leper." The effort remains a doomed one.

The condition of desire is inescapable, and decreed from on high. For, as the Chorus in Atalanta recognizes, the gods have endowed the "holy spirit of man" with mixed gifts, "Pleasure, with pain for leaven; / Summer, with flowers that fell" (4: 258). No single emotion or attribute is experienced without the presence of its opposite. The result is a sense of incompleteness and a guilty yearning which lead both to intensification of emotion and, inevitably, to pain,

particularly in sexual relationships. For the gods have set up categories of good and evil which prevent the innocent practice of sexuality because they work to separate flesh and spirit: the "high god" "makes desire, and slays desire with shame" (287), which has "strewed one marriage-bed with tears and fire / For extreme loathing and supreme desire" (285).

The citizens of Calydon experience a helpless yearning in their relationships with each other, and they also yearn toward the divinities whom they believe created them and control their fate. But one of the prominent themes in Atalanta in Calydon is the difficulty, or indeed the impossibility, of apprehending divinity. Calydon's inhabitants profess belief in their gods and pray to them, but they are unsure whether the gods have heard them. They search repeatedly for visual proof of the presence of divinity, but they have very great difficulty finding it. Again, this is part of mankind's ineluctable situation. The Chorus of Calydonian maidens despairs that mankind is unable to perceive its gods, or its own situation, because the gods have created mankind's eyes blind, and his language deceptive: "Eyesight and speech they wrought / For the veils of the soul therein" (259). Man's "life is a watch or a vision / Between a sleep and a sleep" (260).

Indeed, the various names of the gods — "Zeus," "Artemis," "Venus" — may represent the single fact of inevitability which human beings cannot influence and which in the fifth chorus is called "fate." Identified as "mother of desires and fears," this inevitability is, however, "without body, without name" (312); and so, in the absence of visual proof, even the existence of fate must be considered as no more than opinion in the world of Calydon.

Both in Calydon and in several of the Poems and Ballads, the figure of Venus represents both themes of blindness: "blind desire," and the blindness which hampers the search for the gods. As Swinburne's primary representation of sexuality, the goddess is both an embodiment of life's unassuageable longings, and an exemplum of hope for some relief. She acts to cause the split between flesh and spirit, which prevents either self-unity or unity with the cosmos, and which is the source of humanity's hopeless longing; at same time, she holds out the possibility of joyous sexual completion.

Like all of Calydon's divinities, Venus brings mixed gifts: "Before thee the laughter, behind thee the tears of desire," the Chorus exclaims (273). The beauty of the "perilous goddess" (274) arouses desire, which can bring joyous love, but it hides the inimical

effects of the sexual longing which leads inevitably to "division of soul and disease" (275).

Venus herself is both hidden and known through her signs within the natural and human world: "Earth is thy covering to hide thee, the garment of thee," says the Chorus (273). She is a visible goddess through the actions of her human adherents, and, judging by human suffering, the Chorus cries that "visible fear" (273) should have risen with her as she entered the world. For, while the Chorus says that it has "seen" her, they have seen only Venus's beauty, not her malevolence:

We have seen thee, O Love, thou art
fair; thou art goodly, O Love;
Thy wings make light in the air as the
wings of a dove. (273)

The Chorus recognizes that it has not perceived her fully, and it is not satisfied by the indirect signs of her presence: "All these we know of; but thee / Who shall discern or declare?" (277), they ask. They have answered themselves with a description of Venus rising from the sea in the distance, accompanied by the stormy violence of "Loud shoals and shipwrecking reefs" (276), which they equate with the disorder which her malevolence causes. Yet they continue to question, even as they purport to describe her.

Uncertainty, then, surrounds the existence of the invisible gods in Atalanta in Calydon. Implicit is the nagging possibility that the gods are human constructs,

fashioned by mankind itself in its own image, a theme which becomes more explicit in "Féliste":

Ye fools and blind . . .
 . . . [W]hat thing have ye found on
 high
 Past the blind sky?

The ghosts of words and dusty dreams,
Old memories, faiths infirm and dead.
(1: 196)

Indeed, such a possibility contributed to Swinburne's rejection of conventional religious belief. Like Hopkins, he had undergone a religious crisis at Oxford which had led him to repudiate the High Anglicanism into which he had been born, but with a radically different result. In a letter written in 1874 Swinburne explained that

Having been as child and boy brought up a quasi-Catholic, of course I went in for that as passionately as for other things (e.g. well-nigh to unaffected and unashamed ecstasies of adoration when receiving the Sacrament); then when this was naturally stark dead and buried, it left nothing to me but a turbid nihilism: for a Theist I never was[.] (Letters 3: 13)

Although in the mid-1860s Swinburne's posture was primarily one of revolt against Christianity, he would begin to construct a "religion of humanity" early in the following decade. As he continued, he lay the groundwork for his new religion by questioning the premises of his old one:

I always felt by instinct and perceived by reason that no man could conceive of a personal God except by brute Calibanic superstition or else by true supernatural revelation;

that a natural God was the absurdest of all human figments; because no man could by other than apocalyptic means — i.e. by other means than a violation of the laws and orders of nature — conceive of any other sort of divine person than man with a difference — man with some qualities intensified and some qualities suppressed — man with the good in him exaggerated and the evil excised. . . . Men give [God] the qualities they prefer in themselves or about them. (13-14; emphasis in original)

Swinburne's poetic project was both to deny the existence of the Christian creator-god, or indeed of any transcendent principle of divinity, and at the same to indict Christianity for intensifying the bleak realities of human existence. Rejecting the Bible's claim to supernatural revelation, he began to position poetry itself as a secular substitute for scripture, a strategy which would inform "A New-Year Ode: To Victor Hugo," for example. Insisting that the idea of transcendent deities was no more than a construction of language and desire was one method which Swinburne used to discredit Christian beliefs. Atalanta in Calydon is a dramatic working out of Swinburne's contention that "God" is "the absurdest of all human figments."

A related poetic project in the 1860s was to expose the contradictions and repressions in Christianity's refusal to see the link between sexuality and religion. Swinburne assigns the blame for the self-division which tortures human beings to institutionalized dogmatic religion, with its

insistence upon the subjugation of the flesh. In the name of its God, Christianity denies what sexual pleasures might be possible on earth by introducing the idea of sin into a blameless universe. It is religion which has "slain desire with shame," insisting upon the opposition between purity of the spirit and the filth of the body which it itself has constructed. The Victorian public perceives of religion and sexuality as radically separate, Swinburne complains, which is one of the reasons for the critical furor over Poems and Ballads First Series:

It is really very odd that people (friendly or unfriendly) will not let one be an artist, but must needs make one out a parson or a pimp. I suppose it is part of the fetid and fecund spawn of 'the Galilean serpent.' In the eyes of 'that cursed, crawling, Christian crew' one must be either St. Francis of Assisi or the Marquis de Sade. (193)

Swinburne rejects such binary notions.

Christianity, and in particular Roman Catholicism, he maintains, is pervaded by sexuality. For all its oppressive denial of the flesh, the Christian version of asceticism and eroticism are opposite sides of the same coin.

In an 1876 letter to Edmund Gosse, Swinburne fulminated against Cardinal Newman's "finding 'amorousness' and 'religion' 'such irreconcilable elements'" and so condemning the poetry of Hopkins's friend and fellow-poet Coventry Patmore. In fact, says Swinburne,

the church is the "nursing mother . . . of holy priapism and virginal nymphomania" (116-17). Further, Christian asceticism and sexual sado-masochism are also two sides of the same coin:

We took you [Sade] for a sort of burlesque Prometheus; you are only a very serious Simeon Stylites — in an inverted posture. You worship the phallus as those first ascetics worshipped the cross; you seek your heaven by the same road as they sought theirs. (1: 57)

More recently, John Maynard has explored the conjunction between the discourses of religion and sexuality which Swinburne discerned.¹ In his opening chapter Maynard observes, as indeed Swinburne implied, that both religion and sexuality are cultural constructs. By the nineteenth century their discursive fields were a rich mixture which recognized the many alternatives which had made up Christianity's discussions of sexuality through the centuries.

Polytheistic religions postulate a separate divine world like that of Calydon, in which deities mimic human sexual concerns, with the inference that sex is a creating force or a central source of motivation for the universe. However, as Swinburne again caught, sexuality is also made a central term in anti-

¹ I am indebted to Professor Maynard for his support, and for permitting me to read sections of his Victorian Discourses on Sexuality and Religion in manuscript.

worldly religions, which are created in relation to the carnal world they seem to disavow. Ascetic religions can be variously configured, Maynard observes, some focussing on denial, others redirecting some repressed sexual energies toward the spiritual, and others involving a reversal and deliberate violation of sexual codes. All are versions of religions that directly join sexual and religious celebration in the experiential universe, and to some extent they use sexual discourses to celebrate a removed divine world.

Certainly the divine world in Atalanta in Calydon is brought within reality through sexual imagery, for relationships with the gods are conceived primarily in sexual terms. Many of the heroes who hunt the Calydonian boar are semi-deities, the offspring of male gods and human mothers. Humans approach divinity with desire, like the nymph Tyro, who "Being mixed and made one through desire / With Enipeus," the river-god in whose form Poseidon seduced her, "lay by a god as a lover" (Poems 4: 277-78).

The coupling of religious and sexual discourse in Atalanta in Calydon is of course part of its Greek context, but it also marks the beginning of Swinburne's attack against Christianity's repressive denial of sexual expression which at the same time joins together the religious and the sexual. Veiled in Atalanta in Calydon, the attack is undertaken openly in Poems and

Ballads First Series. In his second volume, Swinburne expands the limits of the representation of sexual acts to include homosexuality, cunnilingus, sado-masochism, and incest, arguing that society considers such acts perversions only because the Christian categories of good and evil are themselves perverted. Using his perception that mankind itself has constructed the laws both of religion and sexuality, he attacks the man-made strictures which typify both.

In Poems and Ballads First Series, Venus is present in poems with both pagan and Christian settings, and her figure serves to make Swinburne's point. The service of Venus in pagan times is joyous, but with the advent of Christianity the moral judgments imposed by religious institutions destroy the simple pleasures of sexuality. The volume opens with paired poems setting up a contrast between the innocently erotic acceptance of physical beauty and sexuality, personified by Lucretia Borgia, and its perversion by a repressive Christianity which brings with it notions of Shame, Fear, and Lust (1: 1-2). Even now in the Christian era the transgressive Borgia, who still retains pagan attitudes toward sexuality, can overcome her lover's religiously-induced guilt — she "transfigureth / All sin and sorrow and death, / Making them fair as her own eyelids be" (3) — and he can celebrate her in poetry. But "A Ballad of Death," recalling "the good days when

God kept sight of us" (7) and viewed physical sexuality, which includes both gentleness and pain, without placing blame, mourns the death of beauty and innocence in a universe where poppies replace the seductive roses of Venus. The goddess appears wearing a garment which depicts the "soft shame" of brides (5) in a Christian universe, and even her own glorious nakedness can no longer be seen without shame.

Christian suppression of innocent sexuality, and its elevation of an ideal of virgin purity in its place, is represented as distorting sexuality throughout Poems and Ballads. The women who possess Venus's beauty are the great Swinburnian whores who transgress imposed sexual limits, like Lucretia Borgia who, at the same time that she exemplifies liberated sexuality, also typifies the perversions cultivated by Christianity, whose commentators have painted her black indeed. By implication, the poetry which celebrates such sexuality is condemned as well.

Swinburne's most extended treatment of Venus occurs in "Laus Veneris," his retelling of the medieval legend of Tannhäuser, which is positioned just after the opening pair of poems. As a young man Tannhäuser had pledged himself to Christianity in its ascetic and aggressive form: "I was of Christ's choosing, I God's knight" (18), he explains. His Christian world was one which valued the virginal male who could sing of

women's love "knowing nought thereof" (21), and who limited himself to the company of fellow males. However, there is an unacknowledged element of sexuality in the band of Christian knights. The latent homoeroticism and sado-masochism emerges in battle, as "beautiful mailed men" fight for the faith with "keen breaths like sighs," in a conflict in which "all the fighting face is grown a flame / For pleasure" (19) (Morgan, "Dramatic Monologues" 188).

One day while Tannhäuser is riding apart from his fellow knights, he catches sight of Venus naked, and, immediately captivated, he leaves the world of God's knighthood to live with the goddess in her horsel. Despite his loss of faith, there is a possibility of miraculous rescue. The Christian God had taken pity and "looked upon" the knight, and in response Tannhäuser "came forth / Like a man blind and naked in strange lands" (Poems 1: 23) to seek forgiveness from the Pope. But the Pope denied it to him, saying that only if his Papal staff of office burst into bloom could the knight be assured of God's forgiveness. Tannhäuser, despairing and driven by desire, returns to Venus without learning that the Pope's staff has in fact bloomed miraculously. The knight will spend the rest of his days burning in physical love:

Ah love, there is no better life than
 this;
 To have known love, how bitter a thing

it is,
 And afterward be cast out of God's
 sight;
 Yea, these that know not, shall they
 have such bliss

High up in barren heaven before his face
 As we twain in the heavy-hearted place,
 Remembering love and all the dead
 delight,
 And all that time was sweet with for a
 space?

For till the thunder in the trumpet be,
 Soul may divide from body, but not we
 One from another; I hold thee with my
 hand,
 I let mine eyes have all their will of
 thee,

I seal myself upon thee with my might,
 Abiding always out of all men's sight
 Until God loosen over sea and land
 The thunder of the trumpets of the
 night. (26)

The Christian's only hope for unity of body and spirit, which can be achieved only through unity with God himself, lies in an imagined future bliss in heaven before the face of God. Tannhäuser refuses to be satisfied with the possibility of heaven, where there are only barren memories of remembered love and dead delight. Instead, he pledges himself to the service of sexuality itself. He has moved from adherence to an ascetic religion which does not acknowledge its sexual content to an open celebration of sexuality as religion enough.

Venus, his "soul's body" (12), possesses Tannhäuser. She can quiet for the moment the yearning which characterizes the human condition, bringing together

flesh and the spirit, but the union is only a momentary one. Tannhäuser gazes at the goddess and is fired by desire, and again assuaged by momentary satiation, and again gazes at her and is fired by desire, "satiated with things insatiable" (16). Still, unlike Christ, who exists disembodied a spiritual realm, Venus allows an immediate, if ephemeral, unity with the divine object of desire.

Throughout Poems and Ballads Swinburne repeatedly links Christian religious practice to the pleasure and the pain of sexuality.² For example, the lover of Dolores, "Our Lady of Pain," exclaims "I could hurt thee — but pain would delight thee" (167). Tannhäuser's Venus brings with her the torments which inevitably accompany, and become part of, the pleasure of sex: "With nerve and bone she weaves and multiplies / Exceeding pleasure out of extreme pain," and the blood of her adherents "runs round the roots of time like rain" (15). Recalling the time in the past when Venus's "clear limbs enticed / All lips that now grow sad with kissing Christ, / Stained with blood fallen

² Morgan ("Dramatic Monologues") and Snodgrass explore the relationship between Swinburne's sado-masochism and his representations of Christianity. Swinburne considered cruelty to be a basic element in the sexuality of the gods: in "Anactoria" Sappho declares that the human suffering which the gods bring about "Feeds the mute melancholy lust of heaven" (Poems 1: 62). The issue of God's possible corporeality and sexuality has a long history: see Eilberg-Schwartz.

from the feet of God" (11), Tannhäuser recognizes that in the Christian era erotic pleasure and pain has been displaced upon the objects of religious worship. Desire which had once been directed innocently toward human objects is now directed toward divinity. Eros is very much a part of caritas, and sado-masochism is very much part of both in Christianity and paganism.

As a Christian, Tannhäuser had believed that Christ's Passion and Crucifixion assure that pain is redemptive, but the paired opening poems of Poems and Ballads, as well as others in the volume, view such religiously inspired self-cruelty as a corruption of man's nature. And Tannhäuser now agrees. But while has lost his soul through his deconversion, his conversion to sexuality as divine in itself can never be a fully joyous one. His passion is fundamentally and inescapably painful, for Tannhäuser is hopelessly trapped in an ideology which has perverted natural sexuality, first through the repressive insistence upon the separateness of body from soul, and then through assigning distorted categories of good and evil to human sexual activity (Baird 65).

Swinburne described the "kernel" of "Laus Veneris" as "the immortal agony of a man . . . desirous of penitential pain, and damned to joyless pleasure" (Swinburne Replies 26). The suffering of the knight

is made acute because he has not lost his Christian faith:

The tragic touch of the story is this: that the knight who has renounced Christ believes in him; the lover who has embraced Venus disbelieves in her. Vainly and in despair would he make the best of that which is the worst — vainly remonstrate with God, and argue on the side he would fain desert. (26)

Tannhäuser breaks the vows which regulated his earlier life. The result is a guilt-ridden desire which can never be fully satisfied. The delights of the painful flesh have cost Tannhäuser his soul: the fires of sexual passion become the fires of hell. Swinburne comments, slyly, that the pain of Tannhäuser's desire raises Venus to a level with the Christian God:

The queen of evil, the lady of lust, will endure no rival but God; and when the vicar of God rejects him, to her only can he return to abide the day of his judgment in weariness and sorrow and fear. (27)

Still, there is something to be won. While erotic desire prompts recognition of a critical absence in mankind's life, and is the mark of his divided self, desire itself can confer some degree of divinity upon mankind, not only by bringing about the momentary sense of unity experienced in sexuality, but, more importantly, as "the means to divine immediacy" (Snodgrass 68). Through transgressing the false notions of right and wrong invented by Christianity, mankind realizes its own godlike powers and becomes present to itself.

Humanity both constructs the false laws under which it suffers, and has the potential for overcoming them. The point, only touched upon in Poems and Ballads First Series, is central to the two volumes of Songs which Swinburne would write in the following decade.

As he had in his attack against the Christian God in Atalanta, Swinburne uses repeated tropes of vision and blindness to represent the effects of Christian repressiveness upon sexuality in "Laus Veneris." Tannhäuser's passionate, despairing, celebratory enslavement to Venus resulted from seeing her. In giving in to the physical desire which the beauty of her body produced he finds himself removed from the sight of men and out of God's sight as well, in the underground Horsel. His reward for his devotion is to let his eyes have his will of her. Indeed, what Hopkins called "looking" at human beauty frequently initiates desire in Poems and Ballads. Tannhäuser's visual attraction to Venus is repeated through the stories of figures who embody a similar beauty, like Persephone, as Demeter describes her just before she is seen and raped by Hades (Poems 1: 210), and again in "The Masque of Queen Bersabe," a retelling of the Old Testament story of King David's voyeuristic introduction to Bathsheba. The king catches sight of Bersabe after her bath "looking on her glass," and the "sweet sight" leaves him blind with desire and leads him to

him to "bitter sin" (236). But Swinburne refuses to moralize about the forbidden vision of human beauty and the sexual desire it leads to, any more than the original Old Testament story did.

It is a critical commonplace that Swinburne's style privileges sound over sight, and Hopkins would complain that there is "no picture" in Swinburne's later poetry (Bridges 202). Hopkins's remark is disingenuous, however, for the early poetry contains sharp visual imagery and vignettes, including those through which Swinburne represents the bodies of Venus and her avatars. Still, such scenes tend to be static and distanced, as if Swinburne were representing in language a pre-existent visual representation of objects and human figures, in accordance with Pre-Raphaelite practice. This characteristic stance, as well as the coexisting Symbolistic emphasis in other passages on rendering the effect of objects of vision upon the viewer, may derive in part from a psycho-sexual predisposition which discouraged an interest in the looking which had so bedeviled Hopkins at Oxford. Edmund Gosse observed Swinburne's lack of visual interest in human beauty and linked it to a weakness of "the generative instinct":

I believe that the generative instinct was very feebly developed in Swinburne. When I walked about London with him by day and night, I was struck with the fact that he never seemed to observe the faces or figures of people whom we met, or to receive from them any of those electric shocks which are

the torment and ecstasy of youth. . . . He occasionally remarked on the form of a woman, or her colouring, but always as we would speak of a work of art, and generally with reference to some painter. (Gosse 243)

Gosse leaves unspoken the equal probability that Swinburne "occasionally remarked on the form" of a boy or man, but in any case the result would have been the same: an aesthetically distanced conception of the human body, for example like that of "Hermaphroditus" where the features of figure have already become objectified "things" (Poems 1: 79) rendered in stone. The irony of the relative positions of the devout, sexually tortured Hopkins and Swinburne, who in the 60s and 70s dedicated himself to embodying and representing in his poetry transgressive sexual behavior, is inescapable: Hopkins, striving for purity but often overcome by the strength of his desire to look at human beauty and the electric shock which inevitably followed; Swinburne, revelling in the literary perversities of de Sade and his own imagination, but relatively untouched by such visual desire. The result in Swinburne's poetry is a lowering of the visual temperature. For the most part the shock of the verses comes, not from lovingly detailed representations of the human body, but from the verbal juxtapositions of pagan and Christian imagery to express attitudes which invariably favor the former, and from considerations of sexuality which had

remained largely beyond the bounds of representation within Victorian poetic discourse.

However it is represented in the poetic universe of Poems and Ballads First Series, human sexuality is one of the "divine contraries" of life. It is at once a curse and a joyous release, an arid longing, and a deceptive chimera, as well as a means to a divine immediacy which heals briefly the aching split between flesh and spirit. In all its aspects, however, sexuality is seen as natural and un sinful. Tannhäuser, who had grown up in a world which worships the Holy Virgin and her virginal Son, disaffiliated himself from the virginal male bonds of "Christ's company." For all its agonies, his devotion to Venus is represented as a preferable bondage. The only unnatural human action is the denial of sexuality.

In Atalanta in Calydon, the denial of sexuality by the human characters proves to be more destructive than profane love. Prince Meleager disaffiliates himself from the masculine company of boar hunters through his love for the holy virgin, Atalanta, who as a follower of the virgin goddess Artemis is pledged to the "cold and sacred life" of "armed and iron maidenhood" (Poems 4: 282). However, Atalanta is "unwomanlike" (265); she is "Virgin, not like the natural flower of things / That grows and bears and brings forth fruit and dies" (270). Atalanta, "Far off from flowers or

any bed of man" (282), is not part of the natural fruitfulness of nature, and her ascetic virginity is sterile. In loving her, and so exalting soul over body, Meleager denies the world of generation, and his actions bring about the disastrous sexual jealousies which destroy him (Mathews 39-40; Riede 95-97). As he dies, Meleager affirms that his love for "Atalanta, the pure among women" (Poems 4: 322) is also entirely pure: "My delight, my desire, / Is more chaste than the rain, / More pure than the dewfall, more holy than stars are that live without stain" (325). Yet for all its supposed purity, Meleager's love contains strong elements of sexual desire which he has not acknowledged. As his body dissolves after his mother casts the brand which controls his life into the fire, his body is destroyed in a fiery disincarnation, the pain of which is described in the language of sexual desire: "For the flesh of my body is molten, the limbs of it molten as lead" (321). Denial of sexuality brings the pains of hell as well.

Virginity, of course, holds an honored place in ascetic religions. The key figure in its embrace by Christianity is the virgin-martyr, enshrined through the centuries in the saint's tales, and frequently enshrined among the saints of the Catholic Church. In the early church its virgins were represented as having been sacrificed because of their devotion to a forbid-

den religion, but in time they came to represent, in its most extreme form, the struggle against concupiscence which has long preoccupied the Church. Rather than solely defending Christianity, the later martyrs defended their own virginity as well. In withstanding pornographically detailed tortures of obscene severity the martyrs displayed the power of chastity over evil, for virginity conferred the strength necessary to resist, as it had in the case of Christ (Warner 69). And the effect of their actions could be powerful: as Hopkins put it, "The world was saved by virgins" (Poetical 52, line 30; emphasis in original).³

In telling Tannhäuser's story, Swinburne had discounted virginity, representing eroticism as both implicated in, and preferable to, Christianity. His further consideration of religious virginity, "St. Dorothy," is positioned toward the end of Poems and Ballads, after the main themes of the volume have been developed. Swinburne again links vision, sexuality, and religion, and in "St. Dorothy" conjoins them more specifically to religious conversion. The poem reverses the events of "Laus Veneris." Tannhäuser did not wait to see proof of God's forgiveness before returning to

³ For discussions of the importance of virginity and virgin desire in Roman Catholic thought, see Gardella 119-24; Maynard, Victorian Discourses; Warner 68-78, 299-302.

an erotic eternity with Venus. Indeed, he denied the possibility that the Pope's staff would blossom miraculously. The pagan Theophilus, on the contrary, converts to Christianity because of a visible miracle, and chooses to follow the virgin saint to death as a Christian martyr in the hope of everlasting life in the Christian heaven.

According to her legend, the virgin Dorothea was called before the governor of Cappadocia to affirm her pagan faith. Defiantly, Dorothea proclaimed her Christianity and was condemned to death. On her way to torture and execution she was stopped by a young lawyer, Theophilus, who asked her mockingly to send him fruits and flowers from the heavenly garden which she had described in her speech to the governor, and after Dorothea's death an angel appeared carrying a basket of apples and roses. Theophilus's conversion and martyrdom followed, and both the virgin and the lawyer became Catholic saints (Jameson 2: 568-71; Butler's 1: 261-62).

In Swinburne's version, Theophilus becomes a soldier who has fallen in love with Dorothea. Following the lead of his friend Edward Burne-Jones, who was working on the theme at the same time, Swinburne added a role for Venus to the saint's tale: it is Dorothea's refusal to worship the goddess of love and passion

which leads to her death.⁴ William Michael Rossetti used "St. Dorothy" in an effort to persuade the publisher Alexander Macmillan that Poems and Ballads was respectable enough to publish, but the presence of the goddess ruined his argument: "I mentioned the St. Dorothy as an unobjectionable poem," Rossetti wrote Swinburne, "but Mac had some funky reminiscences of the allusions to Venus, so really it seemed a bad lookout" (Letters 1: 108).

Like Tannhäuser, Hades, and King David in "The Masque of Queen Bersabe" (which directly precedes "St. Dorothy"), Theophilus falls in love at first sight:

He saw a little lattice open down
And after it a press of maidens' heads
That sat upon their cold small quiet
beds
Talking[.] (Poems 1: 238)

⁴ John Christian notes that "Burne-Jones' choice of subject is so Swinburnian that poem and picture were clearly twin expressions of shared ideas: this was, after all, the moment when the two men were particularly close . . . a fact reflected in the dedication of Poems and Ballads to Burne-Jones" (Pre-Raphaelites 230). Burne-Jones' watercolor Theophilus and the Angel (orig. St. Dorothy) (1863-67) was exhibited at the Old Water-Colour Society in 1867 (Bell 37). The watercolor, which was in the collection of A. E. Street (whom Hopkins knew), is reproduced in Cartwright (10) and described by de Lisle (77-79). It was probably destroyed by enemy action in Bath in 1942; a second version "of inferior quality" exists at Charterhouse School (John Christian, letter to author, 3 December 1985). Treatment of the saint alone by Burne-Jones include numerous cartoons for stained glass (Sewter 2: 290-91; 297).

Looking into their small room, Theophilus sees a group of virgins sitting on their chaste beds. The play on "maidenhead" sets up an erotic reading of the poem, however, and Theophilus falls immediately into a daydream, imagining that he

will take this maid to wife.
And herewith fell to fancies of her life
And soft half-thoughts that ended
suddenly.
This is man's guise to please himself,
when he
Shall not see one thing of his pleasant
things . . .
Come to be eased of the least pain[.]
(238)

Theophilus is attracted by Dorothy's beauty, and his "looking," to use Hopkins's terminology, leads to the "soft half-thoughts" of eroticized fantasizing. But Dorothy, like Tannhäuser, is sworn to virginity. "Christ's maid," she refuses to appear naked on "the Venus stair" (242) as the goddess's rites require. Fired with desire, Theophilus prays to Venus in her "church," but Dorothy still refuses to worship the goddess, and, when Theophilus complains angrily, the sadistic Emperor Gabalus calls her before him. The future saint again affirms her Christian faith, however, describing the kind creator-God whom she adores as governor of all of the natural world, and "in his flesh full chaste" (245).

Gabalus has Dorothy tortured, "her soft blood
. . . shed upon her feet / And all her body's colour

bruised and faint" (247), and she is led to her execution. On the way a remorseful Theophilus stops her and speaks despairingly of the blankness and coldness of death, and Dorothy comforts him with a vision of a green heaven of sun, boughs, and flowers presided over by a great king, Death, whose face "Is as God's face" and through whose power "Are all souls drawn toward him with great love" (248). Theophilus, doubtful, asks Dorothy to send him visual proof, a leaf from the green world of death: "could one see it, this were marvelous" (249). After Dorothy's cruel beheading, a beautiful "child" appears carrying a basket:

It was filled up with heavy white and
red;
Great roses stained still where the
first rose bled,
Burning at heart for shame their heart
withholds:
And the sad colour of strong marigolds
That have the sun to kiss their lips for
love;
The flower that Venus' hair is woven of,
The colour of fair apples in the sun,
Late peaches gathered when the heat was
done
And the slain air got breath; and after
these
The fair faint-headed poppies drunk with
ease,
And heaviness of hollow lilies red. (250)

Like many virgin-martyrs, St. Dorothy is a visionary. She is able to see beyond the limits of the physical world, and to put into words her visions of divine presence, as she did in her speech before Gabalus and again with Theophilus. Further, St.

Dorothy has turned her vision of heaven into perceptible material reality, by sending flowers and fruit as tokens from heaven. At the sight of the flowers, Theophilus is converted and follows Dorothy into martyrdom.

Again, as in "Laus Veneris," Swinburne emphasizes the importance of vision in human life. In "St. Dorothy," sexual arousal, martyrdom, and religious dedication are all brought about through vision. Theophilus falls in love with Dorothy at first sight. Dorothy's insistence on remaining a virginal "Christ's maid" led to her martyrdom, but desire for the holy virgin led to the miracle of Theophilus's conversion, which was also brought about through vision. Dorothea had a vision of heaven; Theophilus saw proof of her vision, and was converted.

And, again as in "Laus Veneris," Swinburne suggests an equation between eros and the Christian caritas. In "St. Dorothy" he represents an eroticized version of heaven suspiciously like the horsel of "Laus Veneris." In "Dolores" Swinburne opposes "the lilies and languors of virtue" to "the raptures and roses of vice" (156). But in Dorothy's heaven, according to the narrator's description of the miraculous basket, lilies and roses mingle with the marigolds that "Venus' hair is woven of." The fruits the child carries are "heavy" and "burning," marked by "shame," "drunk with ease."

The roses are "stained" like the "first rose" — not with Christ's blood, as the Christian myth would have it, but with that of Venus in pursuit of Adonis, for once again Swinburne refers to the myth he had attempted to revive in "Dolores" (Bump, "Hopkins' Imagery" 114, note 29).

"St. Dorothy" typifies Swinburne's attack on Christianity's repressions, and upon its hypocritical insistence on the purity of its beliefs. As he did in "Laus Veneris," Swinburne confounds the blood of sado-masochistic love with the blood of the Christian beloved, Christ. A version of transubstantiation is practiced at the altar of Venus's "church," with her son Cupid taking the place of the Christian God of love: "For this soft wine that did such grace and good / Was new trans-shaped and mixed with Love's own blood" (240). The church of the goddess, in this mock-medieval Victorian rendering, has been strongly influenced by the Tractarian movement — the narrator dwells on its High Church furnishings — and it features a votive light which remains "burning all night red as hot brows of shame" (Poems 1: 241). But while shame is part of the Christian view of sexuality, it is not a part of Swinburne's. "St. Dorothy" extends his insistence on the innocence of sexuality into the afterlife, where Dorothy and Theophilus, are literally united in the Venereal heaven: "in his face his lady's

face is sweet, / And through his lips her kissing lips are gone" (251). The poem embodies Swinburne's approval of the Blakean concept of the holiness of the flesh, for Blake, says Swinburne,

far from inferring . . . that the soul must expire with the body, would have maintained that the essence of the body must survive with the essence of the soul: accepting thus, . . . in its most absolute and profound sense, the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Flesh. (qtd. in Baird 60)

"St. Dorothy" represents Swinburne's belief that ascetic Christianity and eroticism have points in common, and that the conjunction needs to be uncovered. But, for all the Pauline distaste for human sexuality which is apparently evident in the Church's elevation of virginity over sexual love, one line of Christian thought itself finds place for a curiously erotic notion of virginity. That tradition, like the inhabitants of Calydon, conceives of the relationship between God and mankind in sexual terms. However, there is a critical difference of time and place between the Christian and the pagan points of view. The Greek world lived, and loved, in the earthly present. Christian tradition gives a positive reading to virginity as a focus of life's forces in preparation for fulfillment in the life to come with God in heaven.

At the final judgment, according to the Christian myth, the physical bodies of the faithful are raised to heaven. However, although the desire is for full union

with God, the nature of that union remains unknown until death's revelation. In one major tradition, the reward for the good Christian after death is an eternity of looking, in the flesh, at the fully present divine body. Another strand of thought asserts that the union with God is more physical than visual.⁵ In either case, the essential Christian metaphor for the unity after death is marriage with the bridegroom Christ, originally conceived as descriptive of the relationship between the Church and its God, but also taken in individual sexual terms by hundreds of years of Catholic theological speculation (Warner 121-33).

The ultimate object of Christian desire is the absent, beloved God, who is nowhere fully present in the fallen world. Desire for union with the godhead is experienced most acutely by the religious virgin, although in God's absence the virgin remains abstinent. For desire is not repressed: it is heightened through anticipation and deferral to the greatest possible pitch of passion. Far from being a denial of passionate sexuality, religious virginity accepts its unmediated force, but defers relief, in the faith that

⁵ Wheeler (119-74) finds that heaven is a site of ideological controversy for Victorians. For those taking what he calls an anthropocentric view, it is conceived of as a place of human fulfillment (including some degree of sexual fulfillment); for theocentric believers, it is a place of praise.

its ecstatic aspects give a foretaste of joys to be experienced fully in heaven. Eros and caritas go hand in hand, and so does masochism. In the mystic literature, sexual feeling is spiritualized into religious ecstasy, often with accompanying visions, as in the case of St. Teresa of Avila, for example. The result of the deferred sexuality of religious virginity is an intensification of the pain of desire, which is St. Teresa's case was "so severe that it made me utter several moans" (qtd. in Warner 300). As Tannhäuser perceived, as the focus of erotic desire is shifted from human to divine, the pain which is its inescapable component transferred to the worship of Christ.

Like all holy virgins, Swinburne's St. Dorothy focussed her life energy upon the hope of the life to come. But as part of his insistence upon the materiality of Catholicism, Swinburne replaces a mystical marriage with the godhead with a sexual union with a fellow human being, as Dorothy becomes the bride of Theophilus, not the bride of Christ. In Swinburne's universe, all sexual roads lead to the human body, either in or outside of time. Both the virgin Dorothy, through deferral of sexual desire, and the soldier Theophilus, through attempted transgressive sexuality, have achieved the unity of flesh and spirit in the afterlife.

Like Tannhäuser, who tells his own story, the narrator of "St. Dorothy" is a poet-priest, but unlike Tannhäuser he has no insight into the tale he tells. This poet-priest seems to accept the details of Dorothy's legend. But Anthony Harrison has pointed out that the appeal which the saint's life and her religion holds for him

is predominantly erotic and aesthetic, despite her ostensibly ascetic life The narrator conceives of his rendering of the myth as a matter of religious devotion, while it is in fact a fantasy which provides aesthetic gratifications for fundamentally erotic impulses. Ultimately for the narrator and for St. Dorothy as he portrays her, asceticism and renunciation allow for the suspension and savoring of sensation. ("Medievalism" 148-49)

The narrator's position reflects the unacknowledged closeness of erotic and religious impulses, which has resonance for poetry as well. As Harrison observes further, "Swinburne also suggests that medieval poets resolved through their art the eternal feud between poet and priest" by adopting a religion of beauty which is

simply a modern transmutation, or rather, an admission without hypocrisy, of the system of values that dominated many medieval ascetics. Renunciation and indulgence, asceticism and aestheticism are to be seen as contrary expression of the same fundamental human impulse. (150)

Most of the Poems and Ballads express heretical attitudes, sometimes subtly, sometimes from a posture of outspoken revolt against received opinion. In "St.

Dorothy," which is a covert attack against a religion which elevates the condition of virginity over the practice of active sexuality, the collusion of sexuality and religion are examined, quietly, through the medium of the naive narrator, whose aesthetic asceticism itself represents that collusion. The aestheticist position, far from being removed from concerns outside the realm of art, carries with it a heavy ideological load.

Up to the time of his decision to enter the Society of Jesus, Hopkins had limited his talent to poems of delicate, if sometimes desperate, self-exploration. He turned his back on the aestheticist position, although there is some indication that he remained drawn to it later in his poetic career (Mariani, "Andromeda" 121). In Hopkins's "St. Dorothea," a larger purpose for poetry is hinted at, as the future priest-poet also touches upon — delicately, obliquely, tentatively — issues of sexuality, religion, and poetic style.

Two years after the publication of Poems and Ballads First Series, and a few weeks before he entered the Jesuit Novitiate at Roehampton Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote to his friend Bridges:

I cannot send my Summa for it is burnt with my other verses: I saw they w[oul]d interfere with my state and vocation. I kept however corrected copies of some things which you

have and will send them that what you have got you may have in its last edition.

Hopkins then added a postscript:

I hope you will master the peculiar beat I have introduced into St. Dorothea. The development is mine but the beat is in Shakespeare — e.g.

Why should this desert be? — and
Thou for whom Jove would swear — where the rest of the lines are eight-syllabled or seven-syllabled. (Bridges 24)

The poem which Hopkins enclosed was "St. Dorothea (Lines for a picture)" (Poetical 43-44). Two months before the letter to Bridges, on 5 May 1868, Hopkins had "resolved to be a religious," and indeed the resolution was followed by the "slaughter of the innocents" (Journals 165), the destruction of his Oxford poems. The revised version of the poem on St. Dorothea, then, was not like the "other verses" which presented a threat to Hopkins's "state and vocation."

The poem which he sent to Bridges was a revision of "For A Picture of Saint Dorothea" (Poetical 56), which had been entered into his notebook in December 1864, a few months after he had recorded "She schools the flighty pupils" and the first fragments of "Floris in Italy," and a few months before the group of poems which signalled the onset of the Oxford crisis, "Where art thou friend," "Confirmed beauty," "The Alchemist in the City," "Myself Unholy," and "See how spring with disabling cold." A third version with slight modifications, "Lines for a picture of St. Dorothea" (58-59)

followed in 1870-71. Hopkins would later say that, along with "The Habit of Perfection," the St. Dorothea poems were the only ones from the Oxford years which he did not disavow (Bridges 198).

Hopkins's versions of the St. Dorothea legend are unique: the first was written by Hopkins the Anglican, and the revision was made by Hopkins the Roman Catholic. That revision is the single work which can be positively identified as having been written between the "slaughter of the innocents" in May 1868, and Christmas 1870, when Hopkins wrote the Latin "Ad Matrem Virginem" for a Stonyhurst festival (Poetical 103-104; 300-303). Not only did his work on the legend of St. Dorothea escape destruction: Hopkins revised it just three weeks before entering the Society of Jesus, very soon after destroying his other poetry.

Hopkins's treatments of St. Dorothea assume that the reader knows her legend. The early version consists of four six-line stanzas in conventional tetrameter, in which the speaker, who is unidentified but is clearly either Dorothea herself or an angel messenger, does no more than describe the contents of the miraculous basket of fruit and flowers. In the 1868 revision Hopkins doubles the poem's length and dramatizes the discussion, identifying the speakers as "The Protonotary Theophilus," "A Catechumen" and "The Angel," who speaks the opening lines:

I bear a basket lined with grass.
 I am so light and fair
 Men must start to see me pass
 And the basket I bear[.] (Poetical 57,
 lines 1-4)

The lines represent Hopkins's first, halting experimentation with sprung rhythm, and the "beat" is indeed indebted to the Shakespearian rhythm which he cited to Bridges. However, despite Hopkins's reference to Shakespeare, Elisabeth Schneider has demonstrated conclusively that it is Swinburne's prosodic practice which is of major importance in the development of the new rhythm (48-58).⁶ Not coincidentally, Swinburne had published his own "St. Dorothy" two years earlier. Although the tone and the style of Hopkins's "St. Dorothea (Lines for a Picture)" is far indeed from Swinburne's sly deflation, "St. Dorothy" has left a faint trace on "St. Dorothea."

⁶ As Schneider writes, "The most striking and characteristic feature of sprung rhythm, and the basis for its name, is its provision for the juxtaposing of stressed syllables anywhere in the line and as often as is wanted, without loss of force or length in these syllables" (51; emphasis in original). The lines from Shakespeare which Hopkins cited indeed use "four stresses in a six-syllable line, thereby packing stresses next to one another without reversing feet" (Mariani, Commentary 15, note 15). Schneider's point is that "If the new measure was in any sense, as I believe it was, an evolution from current versification, and not either an altogether novel invention or an Anglo-Saxon revival, then [the] writing of Swinburne is an important link" in the development of sprung rhythm (51). Indeed, "Swinburne's influence, coming from the contemporary world of metrical experiment, is . . . one of the mainsprings . . . and may well have provided the first incitement to experiment" (57).

As Hopkins's version continues, the angel, Theophilus, and the Catechumen discuss the nature of the fruit and flowers in the angel's basket:

[Angel] See my lilies: lilies none,
None in Caesar's gardens blow —
Quinces, look, when not one
Is set in any orchard, no;
Not set because their buds not spring;
Spring not, 'cause world is wintering.

[Theophilus] But they came from the
south,
Where winter's out and all forgot.

[Angel] The bell-drops in my mallow's
mouth
How are they quenched not? —
These drops in starry shire they drew:
Which are they? Stars or dew?

[Catechumen] That a quince we pore upon?
O no, it is the sizing moon.
Now her mallow-row is gone
In floats of evening sky. — So soon?
Sphered so fast, sweet soul? — We see
Nor fruit nor flowers nor Dorothy.
(Poetical 57, lines 7-24)

"St. Dorothea" continues the insistent exploration of the nature and limitation of human vision which characterizes Hopkins's Oxford poems. Theophilus, the doubter, argues that the flowers and fruits which appear unnaturally in the winter season have been brought from the warm south, but the Angel points out that there are still drops of dew on the mallow which could not have lasted during a long voyage. However, the nature of heavenly dew is problematic, for it may in fact be stars that Theophilus is looking at. The Catechumen confirms the indeterminacy which the Angel

points out: the dewdrops may be stars; the quince may be the waxing moon; the mallows may be banks of clouds. Then both Dorothea and the fruit and flowers disappear from sight, perhaps set among heaven's spheres, although this too is impossible to determine.

The Catechumen, who is by definition under instruction in the rudiments of Christianity, is receiving a lesson in how to look at the natural world with the eyes of faith. It is impossible to determine whether the fruits and flowers are the natural earthly forms which they appear to be, or whether they are unearthly, heavenly bodies. In the face of such uncertainties of perception, the question of how to identify what is being seen is a matter of faith. To a Christian believer, all of nature is in some way miraculous, indeed heaven-sent. Still, there is the possibility of a greater miracle — the appearance of fruit and flowers out of season.

Hopkins added four new stanzas to the poem in the 1868 revision. In the first of these, Theophilus signals his conversion by affirming that the appearance of the basket is "blessed":

How to name it, blessed it,
 Suiting its grace by him and her?
 Dorothea — or was your writ
 Served by sweet seconder? (57, lines 25-28;
 emphasis in original)

Theophilus asks how to identify the agent of the miracle. The single all-important certainty for him is that a miracle has in fact occurred:

You waned into the world of light,
 Yet made your market here as well:
 My eyes hold yet the rinds and bright
 Remainder of a miracle. (58, lines
 31-34)

Like the moon waning into daylight, Dorothea's figure can be seen only dimly. But the eye still holds the "rind" shape and the glow of the moon in its nighttime element, as a remainder, and reminder, of the miracle.

The visual proof leads to the conversion of Theophilus, who is convinced by the evidence of his eyes of the sanctity of the saint, the possibility of miracles, and the existence of the Christian heaven. What is seen leads to faith, and Theophilus's conversion affirms that miracles happen. Spring's fecundity is present even in the dead of winter. Through the agency of miracle the blessings of a rebirth promised by the conversion to Christianity, exists at any time.

Hopkins has made minor but significant additions to his poem on St. Dorothea. The phrase "made your market" means "won affection," and it is often used when speaking of marriage (MacKenzie, Poetical 259). There is no mention of an earthly lover in the legend as it is traditionally told. Swinburne, however, had represented Theophilus as in love with Dorothea, and

had shown the union between the two in an eroticized heaven, parodying the Christian metaphor of Christ as the bridegroom of the soul in the process. In his new version Hopkins also adds a reference to marriage. Hopkins's Dorothea has made her "market" both on earth and in heaven. She has won the affection of Theophilus, "God-lover," for the Christian God; and as a virgin-martyr she has joined Christ, her bridegroom, immediately after her death. Unlike Swinburne's Theophilus, who is attracted by St. Dorothy's beauty, Hopkins's Theophilus sees, and is attracted to, Dorothea's miracle. Yet, obliquely, "St. Dorothea" raises the question of sexuality in the heavenly realm.

In the preceding stanza, Theophilus questioned the sexual nature of the figure which has brought the miraculous fruits. Is the figure Dorothea, or an angel? Is it male, female, or an androgynous "blessed it"?⁷ The language of Theophilus's question echoes faintly a line in another of the poems included in Poems and Ballads. In the second of the four sonnets which make up "Hermaphroditus," a meditation upon the

⁷ By the time of the 1868 revision, "St. Dorothea (Lines for a Picture)," Hopkins could have seen the androgynous angel in Burne-Jones's "Theophilus and the Angel," exhibited a year earlier. MacKenzie speculates that the original picture Hopkins had in mind in 1864 was one he himself had painted, or intended to paint ("Hopkins and St. Dorothea" 37-38).

famous statue in the Louvre, Swinburne engages the sexual indeterminacy of the statue:

Sex to sweet sex with lips and limbs
 is wed,
 Turning the fruitful feud of hers and
 his
 To the waste wedlock of a sterile kiss.
 (Poems 1: 79)

The "fruitful feud of hers and his" is quieted in the asexual androgyne, but the result is a sterile, non-generative "waste." The emphasized "him or her" in "St. Dorothea," on the contrary, occurs within the context of fecundity, for the figure described bears the evidence produced by a fecund virgin.

For the Christian believer, the assurance of a future life in the presence of God is an essential element of faith. Dorothea's miracle validates that belief. Dorothea is a virgin-martyr, now united in heaven with her God, and she has produced both a vision, and the fruits and flowers which prove the truth of the vision. Most important, like many other virgin-martyrs she has played a critical role in saving a human soul by prompting a conversion to the Roman Catholic Church. The erotic force which religious virginity channels and intensifies through deferral, until the promised unity with God after death, has made this possible. The fecundity of the religious virgin stands in strong contrast to the androgynous "waste" of "Hermaphroditus." The appearance of Hopkins's

indeterminate "him or her," or perhaps "it," far from being a sterile joining of "hers and his" like Swinburne's Hermaphroditus, is the "fruitful" response to Dorothea's miraculous virginal power.⁸

Hopkins wrote the first version of the St. Dorothea legend just before the poems which signalled the onset of his psycho-sexual and religious crisis. The revision appeared just after the time of crisis, when Hopkins had decided to give up all poetry, as putting too much of a strain upon the passions, and had resolved upon a life as a religious. The second "St. Dorothea" may nevertheless signal a continued effort at resolving the conflicts between poet and priest, but in a very different way from Swinburne's narrator in "St. Dorothy."

Hopkins, soon to be a novice and, like the Catechumen, to learn to see with the eyes of faith, had renounced poetry, even though he had turned his eyes away from human beauty and toward Christ. A further renunciation of the poetry of profane love takes place in the final stanzas added to "St. Dorothea" 1868, but there is a hint that writing poetry may still be possible within the priestly vocation. The lines, set

⁸ While they are contrasted here, Busst (39-50) has demonstrated an association between the concepts of hermaphroditism and asexual virginity, particularly in French literature in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

apart from the final speech of Theophilus, are spoken directly by the poet:

Ah myrtle-bend never sit,
 Sit no more these bookish brows!
 I want, I want, if I were fit,
 What the cold month allows —
 Nothing green or growing but
 A pale and perished palmtree-cut.

Dip in blood the palmtree-pen
 And wordy warrants are flawed through;
 And more shall wear this wand and then
 The warped world it will undo. —
 Proconsul, — call him near —
 I find another Christian here.
 (Poetical 58, lines 43-48)

Swinburne had added a major role for Venus in his "St. Dorothy." Hopkins's revision includes a more subtle reference. The "myrtle-bend" which the speaker disowns is a garland symbolic of the goddess of human love. He declares that he has given up any dedication to Venus, the symbol of human beauty and sexual desire, as Hopkins had in fact given up secular poetry, and the secular world.

If he proves himself to be "fit," deserving to continue to write poetry in the cold months of his ascetic priesthood, Hopkins will write only with a pen cut from the palm-tree which symbolizes victorious martyrs. His pale branch-pen appears to be dead, like the Pope's staff in the Tannhäuser legend, but if he writes about martyrs, miracles, and conversions Hopkins will make his poetry fruitful evidence of another sort of miracle. The flaws in the "wordy warrants" of the

verbose and heretical poet, Swinburne, will be exposed by a poet who writes of what he sees with the eyes of faith. Reversing the process which Swinburne had celebrated in "Laus Veneris," as Venus won Tannhäuser away from virginal service to Christ, Hopkins's poetry will win converts away from Venus, and toward Christ.

The slight poem on St. Dorothea signals a new possibility for a virgin priest-poet. Through the image of dipping his penile pen into the blood of martyrs, Hopkins considers the possibility of continuing his poetic vocation within the priestly one.⁹ For, like Swinburne's "St. Dorothy," which is the vehicle for a subtle expression of heresies, Hopkins's revised "St. Dorothea" attempts to fulfill a purpose beyond "mere structured and beautiful human statement" (Loomis 47). Hopkins's poem is itself a

marvelous vision which, like the original vision of St. Dorothea, soon ends, but leaves some luminous traces on the reader's mind. As such it must have suggested to Hopkins the possibility of a genuinely sacramental poetry, the utterance of words that bestow grace. If the purpose of Dorothea's 'parley' and her sacred 'writ' was to bring 'grace' to

⁹ Famously, Hopkins considered that "the artist's most essential quality, masterly execution" was "a male gift, and especially marks off men from women," and that Burne-Jones lacked it: he compared that artist's works to "wind-eggs," which "look just like live ones but never hatch" (Dixon 133). See Loomis, "Birth Pangs"; Munich 74-84. Sulloway, "'Women and Men,'" gives a useful review of Hopkins's misogyny. Perhaps over-optimistically, she detects an easing of patriarchal attitudes toward the end of his life.

Theophilus and convert him, Hopkins no doubt hoped that eventually his own speech and writing might confer grace on some of his readers, convert them, draw them closer to God, and thereby become truly sacramental.
(Bump, Hopkins 46)

"St. Dorothea (Lines for a Picture)" is Hopkins's first exploration of the possibility of a serviceable role for poetry within the vocation of the priesthood. Hopkins establishes conversion as the aim of poetry as well as its theme and, further, as a technique. The three poems which follow will convert Swinburne's "writs" to assist in the larger effort of conversion.

The Dorothea revision, while it points forward to the concern with virginity and the nature of heaven which informs The Deutschland, also concerns the nature of miracles, a matter which was a lively topic in theological and scientific circles in the 1860s and 1870s (Zaniello, Darwin 107-12). As at Oxford, Swinburne and Hopkins can be placed on opposite sides of ideological fault lines. The official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church was set by Vatican Council I, which met in Rome between December 1869 and September 1870. On the subject of miracles the Council declared:

If any one shall say that miracles are impossible, and therefore that all the accounts regarding them, even those contained in Holy Scripture, are to be dismissed as fabulous or mythical; or that miracles can never be known with certainty, and the divine origin of Christianity cannot be proved by them; let him be anathema. (qtd. in Zaniello 88)

The Council stressed the role of miracles as external proofs of revelation which show God's omnipotence and infinite knowledge. It "clearly implied that among the various forms of evidence of the reasonableness of faith miracles hold first place" ("Miracles" 891).

Swinburne, the neologist, dismissed the possibility of miracles scornfully. In an article on the playwright Philip Massinger, he identified the "weak point" of Massinger's 1622 version of Dorothea's legend, The Virgin Queen, as the portrayal of Theophilus's conversion, which is brought about through a "sentimental and rhetorical assumption or affectation of belief in the power of sentiment and rhetoric to work miracles impossible in nature" (Works 12: 256). In Massinger's play "the supernatural element of miraculous or transcendent emotion or influence is of course the inevitable law of action and passion," and in Swinburne's view this presented problems of dramatization:

When the element of supernatural religion or thaumaturgic theology is brought in to make part of the poetic structure or to quicken the dramatic movement, such monstrous miracles of conversion must be accepted as part of the stage business by the imagination of readers or spectators as frankly as they are accepted, under less reputable conditions, by the greasy and gibbering theologians of the gutter. (256-7)

Miracles, the penetration of the natural world by the divine, do not happen, and words alone, "rhetoric,"

cannot work a sudden change in human behavior which is inexplicable in the light of natural laws. Like the notion of a "personal" Christian God, which would demand "a violation of the laws and orders of nature," such "monstrous miracles of conversion" are absurd "human figments." They are to be considered only in the light of their artistic effect.

In contrast, the theme of the miraculous was a sympathetic one for Hopkins both as an Anglican and as a Roman Catholic, for the possibility of miracles was an article of Tractarian faith as well as of Roman Catholicism. John Henry Newman, writing before his own conversion in 1843, had affirmed that there is no presumption against their occurrence:

There are two providential systems in operation among us, the visible and the invisible, intersecting, as it were, each other and having a certain territory in common, and in many cases we do not know the exact boundaries of each, as again we do not know the minute details of those facts which are ascribed by their reporters to a miraculous agency. (Essay on Miracles lxxiv)

What is invisible can be made visible to the human eye through the agency of the miracle, as the supernatural crosses the boundaries of the natural world.

The Society of Jesus gave strong support to the pronouncements of the Vatican Council, including that on miracles. It would appear that at least some Jesuits looked upon certain natural occurrences as miraculously

reflecting God's attitudes toward events in the human sphere. For example, on 25 October 1870, a month after the surrender of Rome to the revolutionary forces of Garibaldi, Hopkins saw a display of northern lights and commented: "A little before 7 in the evening a wonderful Aurora, the same that was seen at Rome (shortly after its seizure by the Italian government) and taken as a sign of God's anger" (Journals 200-201).

Perhaps uncomfortably for critics in our own day, Hopkins indicated in his letters and his journals that he himself had received miraculous signs from heaven. In a letter to his mother written in 1877 he said that he took it as a "happy token" that his grandfather died on the day "our Lady's overruling aid" gave a victory at Lepanto:

I receive it without questioning as a mark that my prayers have been heard and that the queen of heaven has saved a Christian soul from enemies more terrible than a fleet of infidels. Do not make light of this, for it is perhaps the seventh time that I think I have had some token from heaven in connection with the death of people in whom I am interested. (Further 148)

For example, Hopkins noted that he had "received as I think a great mercy about [Digby] Dolben" in 1873 (Journals 236).

Visionary experiences occur, then, not only to saints, but also to believers who know how to interpret God's signs. They can also occur to other poets, as Hopkins indicates in a letter to Canon Dixon written in

1886 in praise of Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality":

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, whatever that really was. Plato is the most famous of these. . . . [H]uman 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. (Dixon 147-48; emphasis in original)

A great poet can transmit some sense of what he has seen, indefinable as the experience may have been ("whatever that really was"), and uncertain as the poet may be, "looking back." For when Wordsworth wrote his ode, Hopkins continues, "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." But, he adds, "commonsense forbid we should take on like these unstrung hysterical creatures," Wordsworth and "crazy" Blake.

Hopkins is talking about more than a strong aesthetic reaction to Wordsworth's poetry. He had written to his mother that he, too, had "seen something," and that the words of a poet who had also "seen something" moved him to tremble, with fear and delight. But, always discreet and restrained, Hopkins is unwilling to "take on" hysterically about either his beliefs or his experiences.

Swinburne had linked belief in a personal God with the "violation of the laws and orders of nature," and rejected such belief on that ground, among others. Hopkins would maintain that precisely such miraculous violations prove the existence of the deity, if they are seen and interpreted with the eyes of faith. Swinburne had the knowledge and the insight to perceive many things; from Hopkins's point of view, he inevitably arrived at the wrong conclusions, as evidence "St. Dorothy," because the interpretation of what is seen is a function of faith. Hopkins's St. Dorothea, on the other hand, was a visionary who sees with the eyes of faith. In his treatment of her legend Hopkins links a visionary experience with the perception of visual proof of divinity, achieved within the natural world through natural forms. He links it, further, with the conversion of an unbeliever. The theme, touched upon so lightly here, will become a central one in The Wreck of the Deutschland. The concept extends, further, to the conversion of Swinburne's texts from heresy to the service of the Roman Catholic Church.

And "St. Dorothea" also hints at another new role for the poet: to at least touch upon sexuality as a theme which parallels a religious one. In Swinburne's "Laus Veneris" the poet-priest Tannhäuser is faced with the conflict between sacred and profane love. He chooses to break the virginal bonds of "Christ's com-

pany" in order to spend an eternity of sexual desire and repletion with Venus. He is damned as a Christian, and awaits hell at the moment of the Last Judgment, but at the same time the force of his desire has been the means of uniting Tannhäuser with the erotic principle of divinity. In Swinburne's "St. Dorothy" the soldier Theophilus, who is not himself identified as a virgin, is led to a saving conversion through the force of his passions, and is awarded with an eternity of sexual bliss with Dorothy herself. In both poems, caritas and eros are seen as implicated in each other.

Unlike Tannhäuser, the priest-poet Hopkins, pledged to "Christ's company," will keep his pledge, always placing the priestly function above the poetic one, as he had when he destroyed his Oxford poems. At the same time, he will nevertheless try to find a way to continue to write poetry within the confines of the Jesuit order, in a way which will permit some intermingling of eros and caritas, as well as a recognition of the importance of virginal erotic desire as a means of insight into, and expression of the presence of, divinity.

But while Hopkins has begun, tentatively, to find new uses for poetry in "St. Dorothea," the discovery is an abortive one. And further recourse to the poetry of Swinburne was apparently not to be possible for some time. Father O. R. Vassall-Phillips, who knew Hopkins

as a priest at St. Aloysius, Oxford, wrote in his memoirs that "it used to be said of him that he expressed surprise at not being allowed to keep by him Swinburne's Poems and Ballads whilst he was in the novitiate at Manresa." Father Vassall-Phillips added, "He was a very lovable person and made great sacrifices to God of his natural tastes and inclinations" (Vassall-Phillips 81). If the story is true, as I strongly suspect that it is, it would suggest both that Hopkins intended to put Swinburne's poetry to use, and that his Jesuit superiors felt that the dangers involved outweighed the possible effect of Hopkins's own efforts. The priest-poet again fell silent. No more efforts in English are to follow for five years.

Chapter 6

Versions of Mary: "We have . . . been in their
ruinous reigns oppressed"

Swinburne found the figure of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, fertile ground for attacks against what he saw as repressive Christian beliefs and the hypocritical refusal to acknowledge their implicit eroticism. In the figure of the Virgin Mary the Church separated fertility from sexuality. Mary followed such great mother goddesses as Diane of Ephesus in her exercise of power over fertility (Warner 280), but, unlike the goddesses of earlier pantheons, she was never the goddess of sexuality. Because she was born without the taint of original sin, Mary is entirely free from the curse of carnal desire.

The Virgin was frequently positioned as the antidote to eroticism: as early as the eleventh century, Marbod of Rennes wrote that "After the Lord, thou art the hope of men whom the mind conscious of sin consumes — the mind which is foul through the contagion of Venus" (qtd. in Warner 236). As the untainted mother of the pure incarnate God, living without sexual desire, Mary is the greatest of the fertile virgins, and a preeminent example of the accom-

modating, mirroring interrelationship between ascetic religion and a religion of sexuality.

As part of his gleeful indictment of Christianity, Swinburne insisted upon treating the mysteries of divine sexuality literally. In "A Christmas Carol," one of the Poems and Ballads, for example, Joseph figures as a cuckold as strong doubt is cast upon the tale that the Holy Ghost is Christ's male parent. At other times, Swinburne used his vast knowledge of Christian liturgy to indict religion through what Margot Louis has called "demonic parody." In Poems and Ballads, the archetypal whore Dolores, "Notre-Dame des Sept Douleurs," is repeatedly addressed in inverted Marian language, for example in transmutations of the litany of Loreto: "O garment not golden but gilded, / O garden where all men may dwell, / O tower not of ivory, . . . / O mystical rose of the mire" (Poems 1: 154-55). By the time of Songs of Two Nations a few years later, however, Swinburne's attack was more mordant: "The Saviour of Society" ("O son of man, but what man who knows?") becomes incarnate through a mother "Whose misconception was immaculate, / And when her time was come she misconceived" (2: 308).

Frequently, Swinburne set the figure of the Virgin Mary against that of one or another of the pagan goddesses as a technique for proclaiming the superiority of the Greek civilization over the Christian world.

The pagan speaker in "Hymn to Proserpine" recalled the happier days in Rome before Christianity was proclaimed by Julian the Apostate by contrasting the beauty and fecundity of the goddess Venus with the newly ascendant Virgin Mary:

Yea, once we had sight of another: but
 now she is queen, say these.
 Not as thine, not as thine was our
 mother, a blossom of flowering
 seas,
 Clothed round with the world's desire as
 with raiment, and fair as the foam,
 And fleeter than kindled fire, and a
 goddess, and mother of Rome.
 For thine came pale and a maiden, a
 sister to sorrow, but ours,
 Her deep hair heavily laden with odour
 and colour of flowers,
 White rose of the rose-white water, a
 silver splendour, a flame,
 Bent down unto us that besought her, and
 earth grew sweet with her name.
 For thine came weeping, a slave among
 slaves, and rejected; but she
 Came flushed from the full-flushed wave,
 and imperial, and her foot on the
 sea. (1: 71-72)

The repressive sexual code of the worshipers of Christ, the "pale Galilean" (69), has destroyed the imperial, celebratory sexuality of the Greek moment, turning its fruitful naturalness to dull ash. Christ's sad, slave-like, immaculate mother now reigns as chief female deity. "Wilt thou yet take all, Galilean?," the speaker asks. Yes, he answers himself, for only poignant memories remain of "The laurel, the palms and the paeans, the breasts of the nymphs in the brake" (68).

Swinburne recreated that earlier fecund pagan world in Atalanta in Calydon. The play opens with the

Chief Huntsman's prayer to Artemis as "Maiden, and mistress of the months and stars" (4: 247), both a virgin and a moon goddess. The first Chorus, celebrating the coming of spring, follows:

When the hounds of spring are on
 winter's traces,
 The mother of months in meadow or
 plain
 Fills the shadows and windy places
 With lisp of leaves and ripple of
 rain;
 And the brown bright nightingale amorous
 Is half assuaged for Itylus,
 For the Thracian ships and the foreign
 faces,
 The tongueless vigil, and all the
 pain. (249)

Artemis, who as the goddess of the moon has control over the sublunary cycle, brings welcome spring. But spring does not arrive gently: the goddess's hounds search out winter to slay it. Nor does frost simply melt or flowers appear gently: "frost are slain and flowers begotten" (250). The springtime world which Artemis presides over is one of amoral natural energy (Brisman 584).

Further, spring is a season when "the oat is heard above the lyre, / And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes / The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root" (250). Pan's pipe has replaced Apollo's lyre, and the hoof of the half-animal satyr crushes the husk holding the seed. Such crushing is necessary for further growth in a world of unrelenting change, for here, as everywhere, Swinburne finds the inevitably mixed nature

of the universe, the "divine contraries" that control mankind's life.

But the brown, bright nightingale brings with it reminders of a darker reality of sexual rapacity. In the myth of Philomela, the Athenian virgin is raped by her brother-in-law Tereus, king of Thrace, who then cuts out her tongue to prevent her telling her sister. Philomela weaves the story into a tapestry which she sent to Procne, the wife of Tereus, who in revenge kills her son Itylus and feeds him to his father. Out of pity the gods turned Philomela into a nightingale and Procne into a swallow (Rose 262-63). The destructive force of eroticism is remembered and memorialized, then, as the beauty of the season is celebrated.

The entire landscape of Calydon is marked by the aggressive eroticism that the myth of Philomela has introduced into the Chorus:

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
 Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot
 kid,
 Follows with dancing and fills with
 delight
 The Maenad and the Bassarid;
 And soft as lips that laugh and hide
 The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
 And screen from seeing and leave in
 sight
 The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

 The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
 Over her eyebrows and hiding her
 eyes;
 The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
 Her bright breast shortening into
 sighs;
 The wild vine slips with the weight of

its leaves,
 But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
 To the limbs that glitter, the feet that
 scare
 The wolf that follows, the faun that
 flies. (Poems 4: 250)

There is no yearning or ascetic repression in this Greek spring. In the satyr-haunted landscape Pan and Bacchus are present noon and night as immanent deities. Sometimes fully visible, sometimes hidden as they pursue the maiden nymphs, the gods are screened and seen in the dense fecundity of the laughing spring world.¹

But these flitting figures alone do not satisfy the Chorus. They continue to seek Artemis, the presiding deity:

Where shall we find her, how shall we
 sing to her,
 Fold our hands round her knees, and
 cling?
 O that man's heart were as fire and
 could spring to her,
 Fire, or the strength of the streams that
 spring! (249)

The Chorus acknowledges that the goddess cannot be reached directly through the human heart, which cannot "spring" to her: nevertheless, the natural spring season will give evidence of her presence:

¹ There is an element of anxiety in Swinburne's seductive visual tease, perhaps reflecting the dialectic between scopophobia and scopophilia which Joseph finds typical of the male Victorian (203), and of which Hopkins is a major example. Swinburne's anxiety may also relate to the shifting perception of the natural world, under the onslaught of evolutionary ideas, from benign mother to demonic femme fatale (Adams).

For the stars and the winds are unto her
 As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
 For the risen stars and the fallen cling
 to her,
 And the southwest-wind and the west-
 wind sing. (249)

The Chorus had celebrated Artemis's immanence as the "mother of months" who fills the spring landscape with fructifying moisture, and as present, as well, in the less substantial wind and stars. However, in other aspects, Artemis is also out of nature and out of sight, "Now folded in the flowerless fields of heaven" (247). Again in the fifth Chorus the goddess is represented in a world that is "Out of all men's sight" (297) as the distant queen of "cold remote recesses / That nor alien eyes assail" (296). In one aspect, as an immanent deity, her "eyes fill the world" (248). In another aspect, as a transcendent deity, she is at best problematic, both "Hidden and shown in heaven" (248).

Artemis is also split in her sexuality. On the one hand, she is the life-force of spring, with power over human sexuality. On the other, as Diana, she is an inviolate virgin, existing in a state beyond sexual craving. Hidden and arid, immanent and fecund, Artemis rules powerfully and paradoxically, for "the re-emergence of the life-force in spring is paradoxically traceable to the principle of sex-denying chastity and mortal destructiveness" (Siegchrist 699).

Artemis's human subjects participate in the generative imperatives of the natural world, but the goddess

demands virginity from those who dedicate themselves to her. In either case, disaster for Calydon results. Because its citizens have neglected to worship at her shrine, Artemis sends the violent phallic boar to ravage the kingdom with the curse of sexuality. She then sends her follower, the virgin Atalanta, to help kill the boar, but that action causes further ravages, for Meleager's "unnatural" love destroys him. The goddess's dual nature, in which cold, distant virginity is opposed to lunar plenitude, holds out no hope for happiness. It mirrors the disunities of humanity, but with the important difference that the goddess is inviolate in her self-sufficiency, as human beings are not (Siegchrist 699, 706).

In its recognition of the complexities of human life, Swinburne's Atalanta was indeed "Greek," as Monckton Milnes had remarked (qtd. in Hyder 16). Pagan culture had accepted the totality of human nature, and made the best of it with the recognition of human finitude, of a nothingness beyond the sensuous world, and of the reality of the cruelty of sexuality. John Addington Symonds would later write of the Greek's "profound sympathy with nature in her large and perpetual reproductiveness, a mysterious sense of the sexuality which pulses in all members of the universe and reaches consciousness in man" (qtd. in Turner 114). Swinburne embraced the Greek view of reality

enthusiastically and made no attempt to rationalize its myths, as witness his treatment of the story of Philomela, but the sense of pervasive eroticism caused considerable unease in other circles. Max Müller for one explained away the unsavory aspects of Greek myth by attributing tales of perverse sexuality to the decay of language (110 - 11).

Hopkins, however, recognized mythology's erotic aspects, and made a moral judgment against its point of view:

[M]ythology is something else besides fairytale: it is religion, the historical part of religion. . . . Now we mostly pass heathenism by as a thing utterly departed, . . . but if for once we face it what are we to say of it? For myself literally words would fail me to express the loathing and horror with which I think of it and of man setting up the work of his own hands, of that hand within the mind the imagination, for God Almighty who made heaven and earth. Still he might set up beings perfect in their kind. But the Greek gods are rakes, and unnatural rakes. (Dixon 146)

Hopkins, facing it, saw that the religion of heathenism still retained power, and presented one of the many threats to morality in secular society. There was some recourse for a believing Christian, however, for the tales could be turned to Christian use, since

Greek mythology is very susceptible of fine treatment, allegorical treatment for instance, and so treated gives rise to the most beautiful results. No wonder: the moral evil is got rid of and pure art, morally neutral and artistically so rich, remains and can be even turned to moral uses. (147)

Allegorical treatment of Greek themes lay in Hopkins's future, however. He had first to serve an apprenticeship, which he began by turning to Swinburne's version of Greek myth.²

Swinburne had repeatedly represented the Virgin Mary negatively, as the antonym of ebullient paganism. In "Hymn to Proserpine" the comparison was between Mary and Venus, in "Dolores" between Mary and a whore, but on at least one occasion Swinburne linked the Virgin Mary with a fertile moon goddess. In "Dolores" Marian language is also used to address Cybele, who is often conflated with Artemis. Cybele is called "Our Lady, / A goddess new-born" who is "A mother, a mortal, a maiden, . . . / Most fruitful and virginal, holy, / A mother of gods" (*Poems* 1: 165). Swinburne was writing a parody, but, in fact, the Roman Catholic Church also linked the Virgin Mary and the moon: in association with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, Christ's mother is most often represented visually as standing upon a half-moon (Warner 266-67). Swinburne's Cybele/Artemis/Mary conflation, then, is in all

² Both Hopkins and Swinburne turned classical myth to moral uses. Each would later construct a mythopoesis, Hopkins within the Roman Catholic tradition, Swinburne by transforming classic elements. For Victorian approaches to myth see Bullen, Burstein, Kissane, Shaw (203-06), Turner. For Hopkins and myth see Cotter (*Inscape*, "Myth"), Fox ("Queen"), Mariani ("Andromeda"), Plotkin [passim]. For Swinburne and myth see Greenberg, Morgan ("Sun of Faith"), Riede.

probability a parody of a recently adopted Roman Catholic doctrine.

In 1854, after centuries of theological controversy, the Roman Catholic church proclaimed the doctrine of the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception. The new dogma set forth by Pope Pius IX in the Bull Ineffabilis Deus resolved a vexing question: if the original sin which all mankind shares can be erased only through Christ's redemptive incarnation, how could He have been born from the tainted womb of a woman who existed, of necessity, before His saving action occurred?

The Church declared finally that, alone among human beings, the Virgin Mary was born without original sin, for she was born without the necessity of the sexual act, "immaculately." The doctrine extended such asexual impregnation back a generation, since the male agency in the case of her Son Christ's birth was already pure spirit, the Holy Ghost. Such miracles of procreation permitted two sides of Roman Catholic belief, the one ascetic, the other life-affirming, to coexist. Mary is a mother, but she is immaculate, and lives without carnal desire (236-54).

Like the subject of miracles, the subject of the Virgin Mary prompted wide and discordant discussion. At mid-century, when the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception had been proclaimed, there was wide dis-

approval in England. Pius IX's decree had been a victory for the forces within the Church which were supporting ratification of the Pope's greater power, and they won the day in 1870, when the doctrine of Papal Infallibility was decreed by Vatican Council I. In contrast to the majority of British Catholics, the Jesuit order had supported the both the doctrines of Infallibility and of the Immaculate Conception. Indeed, St. Ignatius Loyola had dedicated his life to Christ after a night in vigil before the Madonna of Montserrat, one of the icons of the latter doctrine (275). Hopkins himself was devoted to the Virgin and to the newly proclaimed doctrine, which had originated with his favorite churchman, Duns Scotus ("Immaculate Conception" 380-81).

"Ad Mariam" is the first poem in English which Hopkins wrote as a Jesuit. After the 1868 revision, "St. Dorothea (Lines for a picture)," he produced no poetry at all for the two years of his novitiate at Manresa, Roehampton. At Christmas 1870 and again in May 1873 he wrote two Marian poems in Latin for May celebrations at Stonyhurst, "Ad Matrem Virginem" (Poetical 103-04) and "O praedestinata bis" (104-05), and in May 1871 another brief Latin lyric (104) to welcome the visit of the Jesuit Provincial. Beyond that, between 1872 and 1874 Hopkins did no more than translate "O Deus, ego amo te" (106-07) into English, and

revise his earlier versions of "St. Dorothea" (58-59) and "Winter in the Gulf Stream" (16).

"Ad Mariam" has met with almost complete critical silence, as critics have turned away in some embarrassment from a "direct and competent" imitation of Swinburne (Bridges, qtd. in Poems [1967] 253). It is indeed a very slight "presentation piece" (Dixon 14), but within the present context it is important as the most entirely Swinburnian of Hopkins's works. For in it, Hopkins appropriates the "Hounds of spring" Chorus, converting the paean to the pagan goddess Artemis into a hymn of praise for the Virgin Mary.

"Ad Mariam" is an effort to turn Greek mythology to "moral uses." In converting Artemis to the Virgin Mary, Hopkins tacitly acknowledges that the Virgin had pagan predecessors, and in a later poem written to honor the Virgin, "The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breathe" (Poetical 173) he would associate her with an unnamed pagan predecessor. Indeed, Hopkins persisted in seeing a relationship between Greek myth and Christian belief. Near the end of his life, for example, he found a parallel between St. Dorothea's basket of fruit and flowers and the Eleusinian mysteries honoring Demeter and Persephone, but the planned paper on the subject was one of the many projects which he left uncompleted (Cotter, "Myth" 170).

Swinburne had derived the Marian imagery of his parodies from central Christian texts. Similarly, Hopkins works with one of Swinburne's central texts, Atalanta in Calydon. In his parody of the "Hounds of spring" chorus, Hopkins uses Swinburne's own technique of deflation by comparison, but he inverts its two elements, elevating Christianity's Virgin at the expense of a great pagan goddess.

"Ad Mariam" imitates Swinburne's eight-line stanza form as well as its anapestic and logaoedic rhythms. It follows the varied rhyme pattern of the original chorus, mixing masculine and feminine endings as Swinburne does, and follows as well his use of assonance and alliteration. It employs the same patterns of imagery, contrasting spring and winter, light and darkness, joy and grief, and storm and calm. But the pagan celebration becomes a Christian one.

"Ad Mariam" opens with a personification:

When a sister, born for each strong
 month-brother,
 Spring's one daughter, the sweet
 child May,
 Lies in the breast of the young year-
 mother
 With light on her face like the waves
 at play,
 Man from the lips of him speaketh and
 saith,
 At the touch of her wandering wondering
 breath
 Warm on his brow: lo! where is another
 Fairer than this one to brighten our
 day? (Poetical 105, lines 1-8)

Sweet May has come, bringing light and "joy for today and hope for tomorrow" (106, line 15). Yet the speaker reacts with an immediate question: where is another figure who is even more lovely? His eyes look beyond the natural world toward another sort of beauty:

And we that joy in this month joy-laden,
 The gladdest thing that our eyes have
 seen,
 Oh thou, proud mother and much proud
 maiden —
 Maid yet mother as May hath been —
 To thee we tender the beauties all
 Of the month by men called virginal.
 And, where thou dwellest in deep-groved
 Aidenn,
 Salute thee, mother, the maid-month's
 Queen! (106, lines 17-24)

In looking at May, Hopkins's eyes perceive another Virgin, the Queen of May herself. The world of nature leads directly to the figure of divinity. The two realms are linked through the uncertainty of reference in "gladdest thing that our eyes have seen," which can be read as referring to either, or both, May and Mary.

Unlike Artemis, however, Mary does not preside over an erotic plenitude. May, whose name derives from that of the earth-goddess Maia, is the "maid-month," "virginal" like the Virgin it represents. Hopkins sees purity where Swinburne had found eroticism, and he perhaps helps to assure it, rather curiously, by segregating the months by gender: "Spring's one daughter" is separate from, and follows, her "month-brothers." There is no mingling of the sexes, even in personifications.

Aside from its opening line, perhaps the best-known passage from Swinburne's Chorus is that which interprets the importance to human beings of spring's arrival:

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that
wins[.] (Poems 4: 250)

Swinburne has linked winter with "rains and ruins" in a doubling which is typical of his style. "Ruin" carries the meaning "to fall upon," and so doubles the meaning of rain, "to fall" (McGann, Swinburne 155). Taken in conjunction with the word "sin," the connotations expand toward reference to the fall of man, evidenced in Christian belief by original sin. However, Swinburne redefines the concept. The dark days of winter are a period of sin, but it is a particularly Swinburnian one. In this universe sin is equated with winter's frigid, snowy chasteness, emblematic of the division between lovers when they are separated in an arid day and night, not with the sexuality which represents one traditional Christian interpretation of the fall. Implicitly, then, the predatory eroticism of Calydon's spring is equated with purity.

"Ad Mariam" echoes the passage:

We have suffered the sons of Winter in
sorrow
And been in their ruinous reigns
oppressed,
And fain in the springtime surcease

pine" had lamented. The sons of Winter who bring the sins of winter, then, are identified with heathen paganism.

Hopkins's transformation places the words of Swinburne's pagan Chorus within Christian providential history. In making his equations, Hopkins invokes Biblical authority through the reference to Mary's lineage, which emphasizes both Mary's human nature as a "maid in David's house" and her divine role as the mother of the King. Unlike Swinburne in his treatment of Artemis, Hopkins has validated Mary's existence as a divinity less on attempted apprehension of her presence within the world than through reference to Scriptural authority, as the final stanza indicates:

Wherefore we love thee, wherefore we
 sing to thee,
 We, all we, thro' the length of our
 days,
 The praise of the lips and the hearts of
 us bring to thee,
 Thee, oh maiden, most worthy of
 praise;
 For lips and hearts they belong to thee
 Who to us are as dew unto grass and
 tree,
 For the fallen rise and the stricken
 spring to thee,
 Thee, May-hope of our darkened ways.
 (106, lines 33-40)

Swinburne's Chorus had inferred the presence of Artemis in the natural world through the actions of the immanent deities and semi-deities who inhabit it. But there are no such figures present in the Christian landscape. Nor is Mary fully equated with the natural

world. Rather, she is present through simile, providing fructifying grace to humanity as dew provides moisture to growing things. However, the relationship between believer and deity in the Christian universe would appear to be closer than that in the pagan world of Calydon. Swinburne emphasizes the presence of Artemis with repeated rhymes upon a pronoun "her," and she is addressed in the third person throughout, a somewhat distant goddess. In contrast, the Virgin Mary is addressed directly, as Hopkins repeats "thee" at the end of four lines in the final stanza. In Calydon, man's heart could not "spring to her"; in "Ad Mariam," stricken mankind can "spring to thee."

The difference lies in the acknowledgement of sin, which creates a close, because entirely dependent, relationship between mankind and its God. Atalanta in Calydon never indicates that humanity is sinful: the cruelty of the gods is gratuitous and undeserved. The only sin which Calydon's Chorus recognizes, sexual separation, is caused by the decrees of the cruel gods, not by mankind himself. Similarly, the sense of separation from divinity experienced by humanity is also brought about by the gods, who have made themselves unreachable.

In the Christian scheme, however, the springing unity occurs when mankind recognizes its own fallen nature. In Roman Catholicism, a sinful petitioner for

mercy who admits his sins, and obtains the Church's absolution, is assured of forgiveness. He acknowledges his complete dependence upon the deity, and his hope of heaven. The Virgin Mary receives praise from lips and hearts which "belong" to her when they acknowledge the primal fall, and their consequent need for divine mercy from the "May-hope of our darkened ways." The "we" in "Ad Mariam" address the Virgin as "thee" in a mode of prayer, which carries both the admission of guilt and the hopeful assurance of efficacy.

Like Swinburne, Hopkins perceived aching self-division as an ineluctable element in the life of mankind. The two poets differed radically on the source of the split, however. Swinburne saw it as the result of Christianity's assignment of inverted categories of right and wrong to innately innocent sexual behavior. For Hopkins, on the contrary, self-division is the result of man's own sinfulness. Lucifer tempted newly-created humanity, and its ensuing fall brought sin into the world, in the process disrupting the unity of being which sinless and obedient Adam and Eve had experienced before their expulsion from Eden. Sinful flesh became separated from soul, and the result for mankind was a "yearning desire to move back toward God" (Cotter, Inscape 137) as well as an insatiable yearning for self-completion. Although the fall was a fall into knowledge, not into sexuality,

the Catholic church has a long history of difficulties in making the distinction. For Hopkins, at any rate, the Oxford fall into knowledge had been a fall into the experience of sexual desire. The fundamental difference in positions between Swinburne and Hopkins is reflected in Hopkins's conversion of Swinburne's paean to pagan sexuality.

Unlike much of his other poetry, "Ad Mariam" appears to have been well-regarded by his Jesuit contemporaries. However, by the standards either of Swinburne's brilliant "Hounds of spring" Chorus or Hopkins's own later poetry, the poem is awkward and unconvincing. The rhyme patterns for the most part are stiff and unremarkable; "beauties all / . . . virginal," on the other hand, is mannered and strained. There is no equivalent to the supple elegance of many of Swinburne's lines, "And the brown bright nightingale amorous / Is half assuaged for Itylus," for example. Perhaps in part because of its very eagerness to point the differences between Swinburne's universe and his own, Hopkins's "Ad Mariam" is at best an unsatisfactory effort. There is a more powerful reason for its failure, however.

Although the 1868 "St. Dorothea" seems to show that Hopkins had hoped to continue writing poetry immediately after he entered the Society of Jesus, in the event he was not to do so, in English at any rate,

until five years later. And in writing "Ad Mariam" Hopkins used every means available to him to protect himself from the dangers of poetic composition, which at Oxford had put an unsafe strain upon his passions.

Hopkins placed the poem fully under the authority of the Society of Jesus. The occasion for the poem was officially prescribed: the annual Marian celebration at Stonyhurst traditionally included May Lines in honor of the Virgin. At the very least, Hopkins's participation was permitted by his superiors, and it could well have been suggested to him, just as writing a poem on the Deutschland tragedy would be. Hopkins's Oxford confession notes reveal that he had discussed writing poetry with his Anglican confessor on several occasions, and there is no reason to believe that the practice was discontinued within the Society of Jesus.

The occasion was a communal one, as members of the Stonyhurst community joined together in the public ceremony. Hopkins created "Ad Mariam" for a specific audience, not as a lyric expression of his own subjectivity. The public character of the event is signalled through the repeated use of the first person plural, which occurs in its various forms eleven times in the course of five stanzas. The setting which Stonyhurst afforded for the May Lines has further significance. The finished poem was seen and read in conjunction with the statue of the Virgin on which it was

hung in Our Lady's Gallery. In writing the May Lines the poet would fix his eyes, either imaginatively or in actuality, on that representation of divinity for his inspiration. Hopkins avoided the problem of "looking" at either natural or human objects. Mary/May in "Ad Mariam" is "the gladdest thing that our eyes have seen," but the important image is external to the poem.

Hopkins is keeping his distance, as well, by assuming the voice of another poet rather than his own. Through such intertextuality, he further bypasses sensuous apprehension as the source of poetic imagery. In his Chorus, Swinburne's eyes remained firmly on the natural world as he glimpsed the bestialized eroticism that is part of its fecundity. Hopkins's eyes, however, are upon the statue of the Virgin Mary, and upon Swinburne's text.

"Ad Mariam" fails. The failure derives less from poetic incompetence than from a crippling ascetic constriction. Other than "Ad Mariam," Hopkins's poetry indicates that he perceived the natural world in very much the way Swinburne did, as a multiplicity of forms, events, and sensory experiences which were inherently contradictory. For Swinburne, life brought mixed gifts, of "Pleasure, with pain for leaven; / Summer, with flowers that fell" (*Poems* 4: 258); for the Hopkins of "Pied Beauty," of things "counter, original, spare, strange; / . . . With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle,

dim" (Poetical 144, lines 7-9). Yet in "Ad Mariam" Hopkins removed all such complexities.

Hopkins does away with Swinburne's recognition of the mixed nature of human existence, with its fecundity and sexual cruelty, joy and fear. There is no shading in Hopkins's version: male winter opposes female spring, the line of David's house opposes pagan kings, light opposes dark, sinful fallen man opposes the purity of divinity. And Hopkins entirely avoids the challenging doubleness of Swinburne's figure of Artemis, who is both present and absent, virginal and erotic. Both the problematics of immanence and transcendence, and of virginal fecundity, are side-stepped.

Both Artemis and the Virgin Mary are fecund virgins, Mary through her maternity, Artemis through her role as the mother of months who brings about the generative outbursts of spring. "Ad Mariam" purifies Artemis's realm, making it virginal, but Hopkins fails to retain the sense of natural fecundity with which Swinburne endowed his landscape. Hopkins's conversion of the "Hounds of spring" Chorus removes all traces of the active eroticism which Swinburne had represented as universally present in the natural world. In contrast to the teeming erotic world of satyrs, nymphs, burgeoning blossoms, flaming leaves, and pursuing gods, Hopkins's May is the "virginal" "maid-month." She holds "the promise of Summer within her breast" (106,

line 16), but it is a breast that is neither "bare" nor "shortening into sighs," as that of Swinburne's nymph had been. The Christian sense of sexual sin wins out, and the lifeless, arid poem is the result.

Hopkins's figure of Mary is dim at best. She is scarcely present within the poem — she is never named, and she is barely represented directly through visual imagery. The beauties of May are also amorphous, like the divinity with whom it is associated. Hopkins largely averted his eyes from the natural world, looking directly through and beyond May to find a Mary who is disembodied except in the Biblical references to her.

In removing all taint of carnality from the springtime landscape which was to represent the Virgin Mary, Hopkins repeats the gesture which the Roman Catholic church had recently made in relation to the Virgin herself. "Ad Mariam" mimics the strategy of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which removed all taint of carnality from the body of Mary. Fertility and sexuality are separated. To both the Church and to Hopkins, Mary is entirely immaculate both in her own birth and in her motherhood; for Hopkins, she is equally immaculate in her poetic appearance.

"Ad Mariam," then, accepts the full authority of the Church. The acceptance is at once indirect, through the poetic action which parallels that of the

dogma so recently proclaimed by a now-infallible Pope, and direct, as the poem incorporates the authority of Scripture. The poem is an uneasy attempt to develop a use for poetry consonant with Jesuit vows, but Hopkins is so intent on getting rid of the "moral evil" which he perceived in heathenism that he has failed to turn Swinburne's myth to moral uses. Hopkins's first effort to break poetic silence is fatally constricted by the protective layers with which he surrounded it.

However, the protection may not have been complete. There is a second echo in the phrase "ruinous reigns." The speaker in "Hesperia," a poem which The Wreck of the Deutschland would later echo, expresses his relief at having escaped from the cruel eroticism of Dolores, "Our Lady of Pain," in language which suggests a further context for "Ad Mariam." Swinburne's speaker explains that, although "She was sweet to me once, who am fled and escaped from the rage of her reign" (Poems 1: 176), he is freed at last from desire for Dolores, and has now achieved calmness and peace. The "we" in "Ad Mariam" longs for surcease from the pain of the past's unrest, and hopes that Mary/May brings the promise of relief and peace. The ostensible sources of the pain are both the winter weather and pagan reigns. However, the phrase "ruinous reigns" plays both on Atalanta's "rain and ruins" and on "the rage of her reign" from "Hesperia," through which Swin-

burne's speaker signals relief from the pangs of desire. Further, like all parodies, the parody of the "Hounds of spring" continues to invoke the world of Greek myth even as it works to reverse its ideological content. Swinburne's Chorus had celebrated the promise of sexual fulfillment which Artemis/spring brings. By implication, "Ad Mariam" expresses hope for surcease from the past pain and unrest of sexuality.

Like Artemis, both the Virgin Mary and her virgin Son demand that their priests preserve their own virginity. Still, in her role as moon goddess, Artemis presides over generative fecundity in the "Hounds of spring" Chorus. But while Swinburne's Chorus of maidens celebrates an end to virginity, Hopkins and his fellow-Jesuits celebrate virginity itself, glorifying the great virgin-mother, the miracle of whose birth was second only to that of Her Son Jesus, in a poem which intends to be as immaculate as its subject. The virgin priest-poet has over-determined his first Jesuit poem, but it is written under the only circumstances in which he could now write poetry, among Christ's company of virginal men, dedicated to the service of their God.

Hopkins's second Marian poem in English was written sometime before 1876, and with considerably more success than the first. Like the Saint Dorothea poems and, less directly, "Ad Mariam," "Rosa Mystica" deals with a puzzling question: to what extent does the natu-

ral world reflect its divine origin? and how can the poet represent that divinity?

In arguing for a contextual approach Jerome Bump suggests a combative purpose for "Rosa Mystica":

Many of Hopkins' first readers could be expected not only to recognize that 'Rosa Mystica' invoked the typical and typological modes of medieval art, but also that the echoes of Swinburne in the poem were specific allusions to his latest sensation, 'Dolores,' subtitled 'Notre-Dame Des Sept Douleurs,' which parodied the form of a medieval litany to Mary to praise her decadent Hellenic rival, a 'mystical rose of the mire' (l. 21). Familiar with the competition between the religious and pagan versions of medievalism, Hopkins' readers undoubtedly perceived that 'Rosa Mystica' was an attempt to defend devotional medievalism against the increasingly profane interpretations of Swinburne. . . . [M]oreover, they could also be expected to appreciate the irony of borrowing a few of Swinburne's own rhythms to breathe life back into the Christian type he sought to poison. ("Hopkins' Imagery" 108-09)

Bump usefully places the poem in the context of Victorian devotional medievalism, a context which includes the St. Dorothy/Dorothea poems as well. And as he had in the two poems which precede it, Hopkins again has recourse to the techniques, images, and anapestic meter of Swinburne. The formal appropriations are considerably less direct than they had been in "Ad Mariam," closer to Swinburne's own practice in echoing the songs of earlier poets. Still, as Bump comments,

Lines such as 'In grace that is charity, grace that is love' not only allude to Swinburne's 'litanies,' they adapt his technique of synonymic, grammatical repetition to

extend the meanings of the mystical rose.
(111)

The central image of "Rosa Mystica" is that of Mary as the mystical Rose of Sharon from the Song of Songs, which invokes multiple Christian meanings: that of the mystical Body of Christ; of Mary, mother of both the physical and the mystical Body; and Christ Himself, Head of the mystical Body. The Fathers of the Church had also interpreted another Old Testament type, the Tree of Jesse (Isaiah 11), so that the shoot (virga) is taken to represent the Blessed Virgin, and the blossom to represent Christ (113). The image of the rose relates as well to the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, for as the Mystical Rose she signifies the rose as it was before the fall brought the thorns of sin.

As Chapter Four indicates, Swinburne himself was a brilliant student of typology and a master of the intricacies of rose symbolism, and he had played endless variations on the imagery of roses and blossoms long before "A New-Year Ode: To Victor Hugo." Frequently Swinburne associated roses with carnality, as, for example, in St. Dorothy's heaven. In Atalanta in Calydon Venus is an "evil blossom," a "fleshly blossom," a "bitter flower from the bud" as she rises from the sea (Poems 4: 273-74). The speaker in "Dolores" asks of that debased "mystical rose of the mire"

Wert thou pure and maiden, Dolores,
When desire took thee first by the

throat?
 What bud was the shell of a blossom
 That all men may smell to and pluck?
 (1: 155)

Her virginity despoiled, Dolores now leads men to change "the lilies and languors of virtue / For the raptures and roses of vice" (156). Swinburne used imagery of the flower and the bud more graphically in others of the Poems and Ballads to represent parts of the human body: Sappho presses her lips to the "bruised blossom" of Anactoria's "scourged white breast" (60); the figure of Hermaphroditus must choose between the "Two loves at either blossom" of its breast (79).

In contrast, Hopkins in "Rosa Mystica" places the image of rose and blossom firmly within traditional Christian meaning. The poem opens with an acknowledgement of mystery before moving through a series of sixteen questions:

The rose is a mystery — where is it
 found?
 Is it anything true? Does it grow upon
 ground? —
 It was made of earth's mould but it went
 from men's eyes
 And its place is a secret and shut in
 the skies.
 Refrain —
In the gardens of God, in the daylight

Find me a place by thee, mother of mine.
 (Poetical 107, lines 1-6;
 emphasis in original)

In "The Habit of Perfection" Hopkins had prayed that his eyes be "shellèd" to "find the uncreated

light" away from the "ruck and reel" of sensory perception, which "Coils, keeps, and teases simple sight" (90, lines 9-12). "Rosa Mystica" is an attempt to do precisely that. In "Ad Mariam" the natural world was represented, however vaguely, although the poet's eye moves through it to gaze upon the Virgin Mary. In the opening stanza of "Rosa Mystica," however, the natural world is not present in any way. The rose is entirely a spiritual one: it "went from men's eyes" and is shut in a "secret" place, out of view. Hopkins is looking at a rose in a spiritual, not a natural, state; yet the mystic rose is vividly present. The eyes of faith penetrate the secret gardens of God with the help of typological imagery.

In his next effort at identification, Hopkins turns to Scriptural evidence, as he had in "Ad Mariam":

But where was it formerly? which is the
spot
That was blest in it once, though now it
is not? —
It is Galilee's growth: it grew at God's
will
And broke into bloom upon Nazareth hill.
(107, lines 7-10)

At God's decree, the flower took root and bloomed in history at the time of the Crucifixion, "Two thousands of years" ago (15). Christ's redemptive death conferred full bloom upon his mother. Her power derives from the sacrifice of her son.

Next, the speaker asks for a name:

Tell me the name now, tell me its name.
The heart guesses easily: is it the
same? —
Mary the Virgin, well the heart knows,
She is the mystery, she is that rose.
(19-22)

Theophilus in "Lines for a Picture of St. Dorothea," still undergoing the process of conversion, was unable to name with certainty the messenger who brought literal flowers and fruits from heaven: "how to name it, blessed it?", he had asked. But here the human heart can name with assurance (as it could not in the "Hounds of spring" Chorus). The rose is Mary. But more naming is necessary:

But the blossom, the blossom there, who
can it be? —
Who can her rose be? It could be but
one:
Christ Jesus our Lord, her God and her
son. (108, lines 26-28)

The blossom which appears on the same branch as Mary the rose is identified through a string of names which map the relationships within the Holy Family, and between the blossom and the speaker. The questioning continues:

What was the colour of that blossom
bright? —
White to begin with, immaculate white.
But what a wild flush on the flakes of
it stood
When the rose ran in crimsonings down
the cross-wood! (31-34)

Unlike "Ad Mariam," "Rosa Mystica" contains few direct echoes of Swinburne texts. Here, however, there is a double connection in Hopkins's representation of

the blossom, which was first white, and then red. Swinburne had emphasized the erotic aspect of rose imagery in "Dolores" by reviving the Greek legend which explained its color. The flower had been white until Venus, running to help Adonis after he had been mauled by the boar, pricked her foot on a thorn, and her blood turned the rose red (Bump, "Hopkins' Imagery" 114, note 29). Here, in contrast, it is Christ's blood has "crimsoned" the immaculate blossom which represents Him.

In addition, once again, an image from the "Hounds of spring" Chorus which had helped celebrate the erotic fecundity of the spring is purified to serve a Christian purpose. The pipe of the god Pan is heard as

The faint fresh flame of the young year
flushes
From leaf to flower and flower to fruit.
(Poems 4: 250)

Swinburne's image was of the literally intensifying coloring as growth progressed through leaf to flower to fruit. The "flush" on Hopkins's transcendent rose is the redemptive blood shed by the blossom, Christ, which is running down the cross at his crucifixion. "Rosa Mystica," converting Swinburne's text, celebrates a divine event in an image colored by Swinburne's earlier usage. In the process, the original becomes as immaculately pure as Christ and His Mother.

In the next stanza the speaker prays to the
rose/Mary/ bloom/Christ to make him a part of it:

How many leaves had it? — Five they
 were then,
 Five like the senses and members of men;
 Five is their number by nature, but now
 They multiply, multiply, who can tell
 how?
In the gardens of God, in the daylight
divine
Make me a leaf in thee, mother of mine.
 (Poetical 108, lines 37-40;
 emphasis in original)

Throughout the poem the speaker has affirmed his faith that he will participate in the presence of the mystic rose and its blossom: in "the gardens of God," he says, "I shall look on thy loveliness" (107, line 12); "I shall keep time with thee" (18); "I shall come home with thee, mother of mine" (108, line 24). As he had in the Ignatian exercises which trained his eye, then, Hopkins places himself within his image of the Holy Family. He moves from a desire to "find a place" by the Virgin in God's garden and to "look on" her loveliness, to the desire to be united on the same stem both with the mother of God and with Christ. The desire imaged is to unite his body with the mystical Body which the rose represents. All of his senses and his "members" are involved.

Swinburne had expressed a similar wish in "A Match":

If love were what the rose is,
 And I were like the leaf,
 Our lives would grow together
 In sad or singing weather[.]
 (Poems 1: 104)

But Swinburne's desire is to be joined in impossible closeness with a human beloved, not mystically with a divine one, and the impossibility of such a union is the theme of the poem. In the case of Hopkins, the Christian believer, however, the prayer for union will be fulfilled in the gardens of God in heaven, after death.

In the final stanza, the mystical rose identifies the source of its power within the human world. The rose smells sweet, and

the sweetness is grace:
O breath of it bathes great heaven
 above,
In grace that is charity, grace that is
 love.
To thy breast, to thy rest, to thy glory
 divine
Draw me by charity, mother of mine.
 (Poetical 108, lines 44-48;
 emphasis in original)

The speaker desires to be drawn to Mary's body — her breast and her "rest." Hopkins represents that desire for bodily unity as at the furthest extreme from eros. Like the divine bodies represented through the bud/rose imagery, which are entirely pure, so too is the attraction which the speaker has felt. It is through the action of "grace that is charity" — caritas, not eros — that he will be drawn to embodiment in spiritual realm.

Although "Rosa Mystica" represents an advance over "Ad Mariam," Hopkins's two early Marian hymns exhibit

signs of ideological strain. For example, the effort to convert Artemis to Mary in "Ad Mariam" was flawed by the difficulty of equating two female deities where inequities exist between their relative positions within the pantheon. Swinburne's great earth goddesses had ruled independent of male divinities. While there are elements in Roman Catholic practice which would make Mary an object of worship in her own right, in Hopkins's hierarchical universe that was not to be the case. In "Rosa Mystica" Mary to some degree performs her accustomed secondary role, as she mediates the sight of the divine body: the speaker asks, "Shew me thy son," (30), and affirms that "I shall worship His wounds with thee, mother of mine" (36). Yet the image of Mary as rose and Christ as blossom, upon the same stem, with the further identity of Christ the blossom as Mary's "rose," to some extent equates them, with Christ perhaps even as the subordinate figure.³

³ Hopkins's devotion to Mary may contain elements of displacement from a homoerotic attraction to Christ. John Addington Symonds remarked that "The mythology of Mary gave religious sanction to the chivalrous enthusiasm," and Joan DeJean interprets Symonds' use of the word "chivalry" to include the connotation of "pederastia." She comments: "Symonds implies that the modern pederast-homosexual worships at the shrine of the ultimate in female mysticism or chivalric womanhood, the Virgin Mary" (162). Correct or not, the interpretation recognizes the undercurrent of sexuality which religious discourse so often contains.

In his later Marian poetry Hopkins puts Mary more firmly in her traditional place, as mediator between the human sinner and the male God, and her divinity lies in that role. For example, in "The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breath" the Virgin is

Merely a woman, yet
Whose presence, power is
Great as no goddess's
Was deemèd, dreamèd; who
This one work has to do —
Let all God's glory through[.]
(173, lines 26-30)

Unlike the great goddesses who preceded her, Mary's power derives from her role as intercessor, which Hopkins represents in a visual metaphor. Without the Virgin's atmospheric protection the body of Christ, the Sun/Son, would be too dazzling to look at:

Whereas did air not make
This bath of blue and slake
His fire, the sun would shake,
A blear and blinding ball[.]
(175, lines 94-97)

Christ's body is so powerful that His "glory bare would blind" (108).⁴

⁴ The danger of gazing upon divinity is a persistent mythic theme which figures prominently in Judeo-Christian thought, and carries with it sexual anxieties. See Eilberg-Schwartz, Steinberg. I have argued that Hopkins's vision was eroticized by his Oxford fall into knowledge, and that the Oxford poetry marks the turn of his gaze from human toward divine beauty, represented by the figure of Christ. Hopkins constructed a version of Christianity in the 1870s which brought into play both the desire to look and to be looked at. Multiple sight lines extend throughout creation and hold together the individual and the deity. Both mankind and Christ gaze in adoration at the father. Both Christ and the Father look at man, and "Christ first inscapes mankind before they inscape him;

In his two Marian poems, Hopkins once again has reached a poetic dead end. Both poems directly oppose Swinburne's heresies through Swinburnian techniques. Both employ the notion of conversion, and "Rosa Mystica" represents a step toward the development of Hopkins's mature style. But neither "Ad Mariam" nor "Rosa Mystica" is distinguished poetry. The two Marian poems are coldly immaculate, self-consciously constricted. For Hopkins, the would-be priest-poet, part of the problem is Swinburne's texts.

In both of his Marian poems, Hopkins uses the authority of Scripture, an external text, as part of the process of representation, as indeed he would later continue to do. Particularly in "Ad Mariam," the reference was part of a strategy to bring the protection of faith and the full authority of the Roman Catholic Church to the writing of poetry. Such protection is also necessary to his transmutations of Swinburne. The play of fear, desire, and abhorrence informs his readings of his fellow-poet. Hopkins's

he is their aim and mark because he already holds each one fast in his loving sight" (Cotter, *Inscape* 78). As Stanbury indicates, Mary acts as visual intercessor in Roman Catholicism: exempt from the taboo of gazing at the male divine body, she controls the gaze of human viewers as they perceive the dead Christ through the perspective of her sorrowing eyes.

conflicted attitudes toward Swinburne's work intensifies the constriction of the Marian poems.

Swinburne stood opposed to much of what Hopkins believed in most deeply. At the same time, Hopkins responded strongly to sometimes dangerous beauty; and he saw the need to invigorate the dully predictable poetic output of the age: "Recovery must be by a breaking up, a violence, such as was the Preraphaelite school," he wrote as an Oxford undergraduate (Journals 79). Swinburne performed acts of violence against established poetic practice and Hopkins later wrote approvingly of the originality of his style: "for music of words and the mastery and employment of a consistent and distinctive poetic diction, a style properly so called, it is extraordinary" (Dixon 156).

Nevertheless, the compelling sensuousness of Swinburne's style both concealed and revealed unsettling perceptions and desires which paralleled many of Hopkins's own. The temptations which human and aesthetic beauty held, the longings for the unifying force of love in its many aspects, the fascinations of pain, so often the themes in Swinburne's texts, were those which Hopkins's confession notes show to have both attracted and threatened Hopkins in his secular life, and which were to some degree implicated in his rejection of that life. Much as he was repelled by Swinburne's strident heresies, Hopkins was drawn to the compelling beauty of

his lines; and both drawn and repelled, as well, by the representation of many of his own perceptions. By incorporating a poetic discourse associated with the poetic other into his own work, Hopkins in some measure internalized the sinful urges he had experienced in a form which he could control. The problem in "Ad Mariam" and "Rosa Mystica," however, is over-control.

Swinburne's verbal presence within Hopkins's texts indicates the necessity for harmonizing the practice of poetry with the continuing necessity of harmonizing religion and sexuality. In undertaking the Spiritual Exercises, Hopkins immersed himself in the detailed visualization of the human body, which is precisely what had occasioned strong temptation in his Oxford years, and in so doing he was able to redirect his gaze toward Christ. In returning to poetic practice, Hopkins utilized the same technique by which he had successfully overcome the agonies of visual desire. He immersed himself in precisely the sort of poetry which would have caused him the most temptation, that written by the most dangerous of poets, Algernon Swinburne. For Hopkins, Swinburne's poetry acted as a pharmakon: it was both poison and medicine. Hopkins found in Swinburne insights similar to his own, but which were perceived without the eyes of faith, and interpreted without the saving grace of dogmatic religion. Swinburne's powerfully dangerous vision, however, was dif-

ficult to control, and in trying to do so Hopkins further constricted his own poetry. But that vision would again mediate Hopkins's own vision in his next, powerful, poem, as he turned his eyes toward Christ.

Chapter 7

Swinburne's Songs: "Thou madest a choral-souled
boy-priest"

Once again, in the 1870s, Hopkins and Swinburne occupied positions at the extremes of opinion on a matter of public importance, as they had as Oxford undergraduates. For two decades military and political forces supporting "freedom" had opposed monarchical government and the power of the Roman Catholic Church in Italy and France. A major goal was to wrest the political control of Rome from the Papacy and place its territory under the jurisdiction of a secular Italian government.

Under the leadership of Pius IX, Vatican Council I had begun meeting in Rome in 1869. However, in the face of the threat by forces of the Risorgimento, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church suspended the sessions in the fall of 1870. Just a week later Italian forces invaded the Papal States, which surrendered Rome on 20 September ("Vatican Council I" 562).

Before it was so hastily concluded, Vatican Council I had taken two important actions. It adopted a schema of Catholic faith which, like the 1864 Papal Syllabus of Errors on which it was based, condemned

pantheism, naturalism, and rationalism — that is to say, any beliefs which either identify God with the universe or totally exclude Him from it. The Council's agenda was heavily influenced by the current political unrest, and the schema declared anathema all opinions reflecting "liberalism," "communism," or "progress." For example, it condemned the following propositions: that "there must be separation of Church and State"; that "the abrogation of the civil power that the Holy See has acquired would be most conducive to the liberty and well-being of the Church"; and that "it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion be the only religion of the State" (Smith 405-07).

The reaffirmation by Vatican Council I of the controversial Syllabus raised a furor. Even more furor greeted Pastor aeternus, which defined the jurisdictional primacy of the Pope and proclaimed the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. Issued in April 1870, it declared that when the magisterium of the Church defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals which is to be held by the whole church, it does so through the aid of the Holy Spirit. Such teachings are without error, and carry a special power because of the presence of the Spirit. The supreme authority is lodged both in the corporate episcopate and in the Pope. However, it is eminently realized in the Pope, the "true Vicar of Christ and head of the whole Church

and father and teacher of all Christians"; for while the College of Bishops must have the contribution of the Pope if they are to issue a statement considered infallible, their collaboration in the alternative case is not necessary ("Infallibility" 496-97).

English newspapers and periodicals followed Roman events closely, and politicians took public stands on the positions of the Council. The most vigorous attack in England on the increase of Papal power was launched four years after the Council had disbanded by Gladstone, who in 1874 published an Expostulation which excoriated the English supporters of Ultramontaniam, chief among them the Jesuits, whom he called "the deadliest foes that mental and moral liberty have ever known" (qtd. in Journals 442, note 262.1). Members of the Society of Jesus were kept well-informed of events surrounding the controversies. Replies to Gladstone's Expostulation were read to Hopkins and his fellow Jesuits in the refectory at St. Beuno's (262). Indeed, Hopkins fulminated against Gladstone for the rest of his life, at one point agreeing that the Prime Minister "ought to be beheaded on Tower Hill (Further 257).

Three years earlier, as a novice at Roehampton, Hopkins had followed the details of the disbanding of the Vatican Council and the subsequent capture of Rome (Journals 202-03). In summary notes he mentions Mazzini, Garibaldi, the larger battles of the Franco-

Prussian War, the Doctrine of Infallibility, the capture of Rome, and the plebiscite on annexation, which was approved overwhelmingly soon after the victory of the secular forces (Smith 413-15).

The members of the Society of Jesus appear to have taken the Pope's loss of control over Rome very seriously. In fact, Hopkins notes that an occurrence in the natural world may well have reflected God's reaction to the disaster:

Oct. 25 — A little before 7 in the evening a wonderful Aurora, the same that was seen in Rome (shortly after its seizure by the Italian government) and taken as a sign of God's anger. (Journals 200-01)

In the 1860s at Oxford Hopkins had been converted to Catholicism, and determined to dedicate his poetical gifts to its service. Earlier, Swinburne, also an Oxford undergraduate, had converted to the cause of Italian freedom and had made an idol of Mazzini in particular. His devotion to the cause of the Risorgimento was the one commitment, aside from his life-long commitment to poetry, that Swinburne was to make: "After all," he wrote William Michael Rossetti in 1866, "in spite of jokes and perversities . . . it is nice to have something to love and to believe in as I do in Italy" (Letters 1: 195). In the 1860s Swinburne had dedicated himself to the poetry of desire, but early in the following decade he underwent a further conversion, to the "religion of man," and he turned his poetic

talents both to defining his new creed and to supporting the republican political causes that reflected its tenets.

The religion of man and the politics of republicanism are the sole themes of the poetry included in Songs Before Sunrise (1871) and Songs of Two Nations (1875). In both volumes Swinburne celebrates the heroes of the Italian Risorgimento and other revolutionary movements and denounced its enemies, and in the second he launches a more direct ad hominem attack against the Pope and the Society of Jesus, matching Gladstone at his most vigorous. The Songs in their turn created as much of a furor as that expressed over the positions of Vatican Council I, which the poetry directly opposed.

Hopkins had renounced earthly love as a proper theme for poetry in the 1860s, when he first turned his eyes and his voice toward Christ and then affiliated himself with the Jesuit order. Similarly, Swinburne made a gesture of renunciation before undertaking to act in behalf of his new faith. Songs Before Sunrise signals a change in the themes and styles of his poetry. It is both a turn away from the representation of the agonies of self-division and sexual desire, and a turn toward new motifs of revolutionary conversion and rebirth.

Swinburne announces the change in the "Prelude" which opens the volume. The Youth had given himself over to the sexuality celebrated in the "Hounds of spring" chorus of Atalanta: "we . . . twisted through our hair / Such tendrils as the wild Loves wear / And heard what mirth the Maenads made" (Poems 2: 6). He now repudiates such excesses, for he has felt the winds of disillusion "shake and shower / The rose-red and the blood-red leaf" (2) of that eroticized landscape.

The Youth/Swinburne has already left the false world of religious belief, those "Fancies and passions miscreate / By man in things dispassionate" (4). With new clarity of vision, he now recognizes the violent cruelty and ephemeral nature of the "love" which he had celebrated, in a world where the wolf had inevitably followed the flying faun, and he turns away from the world of erotic desire:

Then he stood up, and trod to dust
Fear and desire, mistrust and trust,
And dreams of bitter sleep and
sweet[.] (3)

The "Prelude" announces a gospel of self-sufficiency, in which the man's "soul," no longer submitting to the passions of the flesh, exercises its proper freedom (Louie 87-8). With his new control, the Youth/Swinburne is able to see beyond the former darkness, when "star-proof trees" "hid / The blood-feasts

of the Bassarid" (6). He acknowledges the power of the poetry of the Dionysian celebrants, whose "song's iron cadences / Fright the wolf hungering from the kid, / Outroar the lion-throated seas" (6). However, he will also renounce his own poetic representations of their celebrations, and in the future the voice of the former poet of transgressive desire will be raised for a different purpose, and in a different way. Swinburne sketches a new way to make poetry in the "Prelude":

For what has he whose will sees clear
 To do with doubt and faith and fear,
 Swift hopes and slow despondencies?
 His heart is equal with the sea's
 And with the sea-wind's, and his ear
 Is level to the speech of these,
 And his soul communes and takes cheer
 With the actual earth's equalities,
 Air, light, and night, hills, winds and
 streams,
 And seeks not strength from strengthless
 dreams.

His soul is even with the sun
 Whose spirit and whose eye are one,
 Who seeks not stars by day, nor light
 And heavy heat of day by night.
 Him can no God cast down, whom none
 Can lift in hope beyond the height
 Of fate and nature and things done
 By the calm rule of might and right
 That bids men be and bear and do,
 And die beneath blind skies or blue. (4)

In turning to the "actual earth's equalities," Swinburne indicates a powerful source of republican poetic imagery, and redefines the meaning of "soul" in the process. Rejecting the Christian identification of the soul with a divine element which emanates from a creator-god, Swinburne sees man's soul as self-created

and made strong through recognition of the unity of all things. In order to perceive that unity, however, mankind must abandon the dogmatic beliefs that bring false hope and inevitable disillusion and, defying the bondage imposed by the followers of the false Christian God, arrive at a stoic calm beneath Godless heavens. But mankind needs help from poets like Swinburne to develop the recognition of its own power.

Swinburne recognizes that the soul of man and the soul of nature are one and the same, and so he can understand the speech of sea and wind. Acting out of this powerful insight, he can devote the power of his song to opening mankind's eyes to its own divinity. He serves the cause of freedom best by using figures drawn from the actual earth. It is through poetry, then, that mankind learns to take strength from his communion with the earth's equalities, and realizes that he himself is one of those equalities: his soul and spirit are equal with the sun, his ear is level with the sea and wind.

Swinburne demonstrates how to represent the soul of man through natural imagery in a passage in which life is represented as a sea voyage:

Because man's soul is man's God still,
 What wind soever waft his will
 Across the waves of day and night
 To port or shipwreck, left or right,
 By shores and shoals of good and ill;
 And still its flame at mainmast height
 Through the rent air that foam-flakes

fill
 Sustains the indomitable light
 Whence only man hath strength to steer
 Or helm to handle without fear. (7-8)

When man recognizes the possibilities of divinity within himself through communing with, and submitting himself to, the forces of the natural world, his own nature is all that he needs to give him the strength to steer through life. Looking beyond the disaster of shipwreck, self-sufficient man can follow his soul's "flame at mainmast height" through the sea's "foam-flakes," and by its light navigate life's shores and shoals. There is no need for belief in a transcendent divine power.

The Youth/Swinburne will now employ his time under the blind skies writing revolutionary poetry: "with such good works or such ill / As loose the bonds or make them strong / Wherein all manhood suffers wrong" (9). Again in "The Eve of Revolution" he dons his singing robes, as the poet of the earth's equalities, to proclaim further the potency of his words. Indeed, he assigns extraordinary power to poetic exhortation. In response to the voice of the earth trumpeting from all of the natural world, he writes,

I set the trumpet to my lips and blow.
 The height of night is shaken, the
 skies break
 The winds and stars and waters come and
 go
 By fits of breath and light and
 sound, that wake
 As out of sleep . . .

Yea, the whole air of life
 Is set on fire of strife,
 Till change unmake things made and love
 remake[.] (11)

Feeling his own strength, the poet calls for

Light, light, and light! to break and
 melt in sunder
 All clouds and chains that in one
 bondage bind
 Eyes, hands, and spirits, forged by fear
 and wonder
 And sleek fierce fraud with hidden
 knife behind. (15)

The forgers of chains are priests and kings.

"Open thy soul to see, / Slave, and thy feet are free"
 (15), Swinburne assures captive nations.

Swinburne announces the role that natural imagery in serving the cause of freedom in the "Prelude," but he exhibits the continued force of the earlier mode of parody in "Siena" as he pledges himself, yet again, as a poet of the republican cause. The poet is in England, but his heart moves him from "English mirth" (160) to Italy, and he gazes in his imagination at the city of Siena and on the house of Saint Catherine, the city's virgin saint, recalling the events of her life. The saint had converted a knight on the eve of his execution for treason, and after his death "in pure hands she took the head / Severed and with pure lips still red / kissed the lips dead" (161). Later, she played an active role in the politics of her time, intervening to return the Pope to Rome from his banishment to Avignon. Through her action she

also leads her to take political action: she sets out to heal the rift of the Avignon captivity "Clothed with calm love and clear desire." Images of erotic desire and religious desire become metaphors for each other, and are related as well to a political theme.

Up to this point Swinburne's retelling of the story of St. Catherine has remained, if barely, within the limits of Roman Catholic theology. Now, however, he employs a double strategy which becomes a familiar one to the readers of the Songs. First, the redemptive effects of the Incarnation and the Passion are discounted because of the present-day corruption of Christ's message.¹ The "great torment" of the bloodied figure seen hanging on the cross in Sodoma's image, with its "hungering eyes" and "Mute lips forlorn of

¹ Ridenour argues, however, that Swinburne does not discount the sufferings of St. Catherine, which in their embrace of pain may be redemptive, and he connects "Siena" with Swinburne's larger considerations of good and evil in the universe:

We can see . . . something of how Swinburne, with his assumptions, could say [in reference to 'Hertha'] that 'the principle of growth, whence and by which all evil not less than all good proceeds and acts, . . . prefer[s] Christ to de Sade.' For while Christ and de Sade, from Swinburne's point of view, need each other, Christ can include the values of Sade in a way in which Sade cannot include the values of Christ. This is one reason good, while fundamentally on a level with evil, seems likely to win out over it. (133-34)

words or sighs" is a useless sacrifice: "In vain on all these sins and years / Falls the sad blood, fall the slow tears" (164). For Christianity now means "evil and not good" because of the oppressions practiced in its name by the present "Judases," the priests, kings and the members of the Society of Jesus, "men signed backward with his name" (165).

Swinburne then transforms the image of the crucified Christ into that of a crucified Italy and, in a play on the concept of mystic marriage, represents the country as betrayed through marriage to the Pope with "God's sacerdotal ring" (167). The poet prays to crucified Italy to "Bless also me":

Me that when others played or slept
 Sat still under thy cross and wept;
 Me who so early and unaware
 Felt fall on bent bared brows and hair
 (Thin drops of the overflowing flood!)
 The bitter blessing of thy blood;
 The sacred shadow of thy pain,
 Thine, the true maiden-mother, slain
 And raised again.

Me consecrated, if I might
 To praise thee, or to love at least,
 O mother of all men's dear delight,
 Thou madest a choral-souled
 boy-priest. (168-69)

Swinburne converts the mystical participation in Christ's Passion, such as that which inspired St. Catherine, into his own imagined participation in the suffering of crucified Italy, whose blood blesses him and consecrates him to that country's service. Like Catherine, with her vision of heaven's "choral flames,"

Swinburne's meditation on a crucifixion has given him a vision, which has transformed him into a "choral-souled boy-priest" empowered to prophesize Italy's coming resurrection. Inspired by the figure of Italy crucified, the poet foresees a "perfect people" when "Time, in likeness of a guide, / Lead the Republic as a bride / Up to God's side" (170). The false marriage of Italy has taken place between a downtrodden people and the Pope; the true mystic marriage will take place between a Republican bride and a God whom Swinburne will define in other poems as divine mankind.

Swinburne's gesture of imaginatively placing his own body within the scene of the Passion is of course an Ignatian one. Swinburne employs the language of dogmatic Christianity and one of the techniques of the Society of Jesus to dedicate himself to writing a poetry which will attack both Christianity and the Jesuits. In "The Prelude" and "Siena," he pledges himself to revolutionary poetry in the language of both the old and the new ideologies.

The rest of the Songs Before Sunrise enact Swinburne's new purpose, as the converted poet details his religion of man and exhorts humanity to free itself from the bondage of the Roman Catholic Church, and the national leaders who support it, in Italy, France, and Germany. In particular, Swinburne takes aim at the clerical forces in Italy. In his dedication to Joseph

Mazzini, he lays his "sword of song" at the feet of the hero of the Risorgimento, and prophesizes the day when Rome "shall cry the republican cry," and her voice will awaken England and France (v-vi). The "Epilogue" remains hopeful, although, despite the thunderous convulsions of the revolution, Rome remains in slavery, covered with the "robes blood-wet" of Catholic night, for republican Rome still has not appeared: "Men sought her, and she was not Rome" (229). Still, the poet sends forth his song over the sea, praising Liberty, which inspires the soul of man, and hoping for morning. If Liberty does not appear, then "Let man's world die like worlds of old" (236). Over and over again, in both volumes of Songs, Swinburne places the revolutionary effort within a cosmic framework.

In both volumes, the attack against the Church is made in part through repeated imagery of perverse sexuality and bodily decay. In Songs of Two Nations Swinburne suggests that Locusta, the Roman poisoner reeking with the stench of blood and decay, is the "bride of Christ" (298). He repeatedly attacks the Pope as the corrupt "high-priest" of an obscene religion which corrupts Christ's body in turn, and then murders Him: "By the dead body of Hope, the spotless lamb / Thou threwest into the high priest's slaughtering-room," he cries (310). He consigns "Pius the Ninth, Judas the Second" and Ferdinand II to hell (296), and attacks the

influence of the Society of Jesus: "Now the last Jesuit
found about thee is / The beast that made thy fouler
flesh his cell" (293).

In "Before a Crucifix," one of the Songs Before Sunrise, Swinburne uses the figure of Christ Himself to attack contemporary Christianity. As the speaker looks at a wayside crucifix before which the poor kneel in prayer, their faces mirroring the agony of Christ's own, he urges the crucified figure to "Look down, turn upward" (82) and see the suffering of the people. But Christ has been corrupted, his suffering exploited by the priests of the tyrannical Roman Catholic Church to serve the ends of their own power and enrichment. Like his representation, with its "blind helpless eyeless face" (81), the God can neither see nor speak:

From thy blind stricken tongueless head
What desolate evangel sounds
A hopeless note of hope deferred?
What word, if there be any word? (84)

There is no hopeful word of God, nor will there ever be one until the concept of "god" is changed.

The Church is then figured as the diseased Bride of Christ, whose embrace has rotted the Body of Christ as well,

So when our souls look back to thee
They sicken, seeing against thy side,
Too foul to speak of or to see,
The leprous likeness of a bride,
Whose kissing lips through his lips
grown
Leave their God rotten to the bone. (87)

So corrupted is the figure of Christ by the false and befouling mystic marriage to the Catholic Church that His body cannot be perceived as independent of its corruption.

The figure on the crucifix, however, is revealed as no more than a man-made construction which blocks the development of mankind's own potential for divinity: "Between us and the sunlight swings / The phantom of a Christless cross" (85). It is the People themselves who have been crucified through the misuse of the "poison" images of Catholicism and, were the truth revealed, "we would see thee man" (87), not God, on the cross. Indeed, the Incarnate Son of God has no "manhood" because he has permitted the misuse of the religion established in his name:

What manhood in that God can be
 Who sees their worship, and is dumb?
 No soul that lived, loved, wrought, and
 died,
 Is this their carrion crucified. (87)²

² Such terms as "manhood" and "manliness," as applied either to Christ or to themselves, held considerable resonance for Victorians like Swinburne and Hopkins. Nelson discerns a gradual shift from the mid-century emphasis on an androgynous ideal, typified by Thomas Hughes's The Manliness of Christ (1879), toward the later emphasis on self-conscious masculinity in the Church of England. Unmanliness came to be connected with Anglo-Catholicism (Hilliard). Nevertheless, Swinburne's revolutionary Christ is constructed on the earlier androgynous model, as was Hopkins's Roman Catholic one. For Hopkins and "manliness" see Munich 51-53, 55. For a general discussion of the Victorian preoccupation with androgyny see Busst.

The church encourages worship of the rotting body of a dying God rather than the spiritual apprehension of the truth which his body should reveal, that man himself is divine (Greenberg 187). There is no comfort in this "carrion crucified."

The representation of the martyred body of Christ, the key element in Hopkins's system of belief, is used, then, as a rhetorical strategy to condemn the Church and, further, to recommend that the reader act to repudiate Christianity and its language. Swinburne moves beyond parody in "Before a Crucifix" in insisting on the necessity of discarding the Christian myth in favor of a new truth, that of the freedom enunciated by the "word" of the poet-narrator (Louie 17-18), through which the republican poet intends to convert his readers to his cause.

Swinburne presents his positive vision, of the religion of man, in "Hertha," which he called his "mystic atheistic democratic anthropologic poem" (Letters 2: 45), turning to the "actual earth's equalities" to develop the concept of godlike man. "Hertha" is a hymn in honor of evolutionary becoming, through which disparate elements are constantly transformed into elements of a new unity (Louie 113). A great earth goddess, Hertha is the single generative force which unites all things: "The search and the sought, and the seeker, the soul and the body that is" (Poems 2: 73).

She is the ceaselessly changing sensory flux of the world, which is also the single unchanging element in the world: "God changes, and man, and the form of them bodily; I am the soul" (72).

Man and earth goddess are made of the same stuff: "Man, equal and one with me, man that is made of me, man that is I" (80). The figure is not a conventional pantheistic deity, then, for she is composed of humanity as well as the natural world, "Man, pulse of my centre, and fruit of my body, and seed of my soul" (79) — the individual human who is born, provides new seed for new fruit, and returns to the earth at death (Riede 111).

Divinity as Hertha describes it requires submission to its rule, however. Just as the Youth in the "Prelude" has "given himself to time" (5), so must mankind also give itself to "growth," which is not however directed toward any goal. Nor does Hertha make moral judgments: both good and evil derive from her (Ridenour 130).

Hertha explains that man gains knowledge of her both through the natural world, which "Makes utterance of me" (76), and by looking within himself: "I am in thee to save thee, / As my soul in thee saith" (75). But mankind continues to misread the evidence of the universe and, like the inhabitants of Calydon, creates from imagination a thunderously wrathful God "With

dayspring and lightning / For lamp and for sword" (78),
 who "With miracles shod, / With the fires of his
 thunders / For raiment and rod" (79) demands painful
 submission to his cruel, life-denying laws. In paying
 homage through prayer and sacrifice to this fabricated
 God, mankind denies its own divinity:

But what thing dost thou now,
 Looking Godward, to cry
 'I am I, thou art thou,
 I am low, thou art high'?
 I am thou, whom thou seekest to find
 him; find thou but thyself,
 thou art I. (73)

In "Hertha" Swinburne denies the I/Thou relationship of devotional speech as well as the efficacy of prayer. Mankind joins with Hertha, its "Mother, not maker" (74), without hierarchy: "Not as servant to lord, nor as master to slave, shalt thou give thee to me" (75). The all-encompassing maternal force asks only man's submission to the single law of change in the natural world, without dogma, for

A creed is a rod,
 And a crown is of night;
 But this things is God,
 To be man with thy might,
 To grow straight in the strength of thy
 spirit, and live out thy life
 as the light. (75)

It is enough that man and nature exist, and are one, for the soul of the natural world which he himself makes up is divine.

Hertha declares that a new world is coming. The false construct of God is in his twilight, passing into

the darkness of lost memories, and as he disappears the rigid creeds which maintained his power will disappear as well, to be replaced by Hertha's single moral imperative. And, with the disappearance of the false God, mankind can find divinity simply by looking around him:

I that saw where ye trod
 The dim paths of the night
 Set the shadow called God
 In your skies to give light;
 But the morning of manhood is risen, and
 the shadow-less soul is in
 sight. (75)

The divine force has been misnamed "God." It now has its proper name, "manhood," and it is visible, "in sight," within the soul of man/nature. As Swinburne constructs a new, and newly visible, God, the metaphors for divine presence are visual ones.

The "Hymn of Man (During the Session in Rome of the OEcumenical Council)" combines the positive and the negative aspects of Swinburne's new religion, as strong images of man's divinity are set against a powerful indictment of the Roman Catholic Church. The occasion for the "Hymn" was the establishment of an Anti-Catholic Council in Naples in 1869 to counter the work of Vatican Council I. Swinburne supported the Anti-Catholic Council in a letter written for publication with William Michael Rossetti, which among other things identified Pius IX as the "vowed agent of Evil" (Letters 2: 53-54). Swinburne wrote Rossetti that he

intended to fulfill a large purpose, however: to herald "the Fall of God" (89) by composing a "'Te Hominem Laudamus' to sing the human triumph over 'things' — the opposing forces of life and nature — and over the God of his own creation, till he attain truth, self-sufficiency, and freedom" (37).

The "Hymn of Man" opens with a question: at the beginning of time, "The word of the earth in the ears of the world, was it God? was it man?" (Poems 2: 93). A secularized version of the Christian creation myth will answer the question. Man is born to freedom, and his soul embodies the spiritual principle of the universe, but he arises out of chaos only to fall by becoming a slave through submission to kings and priests. However, an intellectual, spiritual and political revolution is coming which will overthrow the man-created false gods and rulers, when "man thy slave shall unmake thee, who made thee lord over man" (100).

Swinburne repeats his Herthean assertion that man is himself a god, although now a "shamed and sorrowful" one who is "sore stricken of things!" (97), "fast-bound as with iron of adverse things" (96), "storm-worn" with the "thunder of things" (97). In the "Hymn," as he does throughout his work, Swinburne inflects the meanings of a single word through repetition. "Things" are the multiform, powerful, often disastrous, and seemingly random realities of the world which hold back

man from achieving his own divinity: "Things are cruel and blind; their strength detains and deforms" (97).

Mankind feels helpless because organized religion has filled it with the "dread" (116) that, in such a universe, it is powerless without a Savior external to it to preserve it (Louie 102). But the Christian promises of redemption are no more than lies, and, under oppression, humanity follows an unseen and illusory leader: "The herds of kings and their hosts and the flocks of the high priests bow / To a master whose face is a ghost's" (Poems 2: 98). Things can be overcome only by the spirit of man, whose redemption lies within his own power: "Make now for thyself expiation, and be thine atonement for thee" (99).

While mankind's subjugation to the "malice of things" is in part a false one promoted by kings and priests, it also reflects an existential situation, which can be eased only when humanity recognizes its own possibility of divinity, becoming its own "master." The repetition of the word "master" parallels the repetition of "things," with the "truth" of the relationship that man himself is "master of things" (98).

Swinburne now defines the possibility of divinity within humanity more fully. The true God is "in each man of all men, . . . but the fruit of the whole; / Indivisible spirit and blood" (96). This "manifold God" (96) is powerful even though each man recognizes

that he "is servant with Change for lord" (98), for his regeneration through sexual generation defeats death: "In the sea whereof centuries are waves the live God plunges and swims; / His bed is in all men's graves, but the worm hath not hold on his limbs" (96). Mankind will achieve immortality through producing later generations which recognize their own power and proclaim that the "word of the earth" from the beginning of time is indeed the man-god. Leading the way, the revolutionary poet proclaims the word of the earth to the world.

In the "Hymn of Man" the Roman Catholic God is dead and wordless, as he was in "Before a Crucifix." At the end of his lengthy attack Swinburne taunts the followers of Christ to prove that their God still has power: "cry on him then till he show you a sign, till he lift up a rod" and make the nations know him (102):

Cry aloud; for your God is a God and a
Saviour; cry, make yourselves lean;
Is he drunk or asleep, that the rod of
his wrath is unfelt and unseen?
.
Hath he gazed on himself unto blindness,
who made men blind to behold? . . .
By the spirit he ruled as his slave is
he slain who was mighty to slay,
.
Where he stood there is nothing that
stands; if he call, there is no man
that hears. . . .
O God, Lord God of thy priests, rise up
now and show thyself God.
They cry out, thine elect, thine
aspirants to heavenward, whose
faith is as flame;
O thou the Lord God of our tyrants, they

call thee, their God, by thy name.
 By thy name that in hell-fire was
 written, and burned at the point
 of thy sword,
 Thou art smitten, thou God, thou art
 smitten; thy death is upon thee,
 O Lord.
 And the love-song of earth as thou diest
 resounds through the wind of her
 wings —
 Glory to Man in the highest! For Man is
 the master of things. (103-04)

Visual proof of the presence of the "Lord God of
 thy priests" is demanded. But although the faithful
 call him by name, God does not show himself. No answer
 is received because Christianity's God is a false and
 illusory God, and, in part because of the power of the
 poetry which represents his absence, he is now dead.
 The poet can join in singing the "love-song of earth,"
 which is a song of humanity and freedom, and which can
 now be heard because of the death of God. Swinburne
 represents response to the song of the earth, then, as
 validation of man's own divinity; conversely, the fail-
 ure to respond to demands for visual and aural signs of
 his presence is proof that the Christian God is dead.

Swinburne's project in the two volumes of Songs is
 threefold: to expose and destroy the cruel constructs
 of Christianity, to define the religion of man which
 will replace them, and to make converts to his vision
 of society. The volumes represent a sharp change in
 focus and approach from his earlier works. In Atalanta
in Calydon and Poems Before Sunrise First Series, Swin-

burne had represented, again and again, the divine contraries of life, in which seeming opposites — light and dark, pain and pleasure — were inevitably implicated in each other. In "Hertha" Swinburne is the poet of becoming, representing the merging of seeming opposites into a single divine principle of unity. While some sense of a tension between oppositions is maintained, most of the other Songs are poems of exhortation which tend to represent two opposing positions which cannot be resolved. One must defeat the other. The underlying belief may be in the world-picture which Hertha presents, but Swinburne urges mankind, again and again, to join with others in the fight against clearly defined enemies, and locates the sense of human unity, not in the blending of opposites, but in the striving together with others toward an eagerly desired future victory.

In the poetry of the 1860s, desire was directed toward other human beings. In the Songs, it is the source of political action: St. Catherine, for example, went forward to Avignon "Clothed with calm love and clear desire." As the "Prelude" indicated, and as "A Marching Song" demonstrates, political desire results from the control and redirection of erotic desire. "We," the forces of liberty, march with the light toward inevitable future success: "Time, foot by foot, gives back before our sheer desire" (151), for "Our

march is everlasting till time's march be done" (152). In joining together, the marchers rise above the sensual attractions of the earth and overcome the "Desires that urge the sense" (152). Newly dedicated, they "bear witness" that a time of unity will come, bringing "nations undivided, / O single people and free" (153).

But where is "Milton's England" (154)? England seems to be dead as she is led by "mindless" masters allied with "fanged meridian vermin" (155). Still, there is hope, for like all of mankind, England can resurrect herself ("Ask of thyself for grace" [156]), and Swinburne urges her to do so and to join the revolutionaries in their march toward freedom. The future is theirs.

Swinburne's further declared intention in the Songs is to bring about conversions to his world view, not only by individual readers of his poetry but, in keeping with the belief that "all men" make up the "manifold God," by whole countries as well. In "The Eve of Revolution," where he defines the role which the trumpet of poetry can play in that important effort, he poses two questions: "Who is against us? who is on our side?" (20). Praising the countries whose citizens already support revolution, he moves to effect a change in those who do not. The noise of Swinburne's trumpet has the ability to awaken nations at all points of the

compass: Asia, Greece; inhabitants of the north pole, Poland, Russia; England, France, Spain, Italy. However, as he does in "A Marching Song," "The Litany of Nations," "A Watch in the Night" and "Perinde Ac Cadaver," Swinburne bemoans and berates England's inaction for not supporting the revolutionary cause of Liberty. Again, England, "Milton's land" (19), does not listen to the word of the earth and the sea. Unlike Milton's, her blindness does not lead to insight, and her soul is fallen through "sick weakness of a broken will / To the dead cold damnation of disgrace" (20). Once again, England appears to be dead. The power of the poet's word, however, may bring about her resurrection:

O thou, clothed round with raiment of
 white waves,
 Thy brave brows lightening through
 the grey wet air,
 Thou, lulled with sea-sounds of a
 thousand caves,
 And lit with sea-shine to thine
 inland lair,
 Whose freedom clothed the naked souls of
 slaves
 And stripped the muffled souls of
 tyrants bare,
 O, by the centuries of thy glorious
 graves,
 By the live light of the earth that
 was thy care,
 Live, thou must not be dead,
 Live; let thine armèd head
 Lift itself up to sunward and the fair
 Daylight of time and man,
 Thine head republican,
 With the same splendour on thine helm-
 less hair

That in his eyes kept up a light
 Who on thy glory gazed away their sacred
 sight[.] (17-18)

Invoking the "sons of . . . [her] womb" who gave their lives for liberty in the past, Swinburne exhorts his country to lift her "head republican" and restore the splendor which Milton had attested to.

Swinburne continues to exhort England by invoking the beauties of its landscape, the "dear life-springs of England," the "bright race of streams and waters" (20). The elements of British nature are part of the "natural force in spirit and sense, that art / One thing in all things," and that one thing fills waters, woodlands, growing trees, hills, and valleys to hold "one choral sway" over the entire earth (24-25). The names of the natural force are "Swift Revolution," "Serene Republic," and "Freedom, whence the soul's springs ran" (25).

It is now midnight on many of the mountains of earth, Swinburne writes, but the dawn of freedom approaches even though it has not yet arrived. In another exhortation the poet attempts to bring it into sight:

O love long looked for, wherefore wilt
 thou wait,
 And shew not yet the dawn on thy
 bright hair,
 Not yet thine hand released
 Refreshing the faint east
 Thine hand reconquering heaven, to seat
 man there?
 Come forth, be born and live,

Thou that hast help to give
 And light to make man's day of manhood
 fair:
 With flight outflying the spherèd sun,
 Hasten thine hour and halt not, till thy
 work be done. (25-26)

Resurrected England, pledged to the cause of Swift Revolution, is represented as a long-awaited figure which will appear in the bright dawn. She is the first in a series of images of giant figures through which Swinburne will figure the hoped-for arrival of freedom.

The figures need to be interpreted, however. The "Epilogue" of Songs Before Sunrise introduces another giant figure, but here it is in fact absent from sight and can be known only through the "keen and burning signs" as they are interpreted by men such as the leaders of the Risorgimento, "who see / And hear things far other than we" (233). The poet can represent those signs, and he also has the power to interpret them, and to name the figure as "Freedom," as Swinburne will continue to do in his next volume of Songs.

Even brief summaries of the republican poetry give a sense of Swinburne's hectoring, repetitive efforts to convert his readers to the religion of man. Songs of Two Nations, which was published in 1875, the year of the Deutschland disaster, intensifies both the repetitiveness and the tone. In it, as in Songs Before Sunrise, Swinburne presents "A Choice": here, between "Faith false or true, born patriot or born priest."

Faith in the spirit of man is "visible music," and through its power Swinburne's readers can overcome all opposing beliefs, and "Kill the beast faith that lives on its own dung" (300). Swinburne again employs tropes of vision, as he represents the appearance of figures similar to that of England in "The Eve of Revolution" to represent the hoped-for results of revolution.

In "A Song of Italy," the poet recounts that as he gazed across the "clear gulf of night" (249) a great figure arose before his eyes, and as she "clove . . . / Through night and dawn and day — / So fair a presence over star and sun / Stood" (250). The figure, not surprisingly, is Freedom. Swinburne relates the vision to his own conversion, for seeing her has inspired him to write in her cause (Riede 108).

Freedom "Rose, as from the sacred seas / Love, when old time was full of plenteous springs" (253). But she differs from the love of former times: she is "A woman like to love in face, but not / A thing of transient lot" (249). The figure of Freedom rises as Venus rose from the sea in Atalanta in Calydon, but Swinburne has converted the goddess to the cause of republicanism, and he portrays the renamed personification as an altogether more stable principle than that represented by the goddess of erotic desire.

Freedom has taken the place of the Virgin Mary as well, for she is also described as "highest in heaven,

a mother and full of grace, / With no more covered face" (253). The two deities whom Swinburne had opposed in "Hymn to Proserpine" coalesce to form a single powerful figure which combines sacred and profane versions of love, for the converted figure can unite the whole world in love. Venus and the Virgin Mary have been transformed into a single figure representing a political version of caritas.

Throughout the "Song of Italy" the name "Freedom" is modified. The figure becomes "Italy," and then is reborn as the "rose of resurrection" (254), and renamed the "Republic." However, Italy and the Republic are not yet identical. The Italian people are urged to recognize the need for revolution and to give honor to Garibaldi, Father of his country. Swinburne's own praises honoring the leader of the Risorgimento continue for seven pages (263-270).

In answering the call to act on behalf of Freedom, however, the people of Italy risk death. Swinburne had seen anomalies in the Christian embrace of martyrdom which he had parodied in such poems as "St. Dorothy." In the "Hymn to Proserpine" he had related martyrdom, like all ascetic practices, to sado-masochism, and exposed as a contradiction a God who proves immortality by dying (Morgan, "Sex and Ideology" 193). However, in the Songs, Swinburne redefines martyrdom as at the farthest remove from ascetic self-denial. The individ-

ual who dies for freedom lives fully and takes the "world's life on him" (Riede 110). His sacrifice provides a form of redemption for other human beings.

The two volumes of Songs constitute a martyrology of the religion of mankind. Swinburne had explained in a letter to his mother in 1867 that he understood why the followers of Mazzini were ready to die for him: "I know, now that I have seen him, what I guessed before, why, whenever he said to anyone, 'Go and be killed because I tell you,' they have gone and been killed because he told them. Who wouldn't, I should like to know?" (Letters 1: 237). Works such as "Super Flumina Babylonis" "Blessed Among Women," "A Song of Italy," and "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic" celebrate the sacrifices of the heroes who have died fighting against the Papacy and its supporters, in the cause of the French Republic and of the Risorgimento.

In "A Song of Italy" the martyrs, led by the "priest" Mazzini, and driven by the hope for a "priestless Rome that shall be" (Poems 2: 272), redeem the earth. The deaths of revolutionaries is redemptive, as Christ's never was: their "sacred blood is fragrant still / Upon the Bitter Hill" (262), and their "blood-sacrifice" is "A holier immolation than men wist, / A costlier eucharist, / A sacrament more saving" (272). The martyrs have earned a sort of earthly immortality by becoming part of the song of the earth where, buried

in the earth with "shut eyes," they will nevertheless experience the "flash and flow [of] the fiery sense, / The pulse of prescience" until the end of time (272).

However, the citizens of Swinburne's own country are not among the heroes. "The torpor of their blind brute-ridden trance / Kills England and chills France" (252). Once again, England lags behind the rest of Europe in her embrace of republicanism. But Swinburne once again sees a possible resurrection of his own "faded" country, if it follows the lead of Italy, which he praises as

thou that wast
With England ere she past
Among the faded nations, and shalt be
Again, when sea to sea
Calls through the wind and light of
morning time,
And throneless clime to clime
Makes antiphonal answer. (273)

The master of antiphonal poetry prophesizes that, in a republican future, the life of nature, mankind, and nations will make antiphonal answer to each other and will be made one.

Swinburne continues his martyrology in "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic," and with much of the same imagery. The occasion of the "Ode" was the short-lived victory over the government of Louis Napoleon by republican forces, but the Republic was brought to a rapid end by the successful invasion of France by Prussian forces under Bismarck. The long poem is verbose, and extreme in its espousal of revolu-

tionary hope, but in this it is typical of a good deal of Swinburne's republican poetry, and it gives a clear, if somewhat tedious, picture of the flow of his argument in the Songs.

The "Ode" opens with a celebration of victory as, "With songs and crying and sounds of acclamations" the "fallen" rise, for "the word is out among the nations" (279). The word is exultant: "Yours were all yesterdays, but this day ours" (279). The dawn of a new time is heralded in the familiar imagery of resurrection and light, and the appearance of the risen figure of Liberty is anticipated. But how can the people rejoice in a "bride-feast" when the morning comes "walking between doom and dread" with "the night's dead heaped about her feet"? (280). "Deep shame and sore desire" had fed men, but the longed-for change brought death, for Liberty has not appeared. The country despairs:

Is it by such light that we live to
 see
 Rise, with rent hair and raiment,
 Liberty?
 Does her grave open only to restore her
 dead?
 Ah, was it this we looked for,
 looked and prayed? (280-81)

Darkness gives way to sunrise as the revolution succeeds, but the cost may have been too high, for many heroes have died, and still Freedom does not appear. "Where is freedom? who will bring us in her sight?" the poet asks (281). The answer is that he himself will do

so. The now-familiar rising, giant figure appears, and the immediate question is how to name that figure: "Who is this that rises red with wounds and splendid,/ . . . Burning bare as naked daylight?" (281).

The figure is identified as France through a varied repetition of epithets. She is the "many-wounded mother,"

purged at last and perfect without
spot or stain,
Light of the light of man,
Reborn republican,
At last, O first Republic, hailed in
heaven again!
Out of the obscene eclipse
Rerisen, with burning lips
To witness for us if we looked for thee
in vain. (282)

In addition to being the "Light," "France," and the "first Republic," the figure is also called "Liberty," "Love," "Freedom," and "mother." The figure who has risen from the dead to proclaim the law of "manhood to mankind" (282) has many names and, although they are not yet joined together through revolutionary action, all of the names are aspects of a single force within the universe.

The risen figure of the Republic will inspire her people and unite them in a single purpose, by exchanging gazes with them:

Ah, but her fiery eyes, her eyes are
these
That, gazing, make thee shiver to
the knees
And the blood leap within thee, and the
strong joy rise.

exists within the "will" of each individual, giving
 "Power to make, save, and kill, / Knowledge and choice,
 to take extremities and weigh" (286).

The poet calls upon that spirit of man to "Break
 for them now time's iron mesh" and make himself present
 to the French people, as "Heaven to be handled, hope
 made flesh" (286). For the people are calling for
 their king:

O thou the kingless people's king,
 To whom the lips of silence sing,
 Called by thy name of thanksgiving
 Freedom, and by thy name of might
 Justice, and by thy secret name
 Love[.] (287)

Although the French people are tired, bloody, and
 bruised, they nevertheless sing praises to the spirit
 of man, who is "Freedom," "Justice," and "Love." His
 figure appears at last, and the two personifications
 look into each others eyes:

And from their eyes in thine there gazes
 A spirit other far than sorrow —
 A soul triumphal, white and whole
 And single, that salutes thy soul. (287)

As in "A Song of Italy" variously named per-
 sonifications give each other strength through their
 commingled gazes, as their souls are joined and made
 "single." United, they control the cosmos. From the
 union a redeemed Paris is born and, somewhat con-
 fusingly, a third gaze is exchanged. As the infant
 city grasps the "large exulting limbs" of its giant
 mother

Face kindles face with fire,
 Hearts take and give desire,
 Strange joy breaks red as tempest on
 tormented lands.
 Day to day, man to man,
 Plights love republican,
 And faith and memory burn with passion
 toward each other. (288)

Alike in their desires, memories, and faith,
 mother and child plight love republican. Through multiple gazes, then, France, Paris, and the French people, all embodying the spirit of man, inspire and strengthen each other's desire for Freedom.

And, inspired, France is able to interpret the meaning of the deaths of her children, who are also her soul. Truth has risen with the figure of Freedom. The people of France are saved, despite the destruction which the revolution has caused. Truth reveals that the source of good brings also disruption and death, thunder and tempest, as it joins in cosmic marriage with the French people. But the supreme sacrifices of those who died in the cause of freedom prove to be redemptive ones, resulting in recognition of the strength of the all-encompassing unity of the soul of man. Beneath the appearance of disaster, then, those who interpret correctly, with faith in the controlling power of Freedom, see and name the agent of the disaster properly.

The "Ode" ends with a jubilant chant, as it had begun. While the rest of the earth reacted with sadness, the soul of man saw things aright, and the deaths

In only thee put gladness,
 Put strength and love, to make all
 hearts of ages love thee.
 That in death's face thy chant
 Arose up jubilant,
 And thy great heart with thy great peril
 grew more great. (290)

A joyous cry is the proper response to the long
 night and troubled sunrise of the Republic. The deaths
 of the martyrs redeem their country, and their names
 live in memory along with the name of France:

This shall all years remember;
 For this thing shall September
 Have only name of honour, only sign of
 white.
 And this year's fearful name,
 France, in thine house of fame
 Above all names of all thy triumphs
 shalt thou write,
 When, seeing thy freedom stand
 Even at despair's right hand,
 The cry thou gavest at heart was only of
 delight. (290)

The long process of naming ends with "France," but it
 is only a partial name for the soul of man, one of many
 names of honor that the years bring.

In the "Ode on the Proclamation of the French
 Republic" Swinburne represents the constantly changing
 Herthean flux, which is the only reality, through the
 constantly changing names of his amorphous giant fig-
 ures. In the song of the earth images melt into each
 other, only to reappear. Repetition and length add to
 the effect. The reader is swept up in a Wagnerian flow
 of echoing language, through which elusive leitmotifs
 return, slightly modulated, and through which every-

thing — disaster, death, marriage, maternity, redemption — is conceived on a cosmic scale. Swinburne's avowed aim is conversion, and he tries to achieve it, not by reasoned argument, but in part through creating "l'état d'exception" of Symbolist poetics, which mesmerizes the reader into a trance-like state of being in which that reader is open to suggestive imagery.

Nevertheless, the kaleidoscopic imagery in both the "Ode" and the "Song of Italy" also carries an underlying argument. A situation in the past is represented: mankind was, or perhaps continues to be, held as a slave in bondage through the oppressiveness of the rule of kings and church. Mankind has accepted the bondage because, in its blindness, it does not recognize its own participation with the rest of nature in self-sufficient divinity. Speaking for mankind, the poet calls for a visible answer to questions: where is the controlling force in the universe? If that force is benign, how can martyrdom be explained? The poet calls upon the cosmic figure to appear, and his call is answered by the appearance of a figure. The question then becomes how to identify the cosmic force. Through a process of naming it is found to be the many aspects of the "soul of man," and it brings with it a new faith which joins mankind, nature, and revolutionary action into a quasi-divine whole. The death of martyrs in the cause is found to be redemptive, for through their

action they may inspire whole nations, like England, to rise from the dead in a republican resurrection. The poet transmits the word of the new faith to his readers and to nations, whom he then calls upon to convert to its message.

As a way to make a positive argument for conversion, Swinburne employs several sorts of tropes. He envisions the republican future through the natural imagery announced in "The Prelude" to Songs Before Sunrise as proper to its representation. He makes frequent use of personifications, in particular the giant rising figures which represent various aspects of the spirit of man. He employs, as well, insistent parodies of Christian tropes, as he had in the poems through which he discredited Christianity. Redemptive death, resurrection, and mystic marriage are emptied of their Christian context and appropriated in the argument for the need to convert to the cause of Freedom. In making his negative argument, against repressive Christianity, Swinburne employs a negative version of the mythic pattern. In the "Hymn of Man," demands upon the Christian God to make himself known to his people go unanswered. Confronted by silence, the poet announces the death of God, and a future where man himself will be god as the morning of manhood rises. Tropes of vision are prominent in both cases. Divine Freedom is seen; the Christian God is not. However he chose to conceive a

power which raised individuals beyond the mundane, Swinburne often employed metaphors of vision.

In the 1860s Swinburne had represented human sexuality as to some degree a version of immanent divinity: Venus is "Clothed round with the world's desire as with raiment." Beyond that, neither humanity nor the natural world reflected the existence of any power greater than itself. By the mid-1870s, Swinburne had been transformed into the "choral-souled boy-priest" writing of love republican which he had pledged himself to become as the blood of a crucified Italy dripped onto his body in his vision in "Siena." Swinburne's religion of man equated humanity, nature, and soul, which, if they united in revolutionary action, could attain divinity. Looking at the natural world or other human beings, with faith in the revolution, and desire for its redemptive arrival, revealed the joint divinity. Still, for all that he represented the forces of revolution in cosmic terms, Swinburne's eyes were focussed on the here and now, and it is there that he found his version of divinity as well as the imagery to represent it.

Chapter 8

Swinburne and The Wreck of the Deutschland:

"The faithless fable and miss"

The startling originality of The Wreck of the Deutschland has long been a critical given. Hopkins's linking of natural disaster, virginal martyrdom, a possible visionary experience, and conversion has been treated as sui generis, born from a burst of idiosyncratic genius. It would appear that nothing which Hopkins had written earlier could prepare the reader for the choice of subject, nor explain the sudden verbal exuberance, and passionate joy, which mark its style. However, The Deutschland, in fact, represents a return to earlier themes, and once again, as in the earlier poems, Swinburne has led the way.

Like "St. Dorothea," The Deutschland is concerned with conversion, virginity and martyrdom, and with representing the miraculous entrance of divinity into the universe. Like "Ad Mariam" and "Rosa Mystica," it explores the way in which it is possible to perceive that divinity within the world of nature, and to represent it in poetry. These are themes which also characterize Swinburne's poetry in the 1870s, and I will argue that Swinburne's continuing efforts to fash-

ion a new political and religious mythos, through a newly activist poetry, have left a strong mark on Hopkins's great ode.

The Wreck of the Deutschland is subtitled "to the happy memory of five Franciscan nuns, exiles by the Falck Laws, drowned between midnight and morning of December 7 [1875]" (Poetical 119). The Deutschland had foundered in a storm at the mouth of the Thames after sailing from Bremen, and, although its passengers had hoped for rescue through a stormy night, many, including the nuns, died from cold or drowning before help came. The occasion for Hopkins's ode is the result of the Prussian reaction to the decrees of Vatican Council I. The nuns were aboard the doomed ship as a result of the expulsion of Roman Catholic clergy and religious from Germany under the "May Laws" of 1875.

As the last Chapter indicated, the Council had declared the infallibility and the primacy of the Roman pontiff before it disbanded under military threat in 1870, and had endorsed the Syllabus of Errors, which declared anathema any positions which deny the supremacy of the Church over secular authority. In Italy, the revolutionary forces of the Risorgimento had successfully opposed Papal power in their drive to unite Italy under a secular government. The same effort toward secularization was made in Germany, although it took place under the reactionary aegis of

Prussian Prince Otto von Bismarck, who would forge a unified German nation under the rule of the Hohenzollern dynasty (Wells 2: 442).

In reaction to the Syllabus and the announced increase in Papal power, Bismarck worked to isolate his country's Roman Catholics from the still-powerful Holy See, and under his direction Dr. Falk, the Minister of Public Worship and Education, framed legislation which replaced ecclesiastical authority with civil authority in Prussia. When the clergy refused to comply, the state closed and confiscated monasteries and convents, and imprisoned or exiled the defiant bishops, priests and religious. The Franciscan nuns who drowned in the Deutschland disaster had been expelled from a convent at Salzkotten, in Westphalia (Street 1-44).

In his two volumes of Songs Swinburne, dedicated to the cause of revolutionary action to free nations from religious control, had interpreted political events on a cosmic scale in poem after poem during a decade of military conflict, and had celebrated the martyrs who died in the cause of freedom. In the Deutschland disaster, Hopkins found a natural event which could also be interpreted on a cosmic scale, as the aurora of 1870 had been, from the Roman Catholic point of view. The deaths of the nuns, the result of anti-clerical feeling, were considered to be martyrdoms

by a large segment of the Roman Catholic public.¹ Hopkins saw the wreck of the Deutschland, not as a sign of God's anger, but as a sign of the saving grace which lies behind the appearance of disaster, and of the redemptive power in the deaths of martyrs in the cause of the Church.

The Deutschland stands directly opposed to Swinburne's repeated calls for the conversion of England to the cause of anti-clerical revolution in the Songs. Hopkins ends his ode with a call for the conversion of England, and, indeed, made conversion one of its central themes, but it was to be conversion to the Roman Catholic Church. As Elisabeth Schneider writes,

Stated baldly, the poem is an ode on conversion, conversion to the Catholic Church. The main theme of Part the First is [Hopkins's] own conversion: that of Part the Second, the hoped-for conversion of all England, for which certain events connected with the shipwreck are conceived as the spark and the signal. . . . Among Hopkins's most abiding hopes and deepest longings was the wish that England might become Catholic, not in some remote future time, but soon, or now.
(Schneider 14)

Critics have tended to shy away from the uncomfortable implications of a Roman Catholic England. Some of those implications can be glimpsed in a series of sermons which Hopkins gave in Liverpool in January

¹ Street provides useful details of the political and religious pressures which contributed to making the Deutschland disaster a cause célèbre in both England and Germany.

1880 on the "Kingdom of God." He had intended these as discussions of political philosophy, but his superiors, apparently objecting to references to the fall of God's first kingdom, cut the series short. Still, they give some idea of the theological underpinnings of Hopkins's political philosophy.

In the sermons, Hopkins described the lost kingdom of original justice. Following Scotus, Hopkins believed that, in God's original design for the cosmos, Christ would have entered as King and High Priest into a sinless world. However, the original contract between God and Adam and Eve demanded "loyal submission" (Sermons 57) from subject to sovereign, and Adam and Eve, seduced by the "studied words of double meaning" of the serpent Satan, rebelled in the cause of "freedom" (65). Through their primal disobedience, the covenant of God's commonwealth was broken. Since that time, only grace can restore mankind to the state of innocent purity destroyed by original sin. And

now, sanctifying grace is given in baptism and the political justice of belonging to the Catholic Church, to which with the age of reason there either must accede that personal or free justice which depends on free contract or personal and actual sin and injustice and with it the loss of sanctifying grace, but not, in a Catholic, the loss of political justice of communion with the Church. (68)

Hopkins's third sermon ends rather mysteriously. What did he mean by the "political justice of belonging

to the Catholic Church"? It is only possible to speculate, as Christopher Devlin does, that Hopkins "had originally meant his trilogy to end in a demonstration that the Catholic Church as an organized society is the only possible successor to the lost kingdom of Paradise" (Sermons 280, note 68.2).

The Vatican Council's Syllabus of Errors, which the Society of Jesus had vigorously supported, was entirely clear in maintaining the primacy of clerical over secular rule: it declared anathema any propositions which "deny the freedom of the Church and its nature as true and perfect society, subjecting it rather to the laws and authority of the state" ("Syllabus of Errors" 854). For any Catholic, not to believe that Catholic polity superseded secular power was a sin. Hopkins presents a theological background for the Council's declarations, but he goes a step further, coming close to connecting the political justice of the Catholic Church, which would include a restoration of Roman Catholic rule in England, with the bestowal of God's grace. From that point of view, conversion was a matter of urgency if the souls of the English people were to be saved, as was the need to oppose Swinburne's efforts in the other direction.

Hopkins employed a distinctive irregular ode form in The Deutschland. That form, a version of which Milton had used in the Hymn of the "Nativity Ode," had

been reintroduced into English poetry by Swinburne (Havens 684; Schneider 80), and each of three irregular odes which Swinburne published between 1866 and 1871 also involve themes specific to The Deutschland. The main theme of "To Victor Hugo," published in Poems and Ballads First Series, is exile, and it also repeats familiar concerns and images from other works of Swinburne. Man cannot perceive "God or Chance," for night covers the "hollow hiding-place of clouds and stars / Where nought save these is sure in sight" (Poems 1: 146). The life of blindly ignorant man life is circumscribed; still, "One thing we can; to be / Awhile, as men may, free" (1: 146). Hugo has made a move toward freedom, and his defiant self-exile from France contrasts favorably with Christ's slave-like death:

As once the high God bound
 With many a rivet round
 Man's saviour, and with iron nailed him
 through . . .
 So the strong God, the chance
 Central of circumstance,
 Still shows him exile who will not be
 slave[.] (1: 149)

"Blessed Among Women: To the Signora Cairoli" memorializes the death of two of the Cairoli sons, Enrico and Giovanni, who died fighting with Mazzini against Papal forces at Rome in 1867 (Solmi 126). Again, themes and images are familiar ones. The poem equates the birth of the four Cairoli children to the birth of Christ ("Four times a godlike soldier-saviour

hung" at their mother's breast [Poems 2: 56]), and through Marian language the Signora is equated with the Virgin. As he did in "A Song of Italy" with the names of Garibaldi and Mazzini, Swinburne praises and elevates the Cairoli name, which becomes "equal" with that of Italy:

[H]enceforth no man's breath,
Saying 'Italy,' but saith
In that most sovereign word thine equal
name[.] (59)

The extravagance continues. In honor of the grieving mother, all of nature sends forth its praise: "Love like a clear sky spread / Bends over thy loved head," the poet proclaims, until the sky burns

With passion-coloured glories of lit
souls;
And thine above all names
Writ highest with lettering
flames[.] (60)

Swinburne also employed the irregular eight-line stanza which Hopkins used in The Deutschland for the opening strophe and corresponding antistrophe of the "Ode on the Insurrection in Candia" (Schneider 80). In the first strophe Swinburne mourns, through the weary and bleeding figure of Freedom, the deaths of heroes who died for Greece during an uprising in 1867 (Poems 2: 200). As the people cry out and the earth mourns, the poet prays that his "song release / The thought weak words confine" (202) to help bring victory and peace. Like France in "Ode on the Proclamation of the

French Republic," Greece awaits a mystical bridegroom who has not yet come. Swinburne prays that holy Freedom will rise and turn her shining face toward Greece to release the country's chained slaves and "darken the face of kings" (208).

Taken together, the three odes in which Swinburne introduced the irregular eight-line stanza form share with The Deutschland the themes of exile and martyrdom in national causes. Like so much of Swinburne's other poetry they involve, as well, a cosmic event in which all nature is implicated, as well as such Christian tropes as mystic marriage and redemptive death. And in "Ode on the Insurrection in Candia" Swinburne once again evokes the image of a long-awaited figure which will bring with it the hope of a new dawn. It is one of several elements which the "Ode" shares with "A Song of Italy" and "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic."

In "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic," as Chapter Seven indicates, the setting is a scene of cosmic disaster. Speaking for mankind, which is held in bondage by a repressive government allied to the Roman Catholic Church, the poet calls upon the controlling force of the universe to make itself known and to bring about a release from oppression. The call is answered by the appearance of a figure which needs to be identified. A visual description is given. After a

series of identifying names are also given, they are recognized to be aspects of a single force. Martyrs in the cause which the figure represents are memorialized, and their deaths are seen as redemptive, for through their actions they may inspire entire nations to follow them. The poet transmits the word of the faith which the figure represents to other nations, whom he calls upon to convert to his message. The poems end in exultant recognition of the victory of the right and hope for the future, as the cry of the martyred is seen as a "cry of delight."

In the republican poems, Swinburne identified the controlling force of the universe as "Freedom," who appeared to rescue mankind from slavery under the bondage of kings and the Roman Catholic Church. To point of Christianity's failures, Swinburne reversed the trope of calling in the "Hymn of Man," written in opposition to the forces of bondage. There, he called in vain upon the Christian God to make himself known, and in the answering silence the poet proclaimed his new religion of man.

The Deutschland is a double narrative. Part the First recounts a critical personal religious experience, which is not identified but clearly involves Hopkins's own conversion and perhaps his choice of vocation as well (MacKenzie, Poetical 324). It is also a

declaration of belief and an exploration of the proper relationship between God and man.

Part the Second narrates the wreck and its consequences. It presents a moment of apparent disaster, the result of the oppression by a repressive government. The nuns who died in the Deutschland's wreck are martyred in the just cause of the Roman Catholic Church. One of the nuns invokes the controlling force of the Christian universe: she "Was calling 'O Christ, Christ, come quickly'" (Poetical 125, line 191). She had a visionary experience, involving an unusual appearance in the midst of the storm, which requires interpretation. The central event in the poem is the effort to interpret the cry, and the nature of what she saw: "What did she mean?," the poet asks (line 193). The cosmic force is identified, in part through a series of names, as Christ. The poet affirms that the effects of the nuns' martyrdom may be redemptive, for they may bring about the conversions of other passengers lost in the disaster, and perhaps even the conversion of entire nations. The Deutschland ends on a note of exuberant affirmation of God, and with a prayer for the conversion of England.

Far from being sui generis, The Deutschland follows the pattern which Swinburne established in "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic," and elements

of which he repeated in "A Song of Italy" and "Ode on the Insurrection in Candia," with remarkable fidelity.

In his appropriations from Swinburne in The Deutschland Hopkins moves well beyond the radically derivative "Ad Mariam." The ode incorporates a strong counter-text, whose language, as in the earlier Hopkins's poems, has been converted to serve ends which that language had originally opposed. The Swinburnian echoes are often compressed versions of diffuse and scattered images, unremarkable in themselves, and the effect of the bricolage is a cumulative one. It requires consideration within the thematic context. The result is a textual interplay which is made complex not only by the conversions of fragments of Swinburnian language, but by Swinburne's own tropic modulations over two decades of poetry.

The opening stanza of The Deutschland defines the cosmic setting of the ode, and defines the way in which Hopkins will express his themes:

Thou mastering me
 God! giver of breath and
 bread;
 World's strand, sway of the sea;
 Lord of living and dead;
 Thou hast bound bones and veins in
 me, fastened me flesh,
 And after it almost unmade, what with
 dread,
 Thy doing: and dost thou touch me
 afresh?
 Over again I feel thy finger and find
 thee. (119, lines
 1-8; my emphasis)

Hopkins opens with a picture of fortunate cosmic bondage. In much of his republican poetry, Swinburne had set images of slavery and bondage, under the yoke of Roman Catholicism, against images of freedom. In The Deutschland the stress is also upon freedom, but it is paradoxically defined as the willing obedience to God's stern laws.

In his sermons on "God's Kingdom," Hopkins preached that under proper governance within a divine commonwealth "we are God's things,. . . his slaves (Sermons 54); "we are his property and he our master and owner" (55). In their relationship as "master" and "thing," both God and man are "duty bound to strive, . . . the sovereign by the weight of his authority, the subject by the stress of his obedience" (58). For this striving relationship Christ Himself set the example.

The first words of The Deutschland, "Thou mastering me / God!," define the proper relationship between man and divinity. There are no Herthean equalities: God masters man. Indeed, Hopkins emphasizes the word "master" throughout the ode. He prays that God will master all of mankind: "With an anvil-ding / And with fire . . . melt him but master him still" (Poetical 121, lines 73-76); "Make . . . out of us all / Mastery" (lines 79-80). The dying nun acknowledges the proper relationship in "calling / A master, her master and mine!" (124, lines 145-46), and at her moment of

vision she perceives "the Master" (126, line 220). For God rules the natural world, as "master of the tides" (127, line 249). The relationship stands in stark contrast to Swinburne's vision of a perfect polity.

In its repetitive emphasis upon "master," conjoined with "thing," The Deutschland appropriates Swinburne's technique in the "Hymn of Man" where, through repetition, he nuances the meanings of both "master" and "thing" to arrive at the truth of the relationship. Deriding the kings and "flocks of the high priests" who "bow / To a master whose face is a ghost's" (Poems 2: 98), Swinburne constructs a universe where godlike man, free at last from the slavery imposed by Church and repressive state, is "the master of things!" (104).

Hopkins's first stanza also works changes on two other phrases through which Swinburne had defined his new religion of man. God is invoked as "giver of breath and bread." In "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic" Swinburne had used similar language to invoke the "spirit of man":

Give them thyself for hand and head,
Thy breath for life, thy love for bread.
 (2: 286; my emphasis)

In Swinburne's universe, the spirit of man gives himself to create man, that is to say, man's recognition of his innate divinity frees him from deluded slavery to outworn faiths. In Hopkins's universe, it

is the God of that old faith who gives Himself to create mankind.

God is the creator of human beings, and he is also the force which has "almost unmade" his creature. Swinburne had used the opposition of "make" and "unmake" several times to argue an opposite point. In Atalanta in Calydon, Althaea exults in her power as the human agent of her son's creation and, by casting the brand which controls his life-span back into the fire, of his destruction. It places her on a level with the gods:

You strong gods,
Give place unto me; I am as any of you,
To give life and to take life. Thou,
old earth,
That hast made man and unmade . . .
(4: 314; my emphasis)

Echoing the phrase, the dying Meleager acknowledges the power of his mother to both create and destroy him; she is

the bitter mother and mother-plague
Of this my weary body — thou too,
queen,
The source and end, the sower and the
scythe,
The rain that ripens and the drought
that slays,
The sand that swallows and the spring
that feeds,
To make me and unmake me[.] (4: 330;
my emphasis)

As he would continue to do with many of the most powerful images and phrases from Atalanta and Poems and Ballads First Series, Swinburne also uses the

make/unmake doubling in a political context. France, in "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic," is accused of self-murder: "Thou hast set thine hand to unmake and discreate" (2: 284; my emphasis). But the poem demonstrates that the deaths of the country's martyred children in the cause of freedom are necessary, and redemptive. In the "Hymn of Man," the phrase announces the death of the Christian God, as formerly slave-like man recognizes his power to destroy the human figment:

Thou art judged, O judge, and the
sentence is gone forth against
thee, O God.
Thy slave that slept is awake; thy slave
but slept for a span;
Yea, man thy slave shall unmake thee,
who made thee lord over man. (2: 100;
my emphasis)

Poetry has a role to play in the unmaking of the Christian God. Swinburne will continue to blow his revolutionary trumpet, he declares in "The Eve of Revolution," "Till change unmake things, and love remake" (2: 11; my emphasis).

The Deutschland, then, proclaims the power of a creator God who is master and maker, unlike Althaea, and indeed unlike Hertha, who is "Mother, not maker" (2: 74), in part through the conversions of Swinburnian phrases.

The Christian God has created all of nature, and reigns over mankind in life and in death. He is,

however, a fierce God, who creates "dread" in the creatures who are His slaves. Yet the pressure of His touch is necessary, not only to bring human beings to understand their own sinfulness, but also as proof of His caring presence: "I feel thy finger and find thee," Hopkins writes. Like Hopkins, Swinburne experienced the touch of the finger of God:

O soul, O God, O glory of liberty . . .
 The natural body of things is warm with
 thee . . .
 Thou seest us feeble and forceless, fit
 to be
 Slaves of the years that drive us left
 and right,
 Drowned under hours like waves
 Wherethrough we row like slaves;
 But if thy finger touch us, these take
 flight. (2: 16; my emphasis)

In "The Eve of Revolution" Swinburne named the agency of pressure "God," and he identified that god as "liberty," found within the "natural body of things." The saving, formative pressure of liberty releases mankind from slavery to the tyranny of the waves of time, and also from the self-delusions which permit the "chains" and "fettered flesh" of repressive reigns: "Thy bonds and thy beliefs are one in kind," says Swinburne to down-trodden mankind, and "Priest is the staff of king" (2: 15). Over a period of ten years, from the bitter choruses in Atalanta, through the continuing deconstructions of Christianity in Poems and Ballads First Series, to the vituperative attacks in Songs Before Sunrise and Songs of Two Nations, Swinburne had

hit again and again at the constricting cruelty of man's construct of the Christian God who rules with a rod.

Part the First of The Deutschland acknowledges that rod. As man faces God, the stern judge with the "frown of his face" (Poetical 119, line 17), he experiences "terror" (line 12) and "horror" (line 15), but the "fire of stress" (line 16) which appears to be cruelty to the unbeliever is, in reality, a saving grace. As a result of his own stress Hopkins "did say yes / O at lightning and lashed rod" (line 10), and his commitment saved his soul. From Hopkins's point of view, Swinburne is correct in seeing that the lash of God's rod "masters" man; but he is blind to the meaning that such mastery is a necessary part of a sovereign God's rule.

Swinburne had of course perceived both beauty and terror in the natural world, and had assigned moral values of good and evil to natural events, most frequently using thunderous storm as an image of the false Christian God, in Atalanta's "Who hath given man speech" Chorus (Poems 4: 288-89), for example, and such images as sunrise, starlight, and calm sea to represent the beauty of the republican future. Swinburne modified his oversimple world view in "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic," which is his own attempt to explain the underlying benignity in

apparently cruel and useless deaths. There, the redemptive principle of Freedom arrived accompanied by "terror" and fierce scenes of natural upheaval, as the voice of the "God unknown" thundered and

[A]ll the seas and shores within them
 bounded
 Shook . . .
 And all the hills of heaven, the
 storm-surrounded,
 Trembled, and all the night sent
 forth a groan. (2: 283)

The Deutschland affirms that both the divine "stress" of grace which is received from seeing the beauty of "Starlight, wafting him out of it" (Poetical 120, line 35), and the "stroke" felt as men "Glow, glory in thunder" (line 36), are benign, for they reveal Christ's universal presence. The necessary stress does not come from heaven, however, but rather has been present from the moment of Christ's Incarnation, which is the central event in providential time:

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

It dates from day
 Of his going in Galilee; . . .

The dense and driven Passion, and
 frightful sweat:
 Thence the discharge of it, there its
 swelling to be[.] (120,
 lines 41-53)

Hopkins meditates on the Crucifixion in Stanzas six and seven of The Deutschland as he connects the saving stress and stroke, which brings repentance, to Christ's Great Sacrifice. Scotus taught, and Hopkins believed, that the Incarnation is independent of time. Christ was first made flesh before the creation of the world, in angelic time, and so his assumption of manhood is coeval with time itself. The Incarnation is not to be confined, then, to a single historical moment. Rather, it "rides time like riding a river," bringing with it the redemptive grace which Christ first discharged in the "frightful sweat" of his bloody, dying body. And now, after the Great Sacrifice, Christ's body and blood fill the universe, ready to deliver his saving grace to the repentant: he is present universaliter, to use Scotus's phrase. Again and again of course, in poems such as "Before a Crucifix," Swinburne denied the efficacy of the Incarnation and of Christ's suffering body on the cross, and converted the imagery of the Passion to the cause of republicanism. Christ is no more than "car-rion crucified."

In his earlier volumes, Swinburne did not construct a positive alternative to Christianity's cosmic

picture, although a circular flux which held no hope of change in the future was the only reality which he presented. However, he began developing a new teleology in Songs Before Sunrise and Songs of Two Nations, although it was neither a clear nor a consistent one. In "A Marching Song," for example, Swinburne represents the force of republicanism and the religion of man as eventually leading to universal love and freedom within time, although whether through revolution or through gradual amelioration is unclear. In any event, all does not pass away in the endless flux. However, both the impelling force and the end toward which it drives mankind are conceived in human terms. Through his new construct Swinburne accommodates a world in which there is no need for the redemptive grace of the Incarnation.

Swinburne saw the same natural events as Hopkins, and knew of the same Scriptural events. The difference was one of vision. Hopkins saw with the eyes of faith, Swinburne with both the angry eyes of disbelief, and with belief in the eventual appearance of the god Freedom. From Hopkins's point of view, that is, from the point of view of providential history, natural disasters and other stresses must be seen as evidence of the redemptive grace flowing from the Passion and Crucifixion. That grace, like providential time, rides the sea of change like a river which flows toward a final goal of union with God, as it empties into the

sea of faith at the end of time. For Swinburne, the imagery of natural disaster represented the gratuitous cruelty of the gods, notably the Christian God, particularly in the early volumes, and, later, the disorder which is necessary to bring about redemptive revolution within human time. Indeed, "The faithless fable and miss."

Part the Second of The Deutschland continues to engage Swinburne, who described the occasion for the "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic" in an excited letter to William Michael Rossetti in September 1870, just before the "Ode" was printed and circulated as a pamphlet:

I am nine tenths out of my mind with joy and pride in Paris. Now, it may be razed to the ground and sown with salt and the last child killed in the last Frenchwoman's womb, but shame cannot touch it. If the Republic die tomorrow choked in blood and ridden down by brute force of horsehoofs, it has lived this divine hour, worth aeons of empires. I do think the rejoicings and salutations, tears and embraces, of the people at such a time, in the jaws of ruin and in sight of the Republic, the most glorious things in democratic history (barring Rome and Venice) since the old days. (Letters 2: 125)

The letter captures the heady hope of the moment of triumph for freedom, and the "Ode" presents hope itself as a cosmic force with the potential power to overcome death and disaster. In the event, however, France was ridden down by brute horsehoofs. Bismarck's Prussia had invaded French soil in the August, and a

month later Napoleon III, whom Swinburne excoriated in the "Dirae," was deposed by the French revolutionaries. However, the new republic which was proclaimed in the face of the German threat survived only a few months, for the Germans captured Paris and declared victory in January 1871 (Wells 445-46).

Swinburne's letter is a gloss on a central passage in the "Ode." The poet assures France that even if "shafts of iron sorrow"

Should split thine heart, and whelm
 thine head with sanguine waves;
 Though all that draw thy breath
 Bled from all veins to death,
 And thy dead body were the grave of all
 their graves,
 And thine unchilded womb
 For all their tombs a tomb,
 At least within thee as on thee room
 were none for slaves.
 This power thou hast, to be,
 Come death or come not, free;
 That in all tongues of time's this
 praise be chanted of thee,
 That in thy wild worst hour
 This power put in thee power,
 And moved as hope around and hung as
 heaven above thee[.] (Poems 2:
 289-90; my emphasis)

The Deutschland concerns the fate of refugees from Bismarck's power, although in that disaster the sons and daughters of Germany, not of France, will be lost. In representing the shipwreck, Part the Second echoes two of the images in Swinburne's passage. As the ship sails into the winter storm which is her undoing, the snow "Spins to the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps" (Poetical 122, line 104). Hopkins's cosmic

drama unfolds with a reminder, in the word "unchild-
ing," that a vision which had found salvation in free-
dom provides only brief redemption for its heroes.

In Swinburne's "Ode," the hope of freedom was pre-
sent even in the country's "wild worst hour." Hop-
kins's nun, as she faced a martyr's death,

Was calling 'O Christ, Christ, come
quickly':
The cross to her she calls Christ to
her, christens her wild-worst
Best. (Poetical 125, lines
191-92; my emphasis)

In her own "wild-worst hour" the nun named and
sanctified the events of her death through an act of
baptism; she

Read the unshapeable shock night
And knew the who and the why;
Wording it how but by him that present
and past,
Heaven and earth are word of, worded
by? (126, lines 227-30)

The nun's rewording of what seems to be disaster
is accomplished in the light of belief in Christ the
Logos, who gives meaning and shape to all of creation.
In the earlier passage, there is another act of bap-
tism, as the nun "christens" Swinburne's phrase as
well, renaming it to indicate, not the power of revolu-
tionary freedom, but the joyous freedom of a faithful
Christian who acknowledges the mastery of her God.

It might be said further of the German nun, as
Swinburne said in his "Ode" of the French people after
their long night of suffering,

That in death's face thy chant
 Arose up jubilant,
 And thy great heart with thy great peril
 grew more great.
 And sweet for bitter tears
 Put out the fires of fears,
 And love made lovely for thee loveless
 hell and hate; . . .
 When, seeing thy freedom stand
 Even at despair's right hand,
 The cry thou gavest at heart was only of
 delight. (Poems 2: 290)

A second act of poetic rebaptism takes place as the nun calls out. The phrase "wild-worst" is conjoined in Hopkins's passage with another powerful image which Swinburne had used in "Hesperia":

As the cross that a wild nun clasps till
the edge of it bruises her bosom,
 So love wounds as we grasp it, and
 blackens and burns as a flame[.]
 (1: 175; my emphasis)

Swinburne's poem, which appeared in Poems and Ballads First Series, has to do, in part, with the power of poetry. Hesperia, who is yet another giant figure, constantly changes form and significance as the images which represent her modulate, flow together, and dissolve in a shifting, kaleidoscopic text. Like the figure of Freedom in the "Ode," the giant form of Hesperia represents a universe of constant becoming. But, as David G. Riede observes,

The real meaning of 'Hesperia' is its form,
 . . . its subtle transformations of nothing
 at all into a principle of love, that
 represents the real consolation for Swinburne. (Riede 82)

For nothing lies behind Hesperia's changing figure. No principle of freedom is being represented, as

was the case in Swinburne's "Ode." There is no Logos beyond the logos which poetry provides. Swinburne celebrates the writing of poetry as the sovereign act of creation, and there is even a hint that poetic creation is in some way redemptive: by placing itself in a line of remembered antiphonal song, it gives some meaning to life beyond that of constant change. However, the hope offered is a bleak one: Hesperia

is Swinburne's version of the faith that looks through death, but that faith is not Wordsworthian pantheism. . . . [It] involves a denial, not an affirmation, of consolatory divinities, either transcendent or immanent.
(Riede 68)

Nevertheless, by the time of "Hesperia" Swinburne would seem to believe that poetry can provide some consolation in the otherwise bleak world of Poems and Ballads First Series.

The Deutschland negates Swinburne's vision of poetry's elevated role. It puts his poetry in the place proper to all poetry, for, with its theme of self-celebration excised, Swinburne's phrase is converted into one among numerous elements which celebrate the Christian God. In Hopkins's world there is indeed a consolatory divinity, One whose acts of creation the poet reads and celebrates as the only source of his creativity, and the only subject of poetry.

There is another dimension to "Hesperia." The speaker is a fugitive from the agonies of sexual

desire, for he has "loved overmuch" (Poems 1: 176) in his life. Like the phrase "the rage of her reign" (176) from the same poem, which is echoed in "Ad Mariam," the image of the wild nun refers to a past which he is trying to escape. In asserting his present freedom from desire, however, the speaker is shown to be overconfident. Swinburne wrote of "Hesperia" that even the "innocuous desire" represented there shows the impossibility of evading the forceful pain brought by Venus, goddess of earthly love:

But not at once, or not for ever, can the
past be killed and buried; hither also the
huntress follows her flying prey, wounded and
weakened, still fresh from the fangs of pas-
sion; the cruel hands, the amorous eyes,
still glitter and allure. . . . Only by
lifelong flight, side by side with the god-
dess that redeems, shall her slave of old
escape from the goddess that consumes[.]
(qtd. in Rosenberg 332)

The emotions aroused by Venus are both destructive and redemptive, and there is no escape from them. Desire rules the world. Considered within this context, the image of the wild nun, like the image from "Hesperia" in "Ad Mariam," signals a concern for relief from sexual desire.

More obviously, there is a parodic dimension in Swinburne's original image. In his often-repeated view, Christianity refuses to recognize its own eroticism. The powerful simile of the wild nun painfully clutching a cross to her bosom equates the pain-

ful wounds of sexual desire with painful ecstatic ascetic religious practice, and insists, once more, upon the erotic sado-masochism latent in Christian discourse.

In "Ad Mariam" Hopkins had tried to expunge the eroticism of the "Hounds of spring" Chorus, offering the resulting purity of his May Lines in homage to the Virgin Mary. The effort ended in constricted failure. The Deutschland, in contrast, recognizes the power of sexuality. In Hopkins's image of the nun on the wild night of her death, calling "The cross to her as she calls Christ to her," erotic imagery, which had been fashioned from the tropes of religious devotion, is converted into imagery which once again serves a devotional end. Yet the image retains an erotic charge, for, while the form of love which the clutching gesture of the nun reflects has been renamed — Christ, not eros, is its source — the image of the wild nun herself is not exorcised. Unlike the process of expulsion in "Ad Mariam," the text of the The Deutschland recognizes the presence of the erotic within the religious. In "Ad Mariam" Hopkins had purified the groves and hills of Calydon by expelling its gods and nymphs. In contrast, The Deutschland takes place within a universe

pulsing with generative power deriving from the Christian God.²

As Swinburne knew, and as Hopkins came to recognize, eroticism is a component of religious virginity.³ The denial of the sexual act on earth, with the deferred expectation of union with a passionately desired God after death, results in that intensity of physical desire which Swinburne caught well in his depiction of St. Catherine of Siena. In The Deutschland the virgin saint cited is "Gertrude, lily" (Poetical 124, line 157), and the reference connects her with the dying nun, her fellow German and co-religionist.⁴ A standard nineteenth century book of

² A number of passages in The Deutschland, among them lines 157, 165, and 271-72 (Poetical 124, 128), can be read as having reference to such myths of sexuality as those of the Calydonian boar, Orion, and Zeus. They are part of the doubleness of the ode — the Deutschland is "double a desperate name!" (124, line 155); Christ's is a "double-naturèd name" (128, line 266) — inviting a reading in both pagan and Christian contexts, both of which retain the original eroticism.

³ See Further 365. For an analysis of religious eroticism in Patmore's poetry, which sheds interesting light on the Hopkins-Patmore correspondence, see Maynard, Victorian Discourses.

⁴ "Gertrude, lily, and Luther, are two of a town / Christ's lily, and beast of the waste wood" — that is, both Luther and St. Gertrude are associated with Eisleben, Saxony (MacKenzie, Poetical 337). Boar and lily convey two very different attitudes toward sexuality. St. Gertrude's ascetic eroticism contrasts with the carnality of Luther, a rebellious priest who advanced the belief that clergy could enter into marriage with a human bride on earth (and for whom Hopkins had an antipathy).

saints reports that St. Gertrude practiced "the most perfect denial of herself" so that "self . . . should be totally consumed by the flame of holy love." Her asceticism resulted in intense desire:

The exercises by which St. Gertrude made . . . sublime advances in the school of divine love all tended to the closest union of her heart to God by the most inflamed desires and purest affections. (Butler 1430)

The result of St. Gertrude's pure desire for union with her God was a series of visions, for example of Christ as "a divine face, most beautiful and charming, whose eyes pierced her heart and filled both her soul and body with inexpressible delight which no tongue could express" (Butler 1430). Like St. Gertrude (and like St. Dorothea), the nun in The Deutschland is a fecund virgin, producing a powerful and possibly redemptive vision which comes from the "heaven of desire" (Poetical 126, line 207).⁵

⁵ There has been considerable debate on the nature of that vision, most of it involving the question of whether the nun experienced the miraculous presence of Christ as he entered the natural world, in the flesh, as both Elisabeth Schneider (28-32) and Alison Sulloway (Hopkins 182-85) have argued. Cotter (Explicator) maintains, on the contrary, that "it" and "Thing" are "words hardly suitable to Christ," and that the nun inscapes Him in the wave. Whatever the nature of the vision, Hopkins represents the event in sexual language. For example, Miller reads Christ's having "glory" of the nun (Poetical 127, line 236) as "an image of sexual possession" representing the moment when the nun "becomes Christ through grace"; at the same time, she is equated with Mary as she "conceives" Him (line 238). The Christian image of Christ as the Bridegroom of the soul of course carries sexual connotations. Sexual imagery pervades the construction of the Holy Family:

In "St. Dorothea," Hopkins had linked visions and visual proof of the presence of God on earth. In "Ad Mariam" and "Rosa Mystica" he continued to grapple with the problem of how to represent an apprehension of divinity. The Deutschland is the culmination of that exploration. Hopkins chose to represent the nun's vision at her wild-worst hour obliquely, however, through a process which moves language from a stuttering incapacity, through a series of epithets and a laconically brief visual representation, to a second series of epithets.

The vision of the nun is first represented in Stanza 28:

But how shall I . . . Make me
 room there;
 Reach me a . . . Fancy, come
 faster —
 Strike you the sight of it? look at
 it loom there,
 Thing that she . . . There
 then! the Master,
Ipse, the only one, Christ, King,
 Head[.] (126, lines 217-21)

—

Mary is the daughter of her son God is the lover who possesses her and makes her pregnant with Christ. God is also the creating father who makes sure that she herself is born in the image of Christ. God and Christ, though two, are one in the unity of the Trinity. God is father, bridegroom, and child, all three, and this multiple and ambiguous sexual relation is repeated every time a sinful soul, through grace, is reborn in the image of Christ. (Disappearance 348)

There is no visual representation of what looms before the eyes of the dying nun. Rather, the poems asks its readers a question — "Strike you the sight of it?" — and directs our eyes toward what the nun sees — "look at it loom there." The gesture places the responsibility upon the individual imagination to provide the image which is missing from the representation. It is as if Hopkins were saying that the poet, like the reader, can only guess at what token the heaven of desire has sent to welcome its new martyr, and asking that readers join him in trying to represent it.

The "thing" in Stanza 28 is represented through a series of epithets.⁶ Although the belief system behind the gesture is dramatically different, The Deutschland replicates, in the string of names, the technique which Swinburne had used repeatedly in his republican poems to identify their looming figures. In "A Song of Italy" and "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic," a string of inter-modifying epithets name individual elements — "France," "Italy," "light," "bridegroom," "love," "mother," "Republic" — which

⁶ The first of the names which begin the identification of the object of the nun's vision is "Master," a word which appears in other stanzas of The Deutschland, and which Swinburne uses repeatedly in the "Hymn of Man (During the Session in Rome of the OEcumenical Council)," frequently in conjunction with "thing" (see pp. 358-59).

burne's line 'The world's heart's thanksgivings' in Blessed Among Women. (205, note 8)

"Blessed Among Women," like The Deutschland, commemorates martyred heroes. In Swinburne's poem, the speaker and his fellow supporters of Italian freedom send forth "The world's heart's thanksgivings" in praise of Signora Cairoli, she whose family name is "above all names / Writ highest in lettering flames" in a burning sky (Poems 2: 60). The original context once more places the Swinburnian echoes in political and religious opposition to their use in The Deutschland.⁷

Bracketed by the two strings of epithets in Stanzas 28 and 35, the visual representation of what the nun saw in Stanza 33 is brief and enigmatic. First, Hopkins again turns to the reader, asking her to

past all
Grasp God, throned behind
Death, with a sovereignty that heeds but
hides, bodes but abides;

With a mercy that outrides
The all of water . . .
A vein for the visiting of the
past-prayer, pent in prison,
The-last-breath penitent spirits —

⁷ "Heart's . . . hearth's fire" to some degree recalls "The hearth of man, the human home, / The central flame that shall be Rome" — a vision of which inspired Mazzini in "A Song of Italy" (Poems 2: 235). Christ as "high-priest" contrasts with Swinburne's use of the term as a repeated, derogatory, epithet for the Pope in the "Dirae" (2: 293-316).

the uttermost mark
 Our passion-plungèd giant risen,
 The Christ of the Father compassionate,
fetchèd in the storm of his
strides. (Poetical 127,
 lines 254-64; my emphasis)

I have suggested several similarities in poetic method and diction between The Deutschland and the revolutionary poems which are concerned centrally with identifying the giant figures of Freedom, which rise into sight to give hope to the beleaguered at a moment of crisis. There is nothing in Stanzas 32 and 33 which is reminiscent of the language through which Swinburne represented his republican goddesses visually. However, Swinburne's figures of Freedom are themselves the result of a conversion, one which Swinburne had worked within his own poetry by transforming the giant whore /goddesses of the poetry of the 1860s, whom he had evoked within the context of physical desire, into the giant figures which embody political motifs in the 1870s. Freedom in "A Song of Italy" "Rose, as from the sacred seas / Love." In Atalanta in Calydon and Poems and Ballads First Series, it was Venus herself who rose from the sea; in Songs Before Sunrise and Songs of Two Nations, Freedom has taken her place.

The most vivid representation of Venus is the third chorus of Atalanta in Calydon. The Chorus declares that it has seen the fair and goodly side of love, but that the goddess has a less benign aspect

that her beauty hides. It exclaims that the birth of the goddess of sexual desire and division should have been accompanied by

A cry as of perishing lands,
 A moan as of people in prison,
 A tumult of infinite griefs;
 And thunder of storm on the sands,
 And wailing of wives on the shore;
 And under thee newly arisen
 Loud shoals and shipwrecking reefs,
 Fierce air and violent light;
 Sail rent and sundering oar,
 Darkness, and noises of night
 . . .
 All these we know of; but thee
Who shall discern or declare?
In the uttermost ends of the sea
 The light of thine eyelids and hair,
 The light of thy bosom as fire
 Between the wheel of the sun
 And the flying flames of the air?
Wilt thou turn thee not yet nor have
pity,
But abide with despair and desire . . .
 And the crying of armies undone,
 Lamentation of one with another
 And breaking of city by city;
 The dividing of friend against friend,
 The severing of brother and
 brother;
Wilt thou utterly bring to an end?
Have mercy, mother! (Poems 4:
 276-77; my emphasis)

Inevitably the language of all shipwrecks has points of similarity. Wrecks often occur in the darkness of noisy nights on shoals and reefs in sight of shore, as happened to the Deutschland, a doomed vessel whose "goal was a shoal" (Poetical 122, line 94). Similarly, the political and personal repercussions of the entry of Venus into the world, with the crying of

undone armies, the breaking of cities, and the severing of brothers, has universal application, although at the same time it reflects the European situation behind the Deutschland disaster.

There are distinctive verbal similarities between the two passages, however. "Pent in prison" echoes "people in prison." "Uttermost mark" echoes "uttermost ends of the sea"; and in The Deutschland Hopkins works variations on "uttermost" — "uttering truth" (123, line 141) and "uttered thee outright" (127, line 240), as Swinburne does with "uttermost" and "utterly."⁸ "Abides with a mercy" reverses "nor yet have pity / But abide with despair and desire," and reassures where "Have mercy, mother" does not. "Giant risen" echoes "thee newly arisen," and recalls the repeated use of the word "giant" in the revolutionary poems as well.

The echoes of thematic elements in "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic" and "A Song of Italy" oppose the figure of Christ to the figure of revolutionary Liberty; the echoes of the language used to represent Venus in Atalanta in Calydon oppose the figure of the God of caritas to that of the goddess of erotic love. At the same time, however, the gesture joins together these seemingly discordant elements. In

⁸ Compare also Hopkins's "uttered thee outright" with Hertha's assertion that all of nature "makes utterance of me" (Poems 2: 76).

Hopkins's hierarchical world, the power of the male God supersedes that of the Virgin Mary. Still, in the buried image, a female goddess joins a male God, just as erotic human love joins spiritual, divine love. Male God, divine love, Christian belief may be uppermost: but their opposites co-exist within the same image. Just as freedom exists within the bondage of obedient belief, caritas exists in recognition of eros. Sacred and profane love, and male and female, are reconciled as they never were in the Oxford poetry. In the 1860s, Hopkins had turned his eyes away from dangerous human beauty and toward Christ, divine love incarnate. The Deutschland brings about the same transference in the poetry of Swinburne, turning that poet's giant figure of Venus into a shadowy but nevertheless present representation of the god of divine love.

The question which is posed in Swinburne's passage — "who shall discern or declare?" — is answered in The Deutschland. A reader with a knowledge of Swinburne's poetry can discern and declare the figure of the Venus of Atalanta in Calydon looming faintly, past all, at the uttermost ends of the nun's vision. A figure, who rises into view within the thematic context of Swinburne's republican poems, appears at the same time within the context of Swinburne's poems of desire, to supply in the imagination of the reader of The Wreck

of the Deutschland the missing image at the heart of the poem. Hopkins had expressed "loathing" and "horror" at pagan myth-making, which misused "that hand of God within the mind the imagination," but he maintained that myth could be turned to "moral uses" (Dixon 146-47). Once again, as in "Ad Mariam," he has transformed pagan myth into psalms of praise.

Looming even further in the background is still another giant Swinburnian figure. In the "Epilogue" to Songs Before Sunrise, the poet represents himself as looking out across the sea, with other supporters of the Risorgimento, searching for the figure of Liberty. That figure, however, can be known only by its traces, which require such men as the Risorgimento leaders, or the poet, to interpret:

And we that cannot hear or see
 The sounds and lights of liberty,
 The witness of the naked God
 That treads on burning hours unshod
 With instant feet unwounded; we
 That can trace only where he trod
 By fire in heaven or storm at sea,
 Not know the very present whole
 And naked nature of the soul;

[We] hear the harsh hours clap sharp
 wings
 Above the roar of ranks like waves,
 From wreck to wreck as the world
 swings[.] (Poems 2: 232 -33;
 my emphasis)

Swinburne, like Hopkins, has "fetched" a God "in the storm of his strides." The towering, naked, male figure "treads on burning hours unshod," to penetrate

time, as Swinburne entreated the soul of man to do in the "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic": "Break . . . now time's iron mesh," he cried in the "Ode," and be "Heaven to be handled, hope made flesh." But in the "Epilogue" the poet, searching the horizon for the sign of a figure, cannot "know the very present whole": he can only read the visual and aural signs, as with a roar the world swings "from wreck to wreck." So, too, the poet in The Deutschland. He can only represent the figure which the nun perceives through interpreting its traces. Full divine presence cannot be fully represented.

Like all of Hopkins's mature poetry, informed interpretation of The Deutschland demands specific knowledge on the part of its readers.⁹ For example, the recognition that the essential Christian metaphor for the great fulfillment which will be achieved after death is of marriage with the Bridegroom, Christ, can

⁹ Hopkins himself recognizes that knowledge of how to read typologically is useful, for he gives a lesson in Stanzas 22 and 23 (Poetical 124-25, lines 169-84). He believed as well that events and signs refracted through the lens of belief will yield a different interpretation than if they are seen without that faith. To the unfaithful, the snow spinning onto the swirling sea leads to death-dealing disaster. To the believer, the disaster is seen to have produced martyrs who will join their God in heaven. Indeed, with faith mankind can see, as God Himself sees, that the storm is showering flowers of saving grace from heaven: "in thy sight / Storm flakes were scroll-leaved flowers, lily showers — sweet heaven was astrew in them" (124, lines 167-68).

influence the interpretation of the central passages of the ode. As a virgin-martyr, the nun is to be translated at once to an eternity in "the heaven of desire." It can be variously argued that her cry was answered by her Bridegroom, Christ, who miraculously entered the world of nature in the flesh to claim her; or by a vision of Christ which foresaw the joys to come. In either event, knowledge of the traditional bridegroom metaphor is essential.

My argument here is that, as well, an informed interpretation of what the nun saw, as well as of other sections of The Deutschland, depends to some extent upon a knowledge of Swinburne's texts, which represent one of the textualized referential systems which "make a difference" in Said's sense (14), just as Catholic dogma does. For example, it is not coincidental that Swinburne had parodied the mystic marriage repeatedly in his republican poems, as Freedom was joined with revolutionary nations. Certainly, recognition that some of Swinburne's images have some connection with the representation of Christ in The Deutschland — liberty rising to save the future of the French people, or liberty striding naked in the storm at sea, as the world swings from wreck to wreck, or glorious Venus rising from the waves — is as significant for a full interpretation of The Deutschland as that the image of

the Bridegroom, Christ, is a metaphor for what awaits in heaven.

The inclusion of fragments of Swinburne's texts within The Deutschland is part of Hopkins's continuing effort to find a serviceable role for poetry. In affiliating himself with the Roman Catholic Church, Hopkins gained access to the most powerful language system in the Western world. At the acme of the hierarchical pyramid of power the infallible Pope could make pronouncements, as high-priest within the magisterium, which were both inerrant and carried a special grace. These pronouncements accrued political power within the earthly realm. An anointed priest of the church could bring about, through his words alone, the Divine Presence at the moment of transubstantiation, which is a much greater spiritual power, although it is not one which has importance outside the circle of believers.

Relative to the power of priestly language, the language of poetry has severely limited abilities. The traditional subject matter of the ode is divine myth (Princeton 585), but the means at the disposal of the poet who desires to call down the gods are "words only," even if the poet believes that they refer to a transcendent Logos. For example, the word "Ipse" is associated with the minor elevation of the mass, which begins the mystic transformation of bread and wine into

the body and blood of Christ: "Per ipsum, et cum ipso, it in ipso, est tibi Deo Patri omnipotenti, in unitate Spiritus Sancti, omnis honor, et gloria" (qtd. in Wheeler 362). Within the context of poetry, however, as Hopkins used it to characterize the Christian divinity, Ipse is one word among many: "Ipse, the only one, Christ" carries connotations, but it does not carry sacramental force. The power of the priest-poet is no greater than that of any secular poet.

And yet for Hopkins, who in fact would almost seem to believe that some degree of grace resides in poetic language (Loomis 70), poetry can develop power. The Deutschland represents and celebrates, through poetic language, a moment of great verbal power. The strength of the nun's faith may have been able to "Startle the poor sheep back" (Poetical 127, line 248), that is, to work the conversions of the dying unbelievers on the ship, and perhaps even inspire the conversion of all England. She has been able to summon up Christ in a new sacramental incarnation through the force of her language, which

allowed her to perform, according to Hopkins's evident interpretation of her act, the priestly functions for a sacramental baptism of the doomed seagoers. . . . [B]y analogy, Hopkins at the poem's end tries to summon a baptism into Roman Catholicism for all of England. . . . [T]he final stanza of this ode [is] written in a confidently nonstammering rhythm and attempting to use poetry as if to evoke priestly baptism for an entire nation. Poetry's only limit for Hopkins, at this

point, seems its inability to baptize
literally. (Loomis 75-76).

It has been suggested by a number of critics that Hopkins was preoccupied by his sense of the limitation of language.¹⁰ Certainly his attempts to imbue poetic language with sacramental power give evidence of a powerful awareness of the dangers involved in losing the belief that logos reflects Logos. Indeed, for a time in the mid-1870s Hopkins seems to have ascribed too much power to poetry. Hence the importance of directing powerful poetic means to their proper ends, the celebrations of God and Roman Catholic beliefs. Even in the 1880s, discouraged and unproductive, Hopkins could upbraid Coventry Patmore for lines in "The Angel in the House" which, Hopkins wrote, "convey, it

¹⁰ The case, presented most forcefully by Miller, "Linguistic Moment," is also argued by Downes, Great Sacrifice. Loomis argues against the position:

[Hopkins] very directly . . . imitates, with the use of the word 'King' ('Our King back, Oh, upon English souls!' [st. 35, 4]), the lexicon, although not the pulse, of the nun's stammering call on Christ — which, Downes demonstrates [Great Sacrifice 99], Hopkins as poet could himself only utter stammeringly ('Ipse, the only one Christ, King, Head')

. . .
 Downes contends that this earlier stammering pulse of the nun's poetically repeated cry proves 'Hopkins's affirmation of the limits of poetry.' Yet there is a marked incongruity between such supposed affirming 'of [poetic] limits' and the non-stammering rhythm of the final stanza. (75-6)

seems to me, though in small quantities, a poison"
(Further 310).

The Oxford poetry was an expression of yearning toward an absent beloved, whether human or divine. "St. Dorothea," "Ad Mariam," and "Rosa Mystica" were experiments in how to represent the beloved ineffable in the natural world. The two streams converge in the absent figure of Christ in The Deutschland. The nun, a virgin visionary at the point of death, can see the Word made flesh. It is an act of faith, however, not of language.

The priest can make the absent God present through the sacrament of the Eucharist. Within poetry, the poet must construct his God with the tools at hand. Swinburne had suggested in "Félice" that man constructs all gods in his own image, from "The ghosts of words and dusty dreams, / Old memories, faiths infirm and dead" (Poems 1: 196). Like the gods of Calydon — like all images, religious or otherwise — the looming figure of Christ in The Deutschland is woven from the stuff of language, the ghost of words, dreams, and memories. Hopkins constructs a poetic Christ from the material which figured forth the gods of Calydon. Although he did so out of a faith which is burningly alive, and which held that the Logos in some way inspirits the logos, the poetic representation remains a "human figment."

Hopkins made every effort to have The Deutschland something more. He believed in the power of poetic language, as Swinburne later did, and he took care to provide his language with power from several sources. He needed that power because his aim in The Deutschland was to effect change, to write a poem of conversion which would convert others. Saints can work actual conversions, which, indeed, is one mark of sainthood: St. Dorothea converted Theophilus; St. Catherine converted the knight condemned for treason. Priests can convert simple words like Ipse into words of sacramental power, through the power which their office confers. Poets can also work conversions, upon the words of other poets. In doing so, they tap into another, poetic, sort of power.

A number of passages in The Deutschland are converted from fragments of Swinburne's texts. Hopkins recognized, and feared, Swinburne's power to construct a seductive alternative to Christianity. Further, Swinburne gave his purpose in writing the Songs as an effort to convert his country to the cause of republicanism. Swinburne's texts were among the most rhetorically powerful and widely known in the Victorian culture, as Hopkins's later critical comments recognize. Their language was widely dispersed within the culture, instantly recognizable by readers of the poetry, but used as well without full recognition. The Deutschland

incorporates many elements from that currently popular — and from Hopkins's point of view, dangerous — poetry. In Morse Peckham's sense, The Deutschland attempts to "change by negation and inversion" the messages carried by the language which Swinburne's texts had "uttered in the public culture" (Peckham 270).

But, as we know, his few contemporary readers were not only unmoved, but to some degree repelled by the his ode. Their presuppositions about poetic style made it impossible for them to understand what The Deutschland did with words: apparently, neither Robert Bridges nor Father Coleridge, the editor of The Month (White 259), could abide the poem.¹¹

Poetry, like other language systems, is dependent upon its readers to join together its various elements and so construct meaning. Language in The Deutschland names, describes, represents, celebrates, deploras, questions. The problem for Hopkins, however, is that the language of poetry probably does not convert. And readers in the twentieth century, trained to recognize

¹¹ Two years after the Jesuit magazine rejected his ode Hopkins wrote that its "many . . . oddnesses could not but dismay an editor's eye, so that when I offered it to our magazine the Month, though at first they accepted it, after a time they withdrew and dared not print it" (Dixon 15). Beyond that, the editors may not have "dared" to print The Deutschland when they realized the extent of its political content, since the perennial British suspicion of the motives of the Society of Jesus would have prompted discretion on their part.

that there is no logos — that "words only are only words" — bring ideological presuppositions which militate strongly against a conversion experience. Poetry works on imagination, not on belief, and it relies upon belief systems which are already in place in each of its readers. The question "Strike you sight of it?" is answered differently depending upon how a reader feels on the subject of miraculous appearances, for example. I would again argue that the response also depends upon how familiar that reader is with the works of Algernon Swinburne.

In the final stanza of The Deutschland Hopkins prays for the conversion of England:

Our king back, Oh, upon English
souls!
 Let him easter in us, be a dayspring
to the dimness of us[.]
 (Poetical 128, lines 276-77; my emphasis)

Swinburne had repeatedly called upon England to join with other nations in supporting revolution, and nowhere more forcefully than in "A Marching Song":

O people, O perfect nation,
O England, that shall be . . .

We have the morning star,
 O foolish people, O kings!
With us the day-springs are,
Even all the fresh day-springs[.]
 (Poems 2: 157-58; my emphasis)

Hopkins's passage transforms the imagery of the king as day-spring, used by Swinburne within the context of hope for a conversion of England to republi-

canism, to an image of the king as day-spring, within the Christian context of Easter, and of hope for the conversion of England to Roman Catholicism.

Hopkins's desire for a Roman Catholic polity is apparent, not only in the sermon on "God's Kingdom," but also in a letter to Coventry Patmore on the subject of the British Empire:

'Freedom': it is perfectly true that British freedom is the best, the only successful freedom, but that is because, with whatever drawbacks, those who have developed that freedom have done so with the aid of law and obedience to law. The cry then sh[oul]d be Law and Freedom, Freedom and Law. But that does not please: it must be Freedom only. . . . Then there is civilisation. It sh[oul]d have been Catholic truth. That is the great end of Empires before God, to be Catholic and draw nations into their Catholicism.

(Further 367)

The Deutschland attempts to correct the Swinburnian cry of "Freedom," as its poet prays for his country to "be Catholic and draw nations into their Catholicism" in the final stanza. In doing so, he once again rechristens the language of Swinburne. Saints inspire conversion. Priests perform the sacrament of baptism. Limited poetic language, as used by a priest-poet, can baptize into the faith the language in which "the faithless fable and miss," in the hope that the gesture will contribute to the conversion of lost souls and lost countries. Hopkins, as well as the nun, christens his wild-worst best.

Finally, another subtext of argument against Swinburne's views runs through The Deutschland. In The Deutschland, desire is a way of achieving a sense of the divine presence: the nun's virgin desire to spend an eternity in heaven with Christ brought about her vision, as St. Dorothea's had done, for her longing call is answered by the godhead, and by the godhead's own desire. Desire is also the compelling force which enabled Hopkins to create poetry. Hopkins was a virgin, and the preservation of his purity had been the uppermost concern in his efforts to withstand the Oxford temptations. Like other religious virgins, Hopkins practiced total deferral, firm in the belief that the agonies of intensified desire would be released in a heavenly consummation which was beyond comprehension or representation. As Hopkins would preach in 1879, he made it "no secret that I look forward with eager desire to seeing the matchless beauty of Christ's body in the heavenly light" (Sermons 36).

Like every other aspect of his life, Hopkins's poetry had reference to the body of Christ. Hopkins did not remark directly upon this element in his poetry until he felt his absence. In 1879, when he was experiencing the withdrawal of God's grace and the first signs of the spiritual drought which saddened his last decade (and which he at times expressed through sexual imagery), he wrote to Robert Bridges:

Feeling, love in particular, is the great moving power and spring of verse and the only person that I am in love with seldom, especially now, stirs my heart sensibly and when he does I cannot always 'make capital' of it, it would be a sacrilege to do so. (Bridges 66)

The rare stirrings by Christ were by then too precious to be turned from direct religious use toward poetry. But in the mid-1870s such possible discouragements must have seemed to have been transcended. Through the effective control of the Jesuit affiliation, Hopkins was relieved for a time of the burden of his sexuality, and rejoiced in the paradoxical freedom which submission to the control of his Church and its beliefs has given him. He directed some of his own passions toward the creation of a passionate poetry celebrating his beloved Christ.

The result is a sudden explosion of language. The Wreck of the Deutschland marks the release of Hopkins's poetic genius from the self-imposed strictures which marred "Ad Mariam" and "Rosa Mystica." Nearly ten years after the Oxford crisis, he allows his language to flow in a flood of imagery, redeemed by the faith in the presence of Christ throughout the world, and by the promise of unity with his beloved God in the "heaven of desire," where he would join with Him behind the "body of lovely Death" (Poetical 125, line 196).

In the 1870s, Hopkins constructed a universe which is held together through a visual web in which human

being and divinity look at, and long for, each other. Like his nun, he is held in, and protected by, God's "all-fire glances" (125, line 184). Safely within the sight of God, Hopkins detects the presence of His Son everywhere, in the fatal storm, in the benign sunrise which followed it, and in the figures of the nun and the brave sailor. Everywhere his eyes fell Hopkins saw, not the soul of godlike man, but the body of Christ, who was the object of fierce desire. Surrounded by divinity in nature, held in God's protective sight, Hopkins could permit himself a joyous "looking."¹²

¹² More or less concurrently with Swinburne, Hopkins arrived at a very similar concept of the presence of divinity throughout the natural world. Neither embraced a simple pantheistic conception which identified divinity with nature. For the Swinburne of Songs Before Sunrise, divinity lies in a larger concept, the "soul of man," which comprises nature, humanity, and indeed, whole nations. For Hopkins, the divine was the adored body of Christ, present in nature universaliter. In each case, the universe is held together and inspirited through intermingled gazes. Christ and mankind, Freedom and the soul of man, look into each others eyes with love.

Desire is the force which discloses divine presence in the natural and human worlds: Swinburne gazes with desire toward the figures representing aspects of his republican divinity; Hopkins gazes with desire toward the figure of Christ. Undoubtedly Hopkins's construction of a cosmic visual web has antecedents within Christianity: certainly the doctrine of Christ's universal presence is to be found in the writings of Duns Scotus. There is also a more immediate source for the notions, however, in the poetry of Swinburne.

Hopkins's picture of the world, which carried with it political ramifications, held sexual and poetical ones as well. Hopkins's ability to write poetry required his release from sexual anxiety, which had resulted from his submission to Jesuit control. The representations of his own body in Part the First of The Deutschland add to the picture of fortunate bondage: God "has bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh" (119, line 5). Fearsome pressure, terror, and dread had "almost unmade" God's work, but it had led him to conversion, when he "did say yes" to God's "lashed rod" (lines 9-10).

Hopkins experienced the saving pressure in the center of his body, with his "midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with fire of stress" (line 16). At Oxford, Hopkins, so beleaguered by the temptations he saw around him that he feared he was losing his faith, had experienced the unwanted and agonizing "swelling to be" (120, line 54) of sexual desire. Now, however, he is aware that his body is both "lashed" — punished, but also fastened — and "laced" — tied, held together, by the grace of God. In The Deutschland, Hopkins celebrates the realization that the fire of stress is the pressure of God's finger, token of his care for his helpless subject, and that the pressure is also a steady one.

While Hopkins's main devotional emphasis was on the Word made flesh, he also believed in the literal truth of the Bible, and insisted, as well, upon the necessity for orthodox obedience to the doctrinal dictates of his church.¹³ Hopkins's nun calls upon, and calls up, Christ both as the Word and as the Word made flesh, and human flesh is steadied by reverence for both aspects of the divinity. For Hopkins, who is "soft sift / In an hourglass" (120, lines 25-26), is held "steady . . . / roped with, always, . . . / a vein / Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift" (lines 29-32). All of mankind, like Hopkins, must rely upon Scriptural revelation as "Christ's gift" along with his Incarnate Body.

Even though man is roped by the Gospel, and his body laced and lashed by God, he is subject to the flux of time in the hourglass. And in their blindness human beings may think that time and the natural world are the only realities: "But we dream we are rooted in earth — Dust! / Flesh falls within sight of us" (lines

¹³ Hopkins had written in "S. Thomae Aquinatis Rhythmus ad SS. Sacramentum" (Poetical 111-14) that the authority of the Word, the revealed texts of Christianity, must supplement whatever is perceived through the eyes of faith. In the poetry which follows The Deutschland, Hopkins's vision oscillates between two versions of the same truth: the Word, and the Word made flesh, Christ. His most ecstatic poetic celebrations of divine nature end always with a dogmatic affirmation (Moore 86).

85-6; emphasis in original). Humanity is subject to the effects of the primal fall, and flesh must fall again, into death.

The fall of flesh is enacted in The Deutschland by the death of a young sailor, who

stirred from the rigging to save
The wild woman-kind below,
With a rope's end round the man,
handy and brave —
He was pitched to his death at a
blow,
For all his dreadnought breast and
braids of thew:
They could tell him for hours, dandled
the to and the fro
Through the cobbled foam-fleece.
What could he do
With the burl of the fountains of air,
buck and the flood of the
wave? (123, lines 121-28)

The steadying power of Christ, the Word made flesh, has had another important effect upon Hopkins. For the first time since the mid-1860s, Hopkins has looked upon and represented the body of a young man. Christ was indeed present everywhere, in the beautiful human body as well as in the sunset. Hopkins's assured belief in the protection which devotion to Christ provided permitted him to see, and represent, the beautiful male body which had so troubled him in earlier years.

If perceived without the eyes of faith, through ideological lenses such as Swinburne's, the sailor's death can lead to the false conclusions, both about creation and about eschatology. It can seem that man

is self-sufficient and that earth itself creates and roots him, as Althaea believed, and that there is no future at the end of life. But scriptural authority assures that God made man, that flesh falls into dust, and that man is to be redeemed and his body resurrected at the last judgment.

In the "Prelude" to Songs Before Sunrise, Swinburne used the image of the sailor, steering his ship through shoal seas, to represent self-sufficient man as the master of things. Wherever the wind takes his "will," to "port or shipwreck," he is indomitable, because "man's soul is man's God." He will steer his course by the light of that soul:

And still its flame at mainmast height
Through the rent air that foam-flakes
fill
Sustains the indomitable light
Whence only man hath strength to steer
Or helm to handle without fear. (Poems
2: 7-8)

In that volume, the generative sea also symbolized mankind's only possibility of immortality, which lay in sexual generation. In his earlier poetry, however, the sea is Swinburne's insistent symbol for time and change (Landow, Crisis 93-94). The sailor in The Deutschland tries to overcome the blow he receives suddenly from the wind with his physical power alone, through the strength of his "dreadnought breast." But the "rope's end" tied around his midriff cannot protect him. He falls from mainmast height into the Swinburnian sea of

time: the onlookers could "tell him for hours," as his body moved up and down with the motion of the waves, like the action of a clock. Swinburne's sailor steered through the "foam-flakes" by the light of his own soul; the attempt of the sailor in The Deutschland at self-sufficient, individual bravery ends in death, as his body bobs through the "foam-fleece."

The sailor at the end of his rope had not realized that, like Hopkins, he must be roped to Christ. Still, although he has enacted the "fall of flesh in sight of us," he too may be redeemed through the steadying strength of the Roman Catholic faith. For the power of the nun's call may have "startled back" into the fold of the Roman Catholic church the sailor as well as other passengers on the doomed ship.

With his new assurance of God's protection, Hopkins is able to represent the strong male body, and, as he found that it was safe to look, everywhere, he also found Christ everywhere:

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. (Poetical 141,
lines 12-14)

After The Deutschland, however, instead of attempting to represent Christ's divine body directly in poetry, Hopkins turned his eyes to finding and celebrating Christ's universal presence in other forms.

From 1876 on, Hopkins limited the description of the body of Christ itself to a religious context, roping it to Scripture.

The religious context permits an authoritative statement of belief as fact, as poetry does not. For example, in the sermon at Bedford Leigh in November 1879, Hopkins demonstrated that "in his body [Christ] was most beautiful" through a series of "proofs":

This is known first by the tradition in the Church that it was so; . . . and many generations have drawn our Lord accordingly either in their own minds or in his images. . . . [H]e could not have pleased by growth of body unless the body was strong, healthy, and beautiful that grew. But the best proof of all is this, that his body was the special work of the Holy Ghost. He was not born in nature's course, no man was his father; . . . his body was framed directly from heaven by the power of the Holy Ghost. (Sermons 35-36)

The sermon is close to being a gloss on The Deutschland. Christ is

all the world's hero, the desire of nations. . . . He is the true-love and the bridegroom of men's souls: the virgins follow how whithersoever he goes; the martyrs follow him through a sea of blood, through great tribulation And those even that do not follow him, yet they look wistfully after him, own him a hero, and wish they dared answer to his call. (35)

The priest-poet uses the authority of his priestly office, a more powerful language source than poetry, to proclaim Christ's beauty.

Hopkins's new security has permitted him to rope his poetry in some degree to the heretical and fallen

images of Algernon Swinburne. Hopkins was painfully aware of the dangers presented by a beautiful human body: "the soul may have no other beauty . . . than that which it expresses in the symmetry of the body" (Bridges 95). To a religious believer, beautiful poetry, like the beautiful body, may cover a soulless evil, and the beautiful Luciferian poetry of Swinburne was compellingly seductive. The constriction of the Marian poems results to some degree from Hopkins's fear of such seduction. But the beauty of Swinburne's words could present no dangers now. Nor could the beauty of the natural world, which drew Hopkins eyes. Gratefully, Hopkins exulted in easy, guiltless looking, for example at a Welsh mountain at dawn:

This was the prized, the desirable
 sight, unsought, presented so
 easily,
 Parted me leaf and leaf, divided me,
 eyelid and eyelid of slumber.
 (Poetical 131, lines 6-7)

The image of Hopkins opening his eyes in "Moon-rise," written at about the time he was finishing The Deutschland, echoes the phrase "half divided the eyelids of sunset" from Swinburne's "Hendecasyllabics" (Schneider 84). Swinburne's texts remain implicated in Hopkins's new ability to write poetry. It is safe to look at Swinburne's poetry, over and over again, and to turn it to use.

Soulless it may have been, but to some degree Hopkins redeemed Swinburne's poetry through the ability

which he conferred upon it to help him express the realities of God's presence and love. The nun's cry has perhaps redeemed the soul of the young sailor. Hopkins's poetic cry has perhaps redeemed Swinburne's texts. In "Hesperia," Swinburne celebrated the power of individual poems to place themselves antiphonally within the context of the history of poetry and, through echoing earlier song, to attain a sort of immortality. It is a lesser, unsanctified version of eternal life, but it is the only one available to poetry. In placing fragments of Swinburne's texts as counter-text within The Deutschland, Hopkins performed that service for Swinburne, and in the process assured himself of some sort of poetic immortality as well. The gesture was one which helped him find a reason for writing poetry, and empowered him to follow The Deutschland with the confident and exuberant nature poems of the 1870s which have largely constituted his present reputation.

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