
The Creation of the Self in Gerard Manley Hopkins

Author(s): J. Hillis Miller

Source: *ELH*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Dec., 1955), pp. 293-319

Published by: The Johns Hopkins University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2871890>

Accessed: 29-08-2019 17:58 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

The Johns Hopkins University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *ELH*

THE CREATION OF THE SELF IN GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

By J. HILLIS MILLER

Seen from one point of view Hopkins' work is some dozen nearly perfect lyrics. Seen from another perspective it is a heterogeneous collection of documents: poems, fragments of poems, letters, notebooks, undergraduate papers, lecture notes, incomplete commentaries, sermons, and so on. But within this seemingly chaotic mass we can detect a certain persistent structure. It is not a structure of abstract thought, nor is it a pattern of concrete images. To create this structure the world of sense perception has been transformed, through its verbalization, into the very substance of thought, and, one may say, into the very substance of Hopkins himself. This paper has as its limited objective the attempt to reveal this pervasive imaginative structure. One of its chief limitations is the necessity of describing discursively and seriatim what is really the non-temporal interior world of Hopkins, the total context in which any single poem exists and has its real meaning.

I

I find myself both as man and as myself something most determined and distinctive, at pitch, more distinctive and higher pitched than anything else I see.¹

It would seem that the problem of individuation is solved for Hopkins with his first awareness of himself. No one has had a more intense apprehension of the uniqueness and substantiality of his own identity. Hopkins' version of the Cartesian *Cogito* is: "I taste myself, therefore I exist." "My selfbeing," says Hopkins, "my consciousness and feeling of myself, that taste of myself, of *I* and *me* above and in all things . . . is more distinctive than the taste of ale or alum, more distinctive than the smell of walnutleaf or camphor, and is incommunicable by

¹ Humphry House, ed., *The Notebooks and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London, 1937), p. 309.

any means to another man (as when I was a child I used to ask myself: What must it be to be someone else?).”²

The self for Hopkins, in the very first moment in which it recognizes itself, recognizes itself not as a lack, an appeal, but as a plenitude. It does not need to seek something outside of itself as a source of its life, because that life has already been given. One finds oneself, from the beginning, a “throng and stack of being, so rich, so distinctive.”³ No one could be less like Mallarmé, for whom the moment of selfconsciousness was the moment of a paralyzing sense of emptiness. Nor does self-awareness for Hopkins depend, as it does in the long tradition coming down from Locke, on sense perception of the external world. Much less does it depend on a *relation* to that world. No, Hopkins’ *Cogito* is neither a purely intellectual self-consciousness arrived at by putting in doubt and separating from oneself everything which seems to come from the outside, nor is it the Lockean self-awareness which springs out of psychological nothingness in the moment of sensation. It is, like the first, entirely interior, entirely independent of the exterior world, since, for Hopkins, “when I compare myself, my being myself, with anything else whatever, all things alike, all in the same degree, rebuff me with blank unlikeness; so that my knowledge of it, which is so intense, is from itself alone.”⁴

The first moment of self-awareness is, then, not a thought, but a deeply organic sense experience which permeates the whole being, as in the famous formula of Condillac: “I am odor of rose.” But it is a “taste of *oneself*,” not of anything whatsoever which comes from the outside: “The development, refinement, condensation of nothing shows any sign of being able to match this to me or give me another taste of it, a taste even resembling it.”⁵ The self is already fully existent as soon as one is aware of oneself at all, and seems to form an eternally subsisting tasting of oneself which prolongs itself from moment to moment as long as one endures. Since it remains exactly the same through time, it is apparently indestructible. If it extends beyond disembodied consciousness, it is only to include a minimal sense of one’s incarnation, minimal because it is a sense of incarnation in a simple, spaceless body which is wholly undifferentiated, wholly made up of a single taste.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*, p. 310.

⁵ *Id.*

The Hopkinsian self is, then, positive and definite, and it is vividly *sensed*, in the same way that objects in the exterior world are sensed. Intrinsic identity is a primary datum for man. He does not need to *do* anything at all to come into existence or to guarantee himself continued existence. And this intense possession of the sensation of self is the occasion of an elated joy at one's interior richness and at one's independence. If Hopkins' "taste of myself" reminds one of Sartre's "nausea," it is more because of the striking difference than because of the similarity. Sartre's nausea is disgust at the deeply organic sense of one's contingency, of the fact that one is not a free spirit, but is trapped in the flesh and enmeshed in a world of meaningless things. What is in Sartre a sickening sense of one's imprisonment in one's own unjustifiable material form is in Hopkins cause for rejoicing. For Hopkins the fact that "human nature" is "more highly pitched, selved, and distinctive than anything in the world" is proof that man is "life's pride and cared-for crown."⁶ Man is, it seems, sufficient unto himself, like God.

But beneath the rejoicing in Hopkins at the uniqueness and self-subsistence of each human individual there is another current of thought, a current of wonder at this uniqueness, a wonder which shades off into a question, one of the fundamental metaphysical questions, a question which reinstates all the problems. If nothing "explains" or "resembles" this unspeakable stress of pitch," if I "taste self but at one tankard, that of my own being," "from what then do I with all my being and above all that taste of self, that selfbeing, come?"⁷

II

The proof of the existence of God for Hopkins is neither from the evidence of the external world, nor from direct intuition. It is a logical deduction from the fact of one's own uniqueness:

Nothing finite then can either begin to exist or eternally have existed of itself, because nothing can in the order of time or even

⁶ W. H. Gardner, ed., *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, Third Edition (New York, 1948), p. 73.

⁷ *Notebooks*, p. 310.

of nature act before it exists or exercise function and determination before it has a nature to "function" and determine, to selve and instress, with.⁸

And if this is true for all created things, how much more true for human beings is it that they cannot be self-created and self-existent. In a radical about-face Hopkins sees that his apparently so independent self must, on the evidence of its very nature, depend on something outside of itself, must draw its existence from "one of finer or higher pitch and determination than itself."⁹ So here, almost in the moment of rejoicing over the distinctiveness of the "taste of oneself," strikes the "terror" of God.¹⁰ For if the Creator could do so much, so can he undo, or do with his creatures as he wishes. For Hopkins, "a self is an absolute which stands to the absolute of God as the infinitesimal to the infinite."¹¹ The question becomes, then, "What relation do I or should I have to this Being who is so infinitely my superior and so 'dangerous'¹² to me?"

The answer is simple and total: "Man was created. Like the rest then to praise, reverence, and serve God; to give him glory."¹³ But how do God's creatures "give him glory"? Merely by being themselves, by *doing* themselves. Selfhood is not a static possession, but an activity:

Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves—goes itself; myself it speaks and spells;
Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.*¹⁴

But it is just here that a radical division among God's creatures appears. Each non-human creature exists in the absolute security of being unable to do other than what it came for. It cannot choose *not* "to fling out broad its name,"¹⁵ and, in doing so, "make [God] known," "tell of him," give him glory."¹⁶ What they can *they always do.*"¹⁷ But if man can *mean* to give God glory, he can, necessarily, mean *not* to give him glory. His complete fulfillment of his nature, the selving for which he came, is radically contingent. If the full accom-

⁸ *Id.*, p. 312.

⁹ *Id.*, p. 309.

¹⁰ *Poems*, p. 56.

¹¹ *Notebooks*, p. 331.

¹² *Poems*, p. 73.

¹³ *Notebooks*, p. 303.

¹⁴ *Poems*, p. 95.

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Notebooks*, p. 303.

¹⁷ *Id.*

plishment of his being puts him “beyond all visible creatures,”¹⁸ so also he can, because of his free will and its accompanying self-consciousness utterly fail to be, in a way no other of God’s creatures can. So then, within the very development of Hopkins’ apprehension of the nature of his self-being an amazing transformation takes place. What had seemed so solid and definite turns out to be merely a “positive infinitesimal,”¹⁹ something that both exists and does not exist, like a point on a line. It is the mere potentiality of being, a self “intrinsically different from every other self,” but a self to which a “nature” must be added.²⁰ What had seemed so self-subsistent is really very much like the Mallarméan “néant”; it is “nothing, a zero, in the score or account of existence”:²¹ “For the self before nature is no thing as yet but only possible; with the accession of a nature it becomes properly a self, for instance a person.”²²

Now we can see how the fearful experience recorded in the “terrible sonnets,” utter paralysis of the will, and the accompanying spiritual vertigo, is possible, perhaps even necessary, given the premises of Hopkins’ universe. Only the self-conscious mind of man can utterly fail to be and plunge downward into the abyss of complete nothingness, and only the mind of man can experience the terror of that plunge:

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who ne’er hung there. Nor does long our small
Durance deal with that steep or deep.²³

And if it is only man who can taste himself, can be aware of his own being, it is also only man for whom that self-taste can be a terrifying experience of his isolation from God and from all things, an experience of complete enclosure within the prison of his own self-tormenting self:

I am gall, I am heartburn. God’s most deep decree
Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me²⁴

The self which had seemed so solid, so enduring and self-subsistent discovers not only that it is created, but that it absolutely requires help from outside itself in order to be, since

¹⁸ *Id.*, p. 303.

¹⁹ *Id.*, p. 322.

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*, p. 325.

²³ *Poems*, p. 107.

²⁴ *Id.*, p. 110.

to be necessarily means being able to serve, to *do* one's proper being. Without some relation to something outside oneself, man may remain paralyzed, a mere "positive infinitesimal," unable to transform possibility into actuality. Exiled within itself, caged in itself, the self discovers that far from sufficing to itself, it is, in its isolation, entirely impotent, as impotent as a eunuch. It is "time's eunuch,"²⁵ that is, it is wholly unable to project into the future an action and then carry that action out. Instead of a growth, change, accomplishment matching the passage of time and filling it, such as we find in non-human creatures, man in his desolation finds that he is plunged into a subterranean darkness where time has lengthened out into an endless succession of empty moments, each one of which, because of its emptiness, seems itself to be lifelong:

What hours, O what black hours we have spent
This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!
And more must, in yet longer light's delay.
With witness I speak this. But where I say
Hours I mean years, mean life.²⁶

In this extremity, any possibility of help will be grasped. Perhaps that non-human world of creatures who "always do what they can," even though it rebuffs man with "blank unlikeness," may serve in some way to rescue man from his dizzy plunge into the abyss, from the utter cessation of the forward movement of his life. What is the relation of man to nature in Hopkins?

III

There is evident in Hopkins, from the earliest fragmentary notebooks onward, an interest in the exact nature of things in the external world which is extraordinary even in a century to which nature meant so much.

Hopkins' primary relation to nature was what perhaps remains man's most profound reaction to the external world: it was simply the astonished recognition that each perceived object is *there*, exists as a stubborn, irreducible fact. "But indeed," says Hopkins, "I have often felt . . . that nothing is so pregnant and straightforward to the truth as simple *yes* and *is*."²⁷ No one has felt more deeply and consciously this wonder

²⁵ *Id.*, p. 113.

²⁶ *Id.*, p. 109.

²⁷ *Notebooks*, p. 98.

at the mere existence of things, and no one has tried more earnestly to cherish that wonder and make it persist throughout as the basic ingredient of his relation to the world.

This attitude toward nature reminds one, of course, of the fidelity to the minute particulars of nature in Hopkins' contemporaries, the Pre-Raphaelites. Hopkins' own beautiful landscape drawings are very Pre-Raphaelite in their ornate realism. Often a sketch will accompany a detailed verbal description in the *Journal*. And the *Journal* itself is largely made up of the impersonal recording of observed phenomena:

Clouds however solid they may look far off are I think wholly made of film in the sheet or in the tuft. The bright woolpacks that pelt before a gale in a clear sky are in the tuft and you can see the wind unravelling and rending them finer than any sponge till within one easy reach overhead they are morselled to nothing and consumed—it depends of course on their size.²⁸

There is in this a naturalism, an empiricism, even a nominalism, which seems to exclude any theory that objects in nature are parts of a coherent whole. What is, is what it is, and there seems to be nothing more to say about it. In any individual act of perception the whole world is reduced to the self and the observed scene, and one can only assert truthfully what one has oneself experienced. There is an implicit rejection of authority, of *a priori* ideas, the same rejection that was behind the growth of modern science, the same rejection that is one of the central motivations of romanticism. The Hopkins who wrote such passages in his journal might have said, with Keats, "O for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts," and "I can never feel certain of any truth but from a clear perception of its Beauty." In order to reach truth one must begin all over again each time, reject all received opinions and make oneself energetically passive.

But what does Hopkins find outside of himself through this process of long and hard *looking*? He discovers that each thing is uniquely itself, that each thing has its own distinct nature, a nature which is never repeated. This individuality is manifested in things by the freshness and sharpness of their outline or pattern. Hopkins' nature is a nature with clearly defined

²⁸ *Id.*, p. 140.

edges. It is a nature without blurring or smudging, a nature in which each thing stands out vividly as though it were surrounded by perfectly translucent air. And air can reach all the surfaces of even the smallest and most intricate object, so abrupt is the frontier between the object and its surroundings:

Wild air, world-mothering air,
Nestling me everywhere,
That each eyelid or hair
Girdles; goes home betwixt
The fleeci-est, frailest-fixed
Snowflake ²⁹

Hopkins' word for the design or pattern which is the perceptible sign of the unique individuality of a thing is "inscape." I give only one example among a great many: "Below at a little timber bridge I looked at some delicate fly shafted ashes—there was one especially of single sonnet-like inscape."³⁰ But an "inscape" need not be a single object. It can be a *group* of objects which together form a pattern. Nevertheless, this form of inscape, too, is not a mere extrinsic organization of disparate parts, but is the manifestation of an inner, organic unity. Nor is inscape only discovered through the sense of sight (although that sense certainly predominates in Hopkins). The use of synesthesia in Hopkins' poetry is matched by an explicit analysis in the *Journal* of the way the unitary inscape of a single object may be perceived by all the senses. The passage begins: "The bluebells in your hand baffle you with their inscape, made to every sense."³¹ "Inscape," then, is always used in contexts wherein the oneness, the organic unity, of a single object or group of *composed* objects is seen. And it is always associated with distinctness of outline, with words like "sharp," "wiry" and "crisp." Each object in Hopkins' world is distinctly itself, separated starkly from every other object in the universe. And it is not, like the nature of Tennyson and Rilke, seen as suspended statically and mutely in an eternal and fateful present which seems to be in the very act of fading suddenly away into non-existence. Nature in Hopkins is neither static nor does it hauntingly slip beyond the observer's immediate grasp. It is seen as present to the observer

²⁹ *Poems*, p. 99.

³⁰ *Notebooks*, p. 211.

³¹ *Id.*, p. 145.

and as acting directly upon him without any intervening distance or vacancy. It does not somehow escape the spectator by withdrawing in upon itself. And even a natural scene which might seem to ask to be treated as static and inanimate is perceived by Hopkins as the center of a vital activity, even of a *personal* activity: "The mountain ranges, as any series or body of inanimate like things not often seen, have the air of persons and of interrupted activity."³²

Natural objects, then, are not dead, but are sustained from within by a vital pressure. They are not static but ceaselessly active, even when they are apparently motionless. It is this inner pressure, permeating all nature, which is the true source of inscape and what is actually manifested by it. The word is *in-scape*, the outer manifestation or "scape" of an inner principle or activity—not the mere external pattern which things make and which is pleasing to the eye as design: "*All the world is full of inscape* and chance left free to act falls into an order as well as purpose: looking out of my window I caught it in the random clods and broken heaps of snow made by the cast of a broom."³³ "There lives the dearest freshness deep down things."³⁴ "Fineness, proportion of feature, comes from a moulding force which succeeds in asserting itself over the resistance of cumbersome or restraining matter."³⁵ Some of Hopkins' drawings are startlingly like Chinese paintings: their swirling whirlpool patterns seem to manifest an ubiquitous spiritual force rolling through all nature. Hopkins' nature, as much as Coleridge's or Whitehead's, is the locus of a vital process, the explosive meeting-point of a spiritual elan and the stubborn resistance of matter. It is a nature which is in ceaseless activity and which manifests an extreme tension between the inner energy and the restraining outward form. The inscape is the meeting place of these two.

But for the inner energy itself Hopkins uses another word, a word which suggests not the outer design or pattern of a

³² W. H. Gardner, ed., *Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London, 1953), p. 115.

³³ *Notebooks*, pp. 173, 174.

³⁴ *Poems*, p. 70.

³⁵ C. C. Abbott, ed., *Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London, 1938), p. 159.

thing, but that very energy which upholds it from within: "all things are upheld by instress and are meaningless without it," wrote Hopkins in an undergraduate essay on Parmenides.³⁶ Just as the apparently unique and solid "taste of self" which was discovered in the first moment of awareness turned out to be a mere "positive infinitesimal," so nature, apparently so full of sharply defined distinctive objects, turns out to be upheld by a single permeating spirit. This spirit is God himself: "As we drove home the stars came out thick: I leant back to look at them and my heart opening more than usual praised our Lord to and in whom all that beauty comes home."³⁷ Even more striking is a passage from Hopkins' unpublished retreat notes of 1882. In this passage all the solid world is dissolved into expression of God. It is a passage which seems at the furthest possible remove from the naturalism, the humble scientific observation of nature with which Hopkins began: "God's utterance of Himself in Himself is God the Word, outside Himself in this world. The world then is word, expression, news of God. Therefore its end, its purpose, its purport, its meaning and its life and work is to name and praise him."³⁸ Nature, then, for Hopkins as for the Middle Ages, is the "book of nature" in which we may read "news of God." But there is one crucial difference: the medieval doctrine of analogy has almost disappeared from Hopkins. For the Christian of the middle ages each object in the natural world repeated some particular aspect of the supernatural world. It was thus a means of knowing that supernatural world in detail. For Hopkins all the world is "charged with the grandeur of God," and we know through the things of this world simply the power and presence of God, not details of the supernatural world.

It is easy to see now why Hopkins was so elated when in 1872 he discovered Duns Scotus' *Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, and why in that year he could write: "just then when I took in any inscape of the sky or sea I thought of Scotus."³⁹ Hopkins found in Scotus confirmation of the theory

³⁶ *Notebooks*, p. 98.

³⁷ *Id.*, p. 205.

³⁸ Quoted in W. A. M. Peters, S. J., *Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London, 1948), p. 175.

³⁹ *Notebooks*, p. 161.

of nature and of the human self which he already held. Hopkins had always felt that the unique individuality of a thing or person was really a part of it, part of its form and not merely a result of the matter in which the form was actualised as Aristotle and St. Thomas maintained. He had always felt that one knows in the act of perception not, by means of the Aristotelean or Thomistic "*species intelligibilis*," the mere "*quidditas*" or "whatness" of a thing, but its distinctive individuality, its "thisness." In the Scotian doctrine of the *haecceitas* or individualizing form, which makes an object not simply a member of a species, a pine tree, for example, but this particular unrepeatable pine tree, Hopkins found his own deepest apprehension of the world systematized. And perhaps even more importantly Hopkins felt that through the immediate sense perception of things in the world he could know God directly as the "instress" that upheld each thing. He did not want a world of abstract "ideas" or "forms" ("pinetreeness," "bluebellness" and so on) to intervene between himself and God. Paradoxically, the Scotian metaphysic, which, from one perspective at least, seems perilously close to nominalism,⁴⁰ was actually a much better basis for Hopkins' view of the universe as "news of God" than would have been the Aristotelean theory of forms. Only a world in which God himself is directly present without intermediary in each one of his creatures can be "expression, news of God" in the way Hopkins deeply felt it to be: "All things," he wrote, "therefore are charged with love, are charged with God and if we know how to touch them give off sparks and take fire, yield drops and flow, ring and tell of him."⁴¹

IV

"If we know how to touch them." The perception of the instress in natural objects, then, is contingent on something in the observer. The true theme of Hopkins' *Journal* and of his nature poems is not nature alone but the man-nature relationship. Hopkins has a striking phrase for the "bridge," the dynamic interaction, he felt to exist between subject and object: he called it the "stem of stress between us and things."⁴² This

⁴⁰ See Bernard Landry, *La Philosophie de Duns Scot* (Paris, 1922), *passim*.

⁴¹ *Notebooks*, p. 342.

⁴² *Id.*, p. 98.

tension, as between two magnets, is absolutely necessary to "bear us out and carry the mind over."⁴³ Subject and object share one thing at least in common: their possession of the inward energy of instress. This intrinsic spiritual force flashes out from objects; it rays forth from them. Each object is not merely the tense withholding of a spiritual charge. This charge leaps out at the slightest provocation, and all objects are thereby potentially in touch with one another. The world in Hopkins is a vast network of electrical discharges given and received by objects which are an inexhaustible source of the divine energy:

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil.⁴⁴

But human beings too are charged with energy: "Honour is flashed off exploit," says Hopkins,⁴⁵ and "self flashes off frame and face."⁴⁶ Perception, as in Whitehead, is only a special case of the dynamic interaction between all objects. In the moment of perception a "stem of stress" is created between subject and object to which the subject contributes as much as does the object: "What you look hard at seems to look hard at you."⁴⁷ Hopkins' epistemology, like that of the Pre-Socratics (whom he had read), is based ultimately on the "theory of sensation by like and like."⁴⁸ Only if the beholder is able to return stress for stress will the moment of knowledge, the moment of the coalescence of subject and object, take place.

Hopkins almost always mentions both subject and object in his descriptions of nature. He not only describes the bluebells, he says: "I caught as well as I could while my companions talked the Greek rightness of their beauty."⁴⁹ "I caught." It is an active verb, suggesting the energetic grasp of the mind on things. The phrase echoes through the *Journal* and the poetry; it is Hopkins' special term for the strenuous activity of perception: "I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon."⁵⁰

Just as Hopkins' self-awareness is an organic taste of himself, not a dry lucidity, so his grasp of the external world in the dynamic moment of instress is as much emotional as intellec-

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ *Poems*, p. 70.

⁴⁵ *Id.*, p. 112.

⁴⁶ *Id.*, p. 104.

⁴⁷ *Notebooks*, p. 140.

⁴⁸ *Id.*, p. 102.

⁴⁹ *Id.*, p. 174.

⁵⁰ *Poems*, p. 73.

tual. It is a total possession of the object by the thinking, feeling, sensing subject. The object is internalized by the subject. Hence Hopkins speaks repeatedly of instress as something deeply *felt*, not merely intellectually realized: "But such a lovely damasking in the sky as today I never felt before."⁵¹ "Looking all round but most in looking far up the valley I felt an instress and charm of Wales."⁵² One gathers from the constant use of this word and of the word "caught" a strong sense of the precariousness of these experiences. They are reported with a tone of elation, as though they were rare occurrences of success among many failures.

And sometimes indeed the instress does fail to come. It depends on just the proper conditions in the perceiver and in what is perceived: in the perceiver a certain freshness of vision and a singleness of concentration on the object perceived: "Unless you refresh the mind from time to time you cannot always remember or believe how deep the inscape in things is."⁵³ For the instress to come it must be as if there were nothing else in the world but the present moment of ecstatic communication with what is directly present to the senses. Hopkins differs from the romantic poets generally in that there is in his writings almost no interest in affective memory, in the linkage to a moment in the past by means of intense perception in the present. Each moment recorded in the *Journal* and in the poems is sufficient unto itself. There is a kind of radical discontinuity in Hopkins' temporal existence. It proceeds by a series of vivid perceptions. Each is distinct from all the others and each fades away almost immediately to be replaced by another or sometimes by mere vacancy and lassitude. If a relation between past and present *via* memory appears in Hopkins at all it is almost always in the form of a lament for the irretrievable fading away of the ecstasy of instress when it is past: "Saw a lad burning big bundles of dry honey-suckle: the flame (though it is no longer freshly in my mind) was brown and gold."⁵⁴ The *Journal* entries were often written down long after the event recorded from notes made at the time. In the few cases where the notes themselves exist we can sense a frantic attempt to capture some portion at least of what is

⁵¹ *Notebooks*, p. 143.

⁵² *Id.*, p. 210.

⁵³ *Id.*, p. 140.

⁵⁴ *Id.*, p. 159.

known to be fleeting and fragile. And are not the *Journal* and the poems themselves ultimately to be defined as the attempt to give through words some form of permanence to what were actually unique, instantaneous and unrepeatable experiences? There is implicit in the very form of the *Journal* and of the poems a deep anguish at the inevitable passing away of these moments. The loss of these experiences is painful because it is the loss of what the person himself is at that moment. We can detect in the *Journal* both the anxious attempt to give these fleeting moments some permanence in words *and* the obsessive urge to have more and more and more of them. Hopkins can think of no more painful form of self-mortification and penance than to deprive himself of the repetition of one of these experiences.⁵⁵

But sometimes even if the precious activity of instressing is permitted and desired it will not come. Not only must one banish the past and future and live wholly in the moment, one must also banish the awareness that any other person exists: "Even with one companion ecstasy is almost banished: you want to be alone and to feel that, and leisure—all pressure taken off."⁵⁶ One can see clearly and explicitly here what is sometimes obscured in other projects of founding one's self-identity on a direct relationship to nature: such a project is, strictly speaking, amoral. It does not exist in what Kierkegaard called the "ethical" realm. For Hopkins, as for Keats and Wordsworth, the self is formed not through inter-personal relations but through experiences of non-human nature, experiences which simply ignore the existence of other human beings. Hopkins' *Journal* and his greatest poems are the record of experiences of absolute isolation from other people.

But even to be alone, in the moment, isolated from past and future and from all other human beings is not always enough. There may be simply a failure of the sensibility, a failure which in some people is total and permanent: "I thought how sadly beauty of inscape was unknown and buried away from simple people and yet how near at hand it was if they had eyes to see it and it could be called out everywhere again."⁵⁷

And sometimes it is the *object* which for one reason or

⁵⁵ See *Id.*, p. 199.

⁵⁶ *Id.*, p. 111.

⁵⁷ *Id.*, p. 161.

another fails to offer itself to perception, fails to flash itself outwards in the stress that can be counterstressed by the poet. This fact is perceived when a change in a natural object makes it possible to detect an inscape that has been present all the time, but hidden: "This is the time to study inscape in the spraying of trees, for the swelling buds carry them to a pitch which the eye could not else gather."⁵⁸ "I caught as well as I could [in the bluebells] . . . a notable glare the eye may abstract and sever from the blue color of light beating up from so many glassy heads, which like water is good to float their deeper instress in upon the mind."⁵⁹ "Float their deeper instress in upon the mind"! How different this is from the perception, at a *distance*, that each individual thing is its distinct self and has an inscape. Now Hopkins wants to possess that external perception, to internalize it, to "float it in upon the mind" across the stem of stress between subject and object.

When the communication is total perceiver and perceived come into intimate contact, interpenetrate and coalesce. This experience is the true theme of the early nature poems, of "Spring," "The Starlit Night," "The Sea and the Skylark," and "Hurrahing in Harvest." The effect of this experience on the self is, in the etymological sense of the word, "ecstasy": the self leaps outside of itself and creates a new self by means of a substantial identification with all of perceived nature:

These things, these things were here and but the beholder
 Wanting; which two when they once meet,
 The heart rears wings bold and bolder
 And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him off under
 his feet.⁶⁰

V

Another night from the gallery window I saw a brindled heaven, the moon just marked—I *read* a broad careless inscape flowing throughout.⁶¹

The [elms'] tops are touched and *worded* with leaf.⁶²

On the one hand, natural objects are intelligible; they can be read by man as though they were not simply objects, but

⁵⁸ *Id.*, p. 141.

⁵⁹ *Id.*, p. 174.

⁶⁰ *Poems*, p. 75.

⁶¹ *Notebooks*, p. 158, my italics.

⁶² *Id.*, p. 190, my italics.

signs. On the other hand, they are *mute* signs. They only speak when there is a human being present to read them. Man gives natural objects a voice and a language. In "reading" them, and in bodying forth that meaning in words man gives nature something it does not possess, selfconsciousness and a tongue to speak that awareness:

And what is Earth's eye, tongue, or heart else, where
Else, but in dear and dogged man? ⁶³

The true "stem of stress" between man and nature is the word itself. At the point of fusion, where subject meets object and coalesces with it, is born the word. Words have for Hopkins a magic quality of attaining the object, wresting from it its meaning and making that meaning a permanent possession for man. "To every word meaning a thing and not a relation," wrote Hopkins in a brief paper on words dated 1868, "belongs a passion or prepossession or enthusiasm which it has the power of suggesting or producing, but not always or in everyone."⁶⁴ In one sense, all Hopkins' efforts in his poetry were towards the creation of a continuum of words which would, like a proper name, convey the "prepossession," to use his word, of a unique individual experience. All Hopkins' poetry is based on the fundamental discovery that words can imitate things, re-present them in a different form, rescue them from the ceaselessly moving realm of nature and translate them into the permanent realm of words. Words can, Hopkins' discovered, "catch" things, "stall" them, as he said,⁶⁵ and transform them into spiritual stuff. Metaphors were not, for him, "poetic lies," nor were words arbitrary signs. Hopkins discovered what certain contemporary poets, philosophers and anthropologists are making their central theme: in the word subject and object merge and we touch the object in a way we never can without naming it. The word is not an arbitrary label; it carries the object alive into the heart. Each different word for the "same thing" transmits to the mind a slightly (or radically) different aspect of reality. Each new word is a window through which a new

⁶³ *Poems*, p. 96.

⁶⁴ *Notebooks*, p. 95.

⁶⁵ For a use of this word, see *Notebooks*, p. 127: "these images . . . once lodged there are stalled by the mind like other images."

portion of reality is revealed. To name a thing is to perceive it. This thing is not subjective, not "imposed" by the mind "outwards."⁶⁶ It is "really there," but is only perceived when it is so named. We only truly *see* the world when we have represented it in words. Metaphor, onomatopoeia, compound words, inversion, functional shift, and all the other special techniques of verbal representation are only modes of the universal operation of verbal *mimesis*. All the seemingly idiosyncratic methods of Hopkins' poetry are, in one way, directed towards the perfect imitation in words of the object perceived in all its concreteness and in all its energetic activity.

But if words for Hopkins face outwards towards the object, they also face inwards towards the mind. Even in the earliest of Hopkins' writings we can see another fundamental obsession: a fascination for words in themselves, for their etymology, for their multiplicity of meanings, for their abstract "prepossession" without any reference to particular experiences. Hopkins was very sensitive to the inscape of words in themselves, taken in isolation from their meaning. He was fascinated by the fact that the same word can in different contexts carry the "prepossession" of entirely different realities: "Sky peak'd with tiny flames. . . . Altogether peak is a good word. For sunlight through shutter, locks of hair, rays in brass knobs etc. Meadows peaked with flowers."⁶⁷ If Hopkins was the most nature-intoxicated poet of the Victorian period, he was also the poet most fascinated by words in themselves, by words not as the signs of an external reality but as the signs of certain definite spiritual states.

Accordingly, alongside the theory and practice of poetry as *mimesis* we can observe a very different notion, a notion of poetry as a thing to be contemplated for its own sake and without any reference to the external world: "But as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern or what I am in the habit of calling 'inscape' is what I above all aim at in poetry."⁶⁸ Inscape, said

⁶⁶ *Id.*, p. 154.

⁶⁷ *Id.*, p. 32.

⁶⁸ C. C. Abbott, ed., *Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges* (London, 1935), p. 60.

Hopkins, is “the very soul of art.”⁶⁹ It is what makes a work of art “beautiful to individuation,” that is, it gives a poem or a painting the kind of distinctness, uniqueness, *haecceitas*, possessed by a natural object. “Inscape,” then, has two very different meanings. It can refer to the willed design of a human artifact as well as to the pattern into which natural objects fall without any human intervention.

Hopkins sought to achieve in his poetry an organic unity in which each part would be interrelated to all the other parts, and thus transcend its isolation as the name of an external object: “Repetition, *oftening, over-and-overing, aftering* of the inscape must take place in order to detach it to the mind and in this light poetry is speech which alters and oftens its inscape, speech couched in a repeated figure and verse as spoken sound having a repeated figure.”⁷⁰ “Tout le mystère est là,” said Mallarmé, in terms that Hopkins himself might have used, “établir les identités secrètes par un deux à deux qui ronge et use les objêts, au nom d’une centrale pureté.”⁷¹ For Hopkins, as for Mallarmé, the repetition or parallelism which establishes “secret identities” between one part of a poem and another was for the sake of a “central purity,” a central purity which Hopkins called the total inscape of the poem. Here we have moved very far indeed from the notion of poetry as the *mimesis* of the external world, as the violent point of contact between subject and object. All the density of texture in Hopkins’ verse is as much for the sake of creating its own self-sufficient durée or “sliding inscape,” as it is to express the packed energy and radiance which some event in nature contains. If the extreme use of various forms of “over-and-overing” in Hopkins, assonance, alliteration, internal rhyme, Welsh *cynghanedd* and so on, is in one sense all for the purpose of representing nature, it is in another sense wholly indifferent to external nature and all calculated to “detach the mind” and “carry” the “inscape of speech for the inscape’s sake.”

Inscape in poetry is “the essential and only lasting thing”;⁷²

⁶⁹ C. C. Abbott, ed., *Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon* (London, 1935), p. 135.

⁷⁰ *Notebooks*, p. 249.

⁷¹ Letter to Vielé Griffin, August 8, 1891, quoted in G. Poulet, *La Distance Intérieure* (Paris, 1952), p. 343.

⁷² *Further Letters*, p. 225.

it is "species or individually distinctive beauty of style."⁷³ But it is only attained *via* the individuality of the poet himself: "Every poet," says Hopkins, "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."⁷⁴ Each poet, then, is very like each inanimate object in that he is a *species*, not a *genus*, a *haecceitas*, not a *quidditas*. "No doubt my poetry errs on the side of oddness," wrote Hopkins, ". . . Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or inscape to be distinctive and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped."⁷⁵ We can see now that when Hopkins said that he aimed above all at "inscape" in poetry he meant not simply that he aimed at pattern, design, organic unity, but that he aimed at these because only through them could poetry be the affirmation and actualization of his own identity. So in the headnote of the sonnet to Henry Purcell, Purcell is praised for having "uttered in notes the very make and species of man as created in him and in all men generally."⁷⁶ But in the poem itself the bow to St. Thomas is forgotten and Purcell's music is praised not as manifesting "man generally," but as the expression of an absolutely unique self, Purcell's own "arch-especial . . . spirit":

It is the forgèd feature finds me; it is the rehearsal
Of own, of abrupt self there so thrusts on, so throngs the ear.⁷⁷

But at the center of the project of individuation by means of "poeting" there lies a double flaw, a flaw which leads to the faltering and ultimate total collapse of the project. In this collapse, Hopkins is left bare again, "no one, nowhere," enclosed within the unpierced walls of his own impotent taste of self.

VI

This collapse can be seen from two perspectives. The poet, it is true, however much he may be apparently imitating the external world in his poetry, is actually speaking himself, *doing* himself. The poet poets. But this "poeting" is accomplished

⁷³ *Id.*

⁷⁴ *Id.*, p. 222.

⁷⁵ *Letters to Bridges*, p. 60.

⁷⁶ *Poems*, p. 84.

⁷⁷ *Id.*, p. 85.

after all through words that have meanings, that remain signs even when they are used for the sake of their own inscapes. A poem is not an act of absolute self-creation. Without the external world it could not exist; however independent it may be it must remain, to be successful, a faithful representation of the external world. The success of this reliance on the external world will depend on the stability and solidity of that world itself.

Hopkins' nature, so densely packed with distinctly singular objects, each sustained by the instress of an inexhaustible energy would seem perfectly suited to such a dependence on it. Nevertheless, we can see a disastrous transition in Hopkins' apprehension of nature. At first it seems full of solid, static, enduring objects, objects which cannot help but be themselves and which cannot cease to be themselves. But it becomes apparent that these things are in continual movement. Nature is not only full of kinetic energy, it is also a nature in process which is the dynamic expending of that energy. One remembers the clouds in "Hurrahing in Harvest" which are continually made and unmade, "moulded ever and melted across skies."⁷⁸ It is only in some kind of movement that things can radiate their inexhaustible energy outwards. But there seems nothing ominous about the discovery that things are not fixed eternally in a single inscape.

Yet in two magnificent poems of Hopkins' maturity, "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" and "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection," there is a complete reversal of the earlier feeling of the permanent distinctiveness of things. What had begun as the simple perception that the inscapes of things are in a continual process of change becomes an anguished recognition that the "forged features" of things are ultimately utterly destroyed. Never has the perception of nature as a shifting flux of birth and death been expressed with more intensity. As in Parmenides, "unmeaning ($\acute{\alpha}\delta\alpha\eta$) night, thick and wedgèd body"⁷⁹ which inevitably follows day and hides the perceptible forms of things is taken as the symbol of that absolute non-being which will inevitably overtake all created things, all *mortal* beauty:

⁷⁸ *Poems*, p. 74.

⁷⁹ *Notebooks*, p. 102.

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

. . . For earth ' her being has unbound, her
 dapple is at an end, as—
 tray or aswarm, all throughther, in throngs; ' self ín self
 steepèd and páshed—quite
 Disremembering, dísmémbering ' áll now.⁸⁰

Only if we know how much Hopkins cherished the “original definiteness and piquant beauty of things”⁸¹ can we understand fully what violence of regret, what “pity and indignation,”⁸² there is in the image of “self ín self steepèd and páshed.” It is a dynamically *experienced* image of the return of all individuated forms to the “thick and wedgèd body” of primordial chaos. In that chaos every self will be blurred, smeared, inextricably mixed in the other selves. Nature will be, in Hopkins' striking coinage, “all throughther.” The suggestion that a complete phrase such as “each interpenetrated through and through with the others” has been collapsed into “throughther” makes it a perfect *mimesis* of the event described. One feels the forms of the collapsed words straining to differentiate themselves, just as the identities being crushed into chaos resist desperately the unbinding of their being.

In the poem called “That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire” another of the Pre-Socratic symbols is used, fire, the symbol of the energy of being, “ethery flame of fire” as Hopkins calls it in his essay on Parmenides.⁸³ In this poem all the thousand forms in which this energy manifests itself are seen to be impermanent as clouds or as straws in a bonfire, and are continually being destroyed and replaced by other forms. “God gave things,” wrote Hopkins, “a forward and perpetual motion.”⁸⁴ If “Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves” is the frightening vision of night as dismembering, the later poem is a hymn to day as destructive fire, a fire in which “million-fuèled, nature's bonfire burns on.”⁸⁵ The very energy of Being, its fire, what seemed to inhere within things and to sustain them in selfhood turns out to be

⁸⁰ *Poems*, p. 104.

⁸¹ *Further Letters*, p. 72.

⁸² *Poems*, p. 112.

⁸³ *Notebooks*, p. 102.

⁸⁴ *Id.*, p. 347.

⁸⁵ *Poems*, p. 112.

itself the source of their undoing. For that energy drives things on to an activity of selving that eventually consumes them, unelves them, transforms them out of all resemblance to their former selves. Only the "ethery flame of fire" remains constant, that and the activity of change itself, the ceaseless metamorphosis of one form into another.

How, then, can an identification of oneself with external nature be used to establish a permanent identity if nature is as unstable as the day which moves every moment closer towards the tomb of night, as quick to change and as destructive as fire, and if it is to this universal flux that we must testify in our poems?

VII

The evidence from the other side is equally fatal. If nature fails man, man fails nature and fails himself even more totally. His relation to nature can be far different from the reverent and concentrated attention which "floats its instress in upon the mind." If natural objects lack stability and permanence, so even more completely does man. In non-human nature the law is transformation, flux, but the law for man is absolute destruction, since his identity, though incarnated, is too subtle, too spiritual, to retain its distinctness through even so many changes as a tree or flower will endure. The final lesson man learns from nature is that he, too, is part of nature and that this means but one thing for him: death. If all objects are burned in nature's bonfire, man is simply annihilated in that same fire:

But quench her bonniest, dearest ' to her, her clearest-
selvèd spark
Man, how fast his firedint, ' his mark on mind, is gone!
Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark
Drowned.⁸⁶

Even if a man could achieve through the poetizing of his perception of nature an unwavering and permanent identity, it would be all dismembered and unbound in a moment at his death.

But even within the limits of earthly life the project is bound to fail. As we have seen, the ability to "instress" nature is intermittent and can be replaced in a moment by the most

⁸⁶ *Id.*

agonizing spiritual impotence. If the self is unable to selve, as it often is, it will be cut off entirely from the world which can give it such delight. In times of spiritual dryness, of spiritual paralysis, the self is locked entirely within its self-torment and cut off entirely from the outside world:

I cast for comfort I can no more get
By groping round my comfortless, than blind
Eyes in their dark can day or thirst can find
Thirst's all-in-all in a world of wet.⁸⁷

The proper image of spiritual aridity is not of a thirsty man in a desert but of a thirsty man in the midst of water he cannot drink; it is not the image of a man straining to see in the darkness but of a blind man in the midst of light which he cannot see.

There was something ominous in the double orientation of words, and in the split in Hopkins between poetry as *mimesis* and poetry as "the inscape of speech for the inscape's sake." Words can become not the point of fusion of subject and object, but the locus of their most absolute and permanent division. Words, instead of reaching out to things, touching them, and *giving* them over to man, can become merely the opaque walls of his interior prison:

. . . Only what word
Wisest my heart breeds dark heaven's baffling ban
Bars or hell's spell thwarts. This to hoard unheard
Heard unheeded, leaves me a lonely began.⁸⁸

Cast outwards by the mind to capture the object, words may fall endlessly through a shadowy void and never touch anything at all, neither things nor the God within things:

. . . my lament
Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
To dearest him that lives alas! away.⁸⁹

The end point of Hopkins' long dialogue with nature is a complete reversal of the ecstatic mood of "Hurrahing in Harvest." He is cut off entirely from nature and lives in the utter isolation of his spiritual inertia, "this tormented mind / With this tormented mind tormenting yet."⁹⁰ His state is very like that of the damned who are also imprisoned in the corrosive contem-

⁸⁷ *Id.*, p. 111.

⁸⁸ *Id.*, p. 109.

⁸⁹ *Id.*

⁹⁰ *Id.*, p. 110.

plation of their own limits. "Against these acts of its own," wrote Hopkins, "the lost spirit dashes itself like a caged beast and is in prison, violently instresses them and burns, stares into them and is the deepest darkened."⁹¹

VIII

If all the positive ways of self-affirmation fail, perhaps there is one final way, a way through the center of the deepest despair and spiritual abnegation: the creation of one's true self by self-sacrifice. The crucifixion, central moment of history, was the act whereby Christ "annihilated himself."⁹² Christ was most Christ, the Mediator and Saviour of mankind, when he thus sacrificed himself, just as the windhover is most windhover when it renounces its sovereignty of the air and dives earthward.

Hopkins in his later years planned a treatise on sacrifice. It was never published, but it is clear from texts scattered throughout his work what he would have said. Non-human things can praise God simply by being themselves, by "dealing out that being indoors each one dwells." Only man in order to praise God and win salvation must cease to be himself. Only through such a total change of his essential being can man escape the damnation of being "no one, nowhere, / In wide the world's weal," exiled within himself, separated from all, dwelling in "the barren wilderness outside of God,"⁹³ condemned to taste his own self eternally. Only by ceasing to be oneself and becoming Christ can a man avoid an existence which is a continual dizzy falling away in time:

I am soft sift
In an hourglass—at the wall
Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,
And it crowds and it combs to the fall.⁹⁴

In the subtle and elaborate investigation of free will and grace in the "Commentary on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola" Hopkins devises a brilliant metaphor to define this transformation. The actual pitch of self existing

⁹¹ Peters, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

⁹² *Letters to Bridges*, p. 175.

⁹³ *Notebooks*, p. 344.

⁹⁴ *Poems*, p. 56.

at any moment in each person is only one self out of an infinity of possible selves. It is like one cross-section out of all the possible ones of a three-dimensional solid. It is one "cleave of being" out of the total "burl of being." This "burl of being" is as much really part of a person, though only potential, as his actual self. The transformation of the self when it becomes Christ is the abandonment of one cleave of being and the actualizing of another potential one. For every man, and even Satan himself, has at least one potential cross-section which coincides with Christ.

But how can this transformation be brought about? For man of his own power can do absolutely nothing to move himself from one "cleave of being" to another. There is only one answer: by God's grace, "which lifts the receiver from one cleave of being to another and to a vital act in Christ."⁹⁵ Hopkins' concept of grace seems to relate him rather to Post-Reformation theologies than to Thomistic Catholicism. For a Thomist, the initial act of creation gives a man's soul an indestructible permanence. He cannot cease to be himself, even if he veers to one of the extremes of mortal sin or sainthood. Grace, in the Thomistic view, does not exert its power on the permanent identity of a man's being, but only upon the variations of his temporal existence. But grace for Hopkins is precisely a *transubstantiation* of the person's innermost being. It is "an exchange of one whole for another whole, as they say in the mystery of Transubstantiation, a conversion of the whole substance into another substance, but here it is not a question of substance; it is a lifting him from one self to another self, which is a most marvellous display of divine power."⁹⁶ "It is not a question of substance," says Hopkins, but it is difficult to say what else it is, this total transformation from one self to another self, "through the gulf and void between pitch and pitch of being."⁹⁷

Where then is free will? It would seem that there is nothing left for God's creature to do but to pray for grace. But in what Hopkins calls the "least sigh of desire," the "aspiration,"⁹⁸ of man towards God a tiny corner is left for man's free will. "Correspondence" is the key word in Hopkins' theory of grace.

⁹⁵ *Notebooks*, p. 337.

⁹⁶ *Id.*, p. 329.

⁹⁷ *Id.*, pp. 334, 335.

⁹⁸ *Id.*, p. 333.

Just as man's salvation is won by achieving a correspondence to Christ, so the only action on man's part that makes this occur is the minute movement of volition whereby he wills to correspond with God's grace: "and by this infinitesimal act the creature does what in it lies to bridge the gulf fixed between its present actual and worsen pitch of will and its future better one."⁹⁹ This "correspondence with grace and seconding of God's designs"¹⁰⁰ is man's tiny bit contributed towards the creation of his own best self.

But even when transubstantiated into Christ a man still remains himself, since it is that mere positive infinitesimal which the man is aware of in his first self-consciousness which is so filled with Christ. The proper figure for the achieved transformation is of a hollow shell or vessel which is everywhere inhabited by Christ and brought into positive being by Christ: "This too," writes Hopkins, "but brings out the nature of the man himself, as the lettering on a sail, or the device upon a flag are best seen when it fills."¹⁰¹

However, this metamorphosis of man into Christ remains until his death contingent, in jeopardy. It depends on God's continual gift to fresh grace and on man's continual "saying Yes"¹⁰² to God.¹⁰³ Only at the Resurrection will man be securely and permanently transformed, soul and body, into Christ: whence the "comfort of the Resurrection," the only real comfort for man:

. . . Flesh fade, and mortal trash
 Fall to the residuary worm; ' world's wildfire, leave but ash:
 In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
 I am all at once what Christ is, ' since he was what I am, and
 This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, ' patch, matchwood, immortal
 diamond,
 Is immortal diamond.¹⁰⁴

We must leave Hopkins here, at the extreme point of his despair and hope, turned far from nature and from poetry, stand-

⁹⁹ *Id.*, p. 333.

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*, p. 344.

¹⁰¹ *Id.*, p. 343.

¹⁰² *Id.*, p. 333.

¹⁰³ See Hopkins' beautiful image for God's continual *sustaining* of man in stanza four of "The Wreck of the Deutschland" (*Poems*, p. 56).

¹⁰⁴ *Poems*, p. 112.

ing aghast at the sight of a world that is visibly disintegrating and being consumed, as at the last trump. We leave him with nothing but the "comfort of the Resurrection," the hope of that miracle of transubstantiation which will change man from the mere impure carbon of matchwood to immortal diamond, change him, that is, from one allotropic form of himself to another so different that if there is any secret continuity between the two it is only in that the same null potentiality of being, is, in each case, actualized by God, actualized by God in ways that are as far apart as the whole distance from hell to heaven.

The Johns Hopkins University