ORGANIC FORM

"Organic Form: When a work of art has its own inherent laws, originating with its very invention and fusing in one vital unity both structure and content, then the resulting form may be described as organic.

Abstract Form: When an organic form is stabilized and repeated as a pattern, and the intention of the artist is no longer related to the inherent dynamism of an inventive act, but seeks to adapt content to predetermined structure, then the resulting form may be described as abstract."

The notion of an organic form, a vital principle of Romanticism, is as old as art itself. In England Coleridge first formulated this. As a Romantic principle it is concerned with how the artist, a mere specimen of natura naturata (created nature) becomes aware of and reveals the complex process of natura naturans (creative nature), the realm of essence. The process apart, the medium for such transference, says Schelling, is art.

Form is an organic event, realized by the artist at the very moment of piercing through the veneer of appearances to reach the realm of essence. Spontaneity so charges 'form' that it markedly diverges from a pre-
determined shape. "A shape is something pre-existent, belonging to the realm of existence, and essence can be only deformed by being forced into such a ready-made container. Our practical faculties, that is to say, cannot consciously predetermine the form that will fitly express an intuitive experience. Form belongs to the realm of essence and is abstracted from it by the mediating genius of the artist-genius, in this sense, being not the artist himself, but an unconscious power which he possesses (or which possesses him) and which enables him for a moment to identify himself with the formative energy of the universe, with nature naturans."^2

In terms of aesthetics, devoid of this speculative element, 'Form' is restated in these terms:

"The form of a work of art is inherent in the emotional situation of the artist; it proceeds from his apprehension of that situation ... and is the creation of a formal equivalence (ie. a symbol) for that situation. It resists or rejects all attempts to fit the situation to a ready made formula of expression, believing that to impose such a generalized shape on a unique emotion or intuition results in insincerity of feeling and artificiality of form."^3
Of these two quotations the first is more of a metaphysical speculation. And the second in simpler English would mean that verse forms too breathe poetry. W.P. Ker says: "The form of verse is not separable from the soul of poetry."

As such concerning ourselves much with scanning into Ti-TUM/Ti-TUM . . . or TUM-Ti/Ti-TUM . . . pattern, the nomenclature, so many lines, so many feet, so many rhymes, and the usual labels; is a mistake. These are all the results of the rule of thumb and a matter of arithmetic. The dull account of all these before the boys would result in the feeling that the latter have the eyes of a boiled cadfish. No, the verse forms are not as much dry as dust frames, mere husks.

The lover in Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet commencing with, "Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show" complains he is at a loss to write a poem that will win his mistress to him. At last he hears the sound advice from his muse:

Fool, said my muse to me, look in thy heart and write.

This goes to say that forms of verse have a closer bearing on and are very much an integral part of poetic experience and therefore of appreciation than the mere mechanics of
prosody would suggest. Livingstone Lowes claims that 'The incommunicable, unique essence of the poem is its form.4

A poem's vision and versification are inextricably interwoven: the latter in some way always made to work actively in the former's service. As such the form should reveal the intricate DESIGN of the poem. A careful reader knows the stanza pattern, and rhyme scheme of a poem not only in order to be well informed about the poem but in order to respond more exactly to the poem's continuity, the balance and unity that its verse form imposes on it. The structural lines should guide us in paying an undivided attention to thought and full scope to imagination.

Verse form attuned to good poetry exerts a particularly vital shaping of the reader's poetic experience and guides it in such a way that an artistic design slowly works out in the reader's mind; for "each occasion of experience has its own individual pattern." Form is the intricate and delicate blend of the poet's experience under the stress of words and those of words when subjected to significant design.

Form being an organic event would have grown along with the poem. Significantly enough for the reader; study
of verse form can grow only out of the study of the poem itself. Consequently, while studying any poem and its form we should concern ourselves; more than the rhyme scheme, stanza form and metre, with grouping, development and progression of theme, being on the alert to the peculiar arrangement of thought, imagery and sound.

Now let us review these our simple notions of verse form in the light of the pronouncements of acutely critical Hopkins in this regard. His division of the language of verse into three kinds is much to the point.

'The first and highest is poetry proper, the language of inspiration. The word inspiration need cause no difficulty. I mean by it a mood of great, abnormal in fact, mental acuteness, either energetic or receptive, according as the thoughts which arise in it seem generated by a stress and action of the brain, or to strike into it unasked. This mood arises from various causes, physical generally, as good health or state of the air or, prosaic as it is, length of time after a meal ... the poetry of inspiration can only be written by poets themselves. Every body of course has like moods, but not being poets what they then produce is not poetry."

Parnassian is the second kind. "It can only be
spoken by poets, but it not in the highest sense poetry. It does not require the mood of mind in which the poetry of inspiration is written. It is spoken on and from the level of a poet's mind, not, as in the other case when the inspiration, which is the gift of genius, raises him above himself...'

'... Great men, poets I mean, have each their own dialect as it were of Parnassian, formed generally as they go on writing, and at last, - this is the point to be marked, - they can see things in the Parnassian way and describe them in this Parnassian tongue, without further effort of inspiration.

Hopkins then illustrates his point by a quotation from Tennyson's Enoch Arden, and continues:

'I believe that when a poet 
falls on us it is because of his Parnassian ... his poetry does not run in an intelligibly laid down path!

Castalian is the third kind of Hopkins writes:

'There is a higher sort of Parnassian which I call Castalian, or it may be thought the lowest kind of inspiration. ... Its peculiarity is that though you can hardly conceive yourself having written in it, if in the poet's place, yet it is too characteristic of the poet,
too so-and-so-all-over-ish to be quite inspiration.'
He quotes an example from Wordsworth and adds, as an 
after thought that there is also Olympian: the language 
of strange masculine genius which suddenly, as it were, 
forces its way into the domain of poetry, without natu­
rally having a right there.' Rossetti's 'Blessed 
Damozel' is given as example of it.

The one thing that Herbert Read notes in 'the 
language and style of poetry mastered and at command but employed without fresh inspiration' (thus written by 
Hopkins of Parnassian) is the word 'fresh' and observes: 
'to the quality of originality or freshness corresponds 
the effect of sincerity.' As Aristotle observed: 'The 
talent or gift for great poetry is bringing into a har­
mony the images and their metaphorical conjunction. Side 
by side should be the significant word-pattern concre­
tizing the images chosen, by its sensational equivalence 
to the image. The example of Wordsworth quoted viz.,

Yet despair
   Touches me not, though pensive as a bird
   Whose vernal coverts Winter hath laid bare
fails here in realizing the concept 'despair' into an 
image and then concretizing the images of 'bird,' 'covert'
and 'winter.'
As Coleridge asserted: 'the form proceeds from feeling - it is organic; for Hopkins, the native rhythm of the words (his sprung rhythm) bodily imported into verse (RB, 46) a brief survey of which has been covered in Chapter - 2 under Sprung Rhythm.

Further for Hopkins speech in a distinct form or shape (Gestalt) is poetry as distinct from verse. This shape or inscape of the speech sound is more important than the logical content. "Some matter or meaning is essential to it but only as an element necessary to support and employ the shape which is contemplated for its own sake." This shape is the total sound pattern of the spoken poem as received by the hearing ear and contemplated by the listening mind. Thereby the logical sense is not altogether abandoned. Nevertheless Hopkins must be ranked first among those few who did not hesitate to sacrifice immediate intelligibility in the interest of inscaping or intensifying the sound pattern. Unique utterance was so important to him. Hence the insistence on repetition of form or figure in poetry as well as in verse. Poetry is repeated pattern, and "parallelism in expression tends to beget parallelism in thought."

For this reason Hopkins was greatly preoccupied
with rhythm, alliteration, assonance, cynganedd and
the whole art of what he called 'lettering' the syllables. The speech-sound is inscaped. But the same
formed the basis of his syntactical difficulties and
alleged eccentricity. Hopkins so liked paradoxes of
God, of nature, that he came to be full of paradoxes.
So he IS, so he writes.

What follows is a consideration of form of some
of Hopkins's poems in their chronological order.
ELECTED Silence, sing to me  
And beat upon my whorled ear,  
Pipe me to pastures still and be  
The music that I care to hear.  

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

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

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

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

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

And, Poverty, be thou the bride  
And now the marriage feast begun,  
And lily-coloured clothes provide  
Your spouse not laboured-at nor spun.
The moment is dramatic in that an aesthetic 
wriggles his way to be an astringent ascetic. The way 
is arduous. Senses are there. They cannot and should 
not go into nothingness, as it were. They need to be 
thoroughly differently oriented before gaining a hard 
but hearty assent to that proposition. And the orien-
tation also materially only. First the sense of hearing 
plays on the idea: "pipe me to pastures still and be the 
music that I care to hear." Then the sight: to be doubly 
shut and concentrate on the creative energy of God's mind. 
Then the taste to observe fasts and satisfy hunger with 
dry bread and plain water. Then smell: only "what relish 
shall the censers send/Along the sanctuary side". Then 
touch: not to seek the pleasure of walking upon thick, 
velvety grass but to walk to the church and there partake 
of the consecrated bread symbolic of Christ's body.

Each stanza stands by itself. No plot or logical 
argument. The last two lines of each stanza are equally 
balanced against the first two except 'Nostrils' relish 
of the incense along the sanctuary side of which Bridges 
is sternly critical.

Throughout the speaker is behind addressing by 
turns personified silence, lips, eyes, palate, nostrils,
hands and feet, and poverty. Therefore the poem is in the form of a dramatic monologue, or one of Loyola's colloquies.

We note the series of paradoxes also imbued with Hopkins's characteristic sensuous imagery running parallel to the proposed self-denial - the silence sings, shut lips are eloquent, doubly shut eyes find light, the crust tastes best, censers along the sanctuary side smell the sweetest and so on.

Its form well fits the senses concentrating on the immaterial through only the material means.

THE WRECK OF THE DEUTSCHLAND (Poems 28)

It has been customary to describe 'The Wreck of the Deutschland as an elaborate funeral ode elegy. When Hopkins's rector wished someone would write a poem on the Wreck of the Deutschland, in which among others, five Franciscan nuns were drowned, perhaps he expected the usual kind of elegy on the tragic incident. Hopkins who took the hint and wrote on it, however, seems to have regarded his poem in a different light. He described the poem to Bridges in a letter as "an ode and not primarily a narrative ... the principal business is lyrical". R.L. Brett has found in the poem some features of an epic poem, even though he would classify it as an elegy.
However, there is no dispute that it is Hopkins's longest verse, and by far his most puzzling work into the composition of which he mustered all his energy. On the surface its two-part division, among other technical innovations, seems to deny the poem that architectural unity which a poem, long and majestic as this, should possess. He made it clear that his poem was an ode and an examination of his view of Greek odes may therefore illuminate his method of composition and how far Greek lyrics encouraged the use of non-logical structure in his poetry.

From one of his letters to Baillie we understand that he was to undertake a major work on the Greek lyric art in two parts, one on meter and the other on style. According to Hopkins, the Greek or the logaoedic verse was composed of dactylic and trochaic feet mixed indiscriminately but believed to be equal in length as the feet were isochronous. But critics have proved Hopkins's was a misconception in so far as his theory described Greek practice. And unluckily the manuscript too was lost and correct understanding of Hopkins's study of Dorian meter is not possible.

The other part of his book was on style. In a
letter to A W M Baillie of January 14, 1883 he detailed that, in his book on style, he wanted to explain a new structural principle that he discovered at work in many Greek lyrics:

My thought is that in any lyric passage of the tragic poets (perhaps not so much in Euripides as in the others) there are-usually; I will not say always, it is not likely - two strains of thought running together and like counterpointed; the overthought that which everybody, editors, see (when one does see anything - which in the great corruption of the text and original obscurity of the diction is not everywhere) and which might for instance be abridged or paraphrased in square marginal blocks as in some books carefully written; the other, the underthought conveyed chiefly in the choice of metaphors etc; used and often only half realized by the poet himself, not necessarily having any connection with the subject in hand but usually having a connection and suggested by some circumstance of the scene or of the story.

As an example of such underthought governing imagery Hopkins offers the first chorus of Aeschylus' Suppliants.

To illustrate how the most disparate elements are connected in a Pindaric ode, Todd K. Bender quotes an apocryphal story: "An admirer of Pindar mentioned the
beginning of the First Olympian ode with approval, whereupon his wife demanded a translation. He complied:

'Water is indeed very good, and gold which shines like blazing fire in the night is far better than all riches which make men proud. But, my spirit, if you desire to sing of contests, do not look for any star brighter than the sun during the day in the empty heavens, nor let us sing any contest more illustrious than Olympia.' This wife was outraged because she thought that he was inventing nonsense to make a fool of her. We need not go the whole hog explaining the perversely diverse lengths Pindar went in his odes to be difficult. Instead I like to cite Milton's 'Lycidas', one of the most familiar poems, too closely related to Greek models in its structure.

We know how at the time of composition of this elegy, Milton was the victim of several conflicting thoughts and emotions. The poem starts with an apology for breaking his resolve not to write any poetry until his genius was sufficiently ripe for that purpose. The death of his friend, Edward King (Lycidas) has compelled him to write before maturity. Away from the subject matter, Milton allows himself to be drawn into meditations over the value of life, spent not in the pursuit
of pleasure, but in laborious search after knowledge. The introduction of St. Peter and his denunciation of the English clergy are strictly irrelevant to the subject in hand. After the classical fashion, the whole of external nature is steeped in grief. There is also the conventional enquiry into the immediate cause of Edward King's death.

Following the orthodox tradition, Milton also introduces Old Camus and St. Peter as mourners. Finally we are informed that Lycidas is not dead, but has ascended into heaven. The poem does not contain as keen a note of personal regret as Thyris. In depth of thought and in harmony of passion, it might also be mentioned that it is inferior to Shelley's Adonias. "Wherever there is leisure for fiction, there is little grief" remarked that great Sultan of literature, Johnson. But this remark seems to denounce not only 'Lycidas' but all pastoral poetry to be unreal. Built on the models of Greek, the unity of 'Lycidas' resides largely in the pun of the word 'pastor'. We shall examine whether any such key word or image unifies the Wreck of the Deutschland.

The composition of 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' in 1875 marks the break of the poet's silence for seven
years after he entered Manresa House, the Jesuit Novitiate at Roehampton on 7th September, 1868; having performed a voluntary holocaust of his verses during the summer prior to his entrance thereinto. Naturally as many years of poetical silence, religious meditation, theological studies, combining in themselves a year's teaching of rhetoric and pondering over the problems of prosody, lay behind it.

The poem has been variously described as a great dragon folded in the gate to forbid all entrance to the other poems, the incoherent raving of a mad man and an intense and immediate expression of the poet's personality. These descriptions say that the poem is not well constructed and that the two parts have little connection to each other.

However, a close analysis of the poem shows the various images, peculiar diction and parallels cluster around a key word or phrase, as in any Greek ode. We note at the same time that the poem is not a narrative of the ship Wreck but a new assertion of God's place in the world, the Wreck serving only as an occasion for and a stimulus to that assertion.
'THE WORD MADE FLESH' : THE KEY PHRASE

In the Holy Bible we read: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Hopkins used the concept of the 'Word' in three senses in the poem: God making the world; His witness speaking His message; and the poet expressing His meaning.

Wording it how but by him that present and past, Heaven and earth are word of, worded by? - says the 29th stanza of the poem. Inscaping 'word' the poet here means that there is a need for a witness to spell out what is there, to 'word' it, which is what the nun does in the climactic 29th stanza. And what is more, the nun's witness has to be 'worded' or explained, by the poet-priest, whose heart being hard at bay' is just out with it as in stanza 8. Thus the poem is held together by a series of balances and distinctions. Hopkins moves by a juxtaposition of narratives, events, ideas, words and phrases, in a sort of opposition where things are seen to be disparate but fundamentally the same. It is a sort of fugue with repetitions of individual words on the large scale a repetition of motifs and whole structures. The central idea around
which all imagery and metaphors cluster is 'Incarnation.'

Division into two parallel parts is a marked feature of the poem. Rigid parallel cannot be expected as the unequal lengths of the parts show. Hopkins was interested not only in parallels: word becoming flesh, abstract becoming concrete, God becoming man but in tensions between likeness and unlikeness. A broad similarity and important distinctions are traceable in the development of the first part side by side with that of the second.

The first part opens with "God! giver of breath and bread" sharply contrasting with 'Death on drum' of the second. At the same time the second is contained in the first as "He almost unmade" His creation. Stanzas 2 and 3 move through 'the sweep and the hurl' and 'To flash from the flame to the flame then, tower from the grace to the grace;' and in stanzas 12 to 17 the poet moves from 'the dark side of the bay of thy blessing' to the "prophetess Deborah towering in the tumult."

The stanzas 4 and 5 in Part I and St. 18 in Part II alike return to the present tense after the past tense of the crisis in stanzas from 14 to 17. For its two important images to convey the mysterious connec-
tion between the individual and God (even this being a parallel on a minor scale), stanza is conferred upon a metaphysical skill:

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;
I steady as a water in a well, to a poise, to a pane,
But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall Fells or flanks of the voel, a vein
Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle,

Christ's gift

The poet is like sand or water, the one "at the wall/ Fast," the other as in a well reaching 'a poise, a pane.' Both the images have a pattern within their apparent formlessness: the sand seems to be fixed at the walls of the chamber, but there is an imperceptible lowering down, just like the change of the mortal body. This again may hint at the 'world's strand' of the first stanza. At the second instance the poet is conscious of the spiritual regeneration in the image of the water-level in a well. As the well is constantly fed with water coming from streams down the slopes of hills, the
level is always to the poise of a pane. The metaphor implies the steady process of spiritual regeneration through 'gospel proffer,' Christ's grace which comes to man as a pressure. Being placed parallel, the two images look, linked, but also they are mixed, rather as the events of the Wreck are mingled with the poet's experience later in stanzas 18 & 24. Thus both the 'vein' and geological 'mine' of hourglass image are connected with the veins of Christ and his redemptive blood and the whole stanza serves to convey the pleasant aspect of connection with grace.

Stanza 5 widens the effect by speaking of the poet's relationship with awful aspects: 'glow, glory in thunder.' Stanzas 18 to 24 deal with his response to the particular shipwreck including an exploration of the symbols of refusal of grace:

... and Luther, ...

... and the beast of the waste wood:

and Germany's wrong-headed attitude in expelling the Franciscan nuns. Stanza 7 with its frightful sweat (John 19: 28-37), 'though in high flood yet' (CoS.I, 24) signifying sacrifice has a link with the notion of crucifixion in stanza 22:
And cipher of suffering Christ

But he scores it in scarlet himself on his own bespoken (Ephesians I, 4-7); while "The Cross to her she calls Christ to her, Christens her wild-worst Best" of St.24 has a parallel in St.8 wherein 'We lash with the best or worst/Word last'. The gift of grace, 'the stress' runs through stanzas 6 to 8. It does not come from heaven. It comes from Christ's Incarnation and Passion, and it is this moment of extremity which releases the gift and a similar moment of extremity which acknowledges it. Parallel to this the stanzas from 25 to 29 say that the nun's cry did not mean before we learn what it did mean. Her cry did not mean that she with her sodden-with-sorrowing heart deserved the reward. It was actually in her extremity that she could understand what her cry did mean. At this, though she differed from the poet in circumstances, she could also be what Hopkins was in Stanza 5:

"... I greet him the days when I meet him, and bless when I understand".
She was "... to the blast Tarpeian-fast, but a blown beacon of light" (St.29)
combining the qualities of the rock-like stability amidst storm and those of light registering the forces acting on them. Stanza 30 makes her even more significant: On the basis of the date of the death of the nuns, the poet comes out that this was the eve of the feast of the Immaculate conception. This is another occasion for the celebration of God becoming man. In the last part of the poem, the nun obeys the message of God, speaks of His ways to men, and redemption and turns the poor sheep (unconfessed companions - Catholics) back to Christianity, and the poem ends with a hymn of praise to God and prayer that He may 'easter' in us and dawn upon our darkness. This matches the last two stanzas of the I part, mixing in themselves an adoration and the paradoxical way of God's treatment of men, the theme of the poem.

So far the formal balance of the two parts in spite of their varying lengths. Across the larger structure of repetition of 'Word made flesh', we see the smaller structures of repetition of words, images and syntax, all contributing to the unity of the poem. God's mastery of the world is a central idea which flows as an undercurrent. The image of water which
is present in both the real and symbolical senses is thus noted by Todd K. Bender, one of the highly perceptive critics of Hopkins:

(Stanza 1) strand .... sea
( " 4) water etc.
( " 6) springs, ... flushed ... melt, etc.
( " 7) sweat... discharge ... flood
( " 8) gush... flush... brim... full
( " 9) Storm
( " 10) melt
( " 11) flood... storms
( " 12) shoal ... drowned
( " 13) haven... sea... deeps, etc.
( " 14) breakers etc.
( " 15) lives ... washing away, etc.
( " 16) foam-fleece... flood... wave, etc.
( " 17) drowned ... sea romp.
( " 18) tears... melting... river
( " 19) seas... slogging brine, etc.
( " 20) sucked
( " 21) showers
( " 23) wild waters ... bathe
( " 24) Christens
( " 27) seas
( " 31) tempest
( " 32) tides, ... yore flood... gulf etc.
( " 33) water... Vein... plunged
( " 34) shower
( " 35) shoals, ... roads.... haven.
The nun's death in water and her reward in heaven being an instance of God's paradoxes - His mercy functioning by means of sternness; he considers this 'a terrible baptism.' Again, considering water as the unstated key concept of God's power and mercy, he lucidly resolves the problems in the structure of the poem such as (1) four disparate sections into which Gardner divided (2) apparently inappropriate images and metaphors and (3) repeated use of puzzling diction.

Then there are images of fire, flame and light which represent both warmth and ferocity. In stanza 10 fire forges God's will or lovely-asunder starlight (st 5). Sometimes it paradoxically combines with its opposite: Thou art lightning and love, I found it, a winter and warm (St 9) or the 'white-fiery' snow of stanza 13. In fact the fire-image seems to cover a wider canvas from when the poet had

"To flash from the flame to the flame ... (St 3)
to that homely fire in the poem's last line
"Our heart's charity's hearth's fire, .... (St.35)

Now let us for a while reflect on Heraclitus, who, precisely like the Upanishads tells that "God is all contraries; 'He takes various shapes just as fire, when
it is mingled with species, is named according to the savour of each'. ... He has no form that the vision can seize, He whose name is a mighty splendour." On the poet of fire-folk (32), fire-featuring heaven. That Nature is a Herachitean Fire ... (72) The Greek philosopher's influence need not be reiterated. With this it might be argued that 'fire' instead of water, is the key image of the poem.

Furthering digression, I set my recordings of the references to the Holy Bible the poem calls for and the invocations to Christ going well together often in order thus:

Stanza 1 ... Job x, 8-11; xvi, 12.
" 2 ... Christ
" 3 ... Luke III, 22; Mark 1, 10
" 4 ... Christ's gift
" 6 ... his bliss, ... stress
" 7 ... Luke II, 1-7; John XIX, 28-37; Col I, 24.
" 8 ... Calvary, Christ's feet
" 9 ... three-numbered form
" 10 ... Acts VII, 58; VIII, 1-3; IX, 1-30
" 11 ... his fame
" 12 ... O God
" 17 ... Genesis XI, 9; Judges IV
" 19 ... A master, her master
" 21 ... Orion of light
" 22 ... Christ, Ephesi I, 4-7;
Stanza 23  ... Life that died; Romans, VI, 4-11;
  " 24  ... 0 Christ, Christ.
  " 25  ... Matthew VIII, 23-25
  " 26  ... I Corinthians i i, 9.
  " 28  ... Christ, King, Head.
  " 29  ... Matthew XVI, 13-16
  " 32  ... Psalms LXXXIX, 9; Genesis i, 2; Job XXXVIII, 4-11.
  " 33  ... Genesis VI, 8; Romans VIII, 30; Ephesians IV, 9-10.
  " 34  ... Double-natured name
  " 35  ... King, Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest, heart's charity's hearth's fire, thoughts' Chivalry's throng's Lord

Such a picture may argue us into joining Hopkins's priestly theme of God's message to man and man's acceptance or denial of it around which cluster different images and events.

There is also the repetition of grammatical form used in offering hymn of praise to God:

Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King (St.10)

Our hearts' Charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' Chivalry's throng's Lord (St.35)

Broken sentences at the moment of elective choice as in

Behind, where, where was a, where was a place (St.3)

and the frenzied verse indicating the poet's difficulty of grasping the full significance of the event in

But how shall I ... make me room there:
Reach me a ... Fancy, come faster. (St 28)

As against stanza 3 where in the poet was desperately in search for a sanctuary, in this stanza of truncated exclamations (aposiopesis) the meaning simply burst out. The language may not be enough for the purpose, because the poet is concerned with the supernatural which is beyond expression.

Coventry Patmore complained that Hopkins, among other things added to the difficulty of the poem by bringing is several of his technical innovations of rhythm, diction, versification and structure. But the poet is justified in using his sprung rhythm as it uses the rhythm of speech as its base. Interconnections of words and images behind their apparent disparity, the structure of rhythm behind the surface ruggedness, speak of a fundamental pattern "word made flesh" in 'our sordid turbid time'.

We cannot say that any one image is first selected and then elaborated; nor is there a mechanical repetition. But it is like the musical key in which the whole thing is written. Inscape rests on the surface and yet underlies everything, giving the poem coherence and control. The images are related and the poet sees a variety of
things in them. The things grow together by the accumu-
lation of juxtapositions to form a unifying undercurrent
to the poem. "Poetry is not only its (inscape's) vehi-
cle, it is inscape expressed and revealed." Yet we see
why the critics contend that the poem lacks an archi-
tectonic unity required in a poem on a grand scale -
'We can never see anything clearly and excellence of the
highest kind without obscurity cannot exist' Ruskin.

As Leavis pointed out long ago, on a personal
level the poem is supposed to reenact the inner struggle
and tensions of the poet who had become the priest. The
form and the theme of the Wreck provide an adequate objec-
tive correlative of the poet's own attempt to die to his
old self and be reborn to live

.... the Master,

IPSE, the only one, Christ, King, Head:

THE STARLIGHT NIGHT

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies:
0 look at all the firefolk sitting in the air:
The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!
Down in dim woods the diamong delves! the elves'-eyes!
The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!
Wind-beat white beam! airy abeles set on a flare!
Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare!
Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.
Buy then! bid them! — What? — Prayer, patience,
alms, vows.

Look, look: a may-mess, like on orchard boughs!
Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow sallows!

These are indeed the barn; within doors house
The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the spouse
Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows.

This is one of the brightest sonnets of Hopkins in the usual two-part Italian sonnet form with a slight variation of rhyme scheme in the sestet — the octave — devoted to the ecstatic description of a natural scene and the sestet proceeds to show how through such beauty one can get a glimpse of God.

A word about the diction. In both the attitude to nature and tone, Hopkins here seems explicitly to affirm that of Loyola who in his 'The Spiritual Exercises' demands the use of the senses for a devotional activity thus: "you hear Spanish boys at play crying to one another, mira, mira (look, look). That is what St. Ignatius says to us over these mysteries of the life of Christ: Look at the author and achiever of our faith (Heb. XII.2)". The exclamatory tone of this poem is more typical than the
one from 'Spring'. The octave has a six and five exclama-
mations and the first three lines of the sestet have five
more and a question-mark in addition. The word 'look'
occurring four times in the first two lines to produce the
effect of urgency. The emphatic speech-like structure
fits the emotion. 'Like on orchard boughs' and 'like on
mealed-with-yellow sallows' mark his alleged obscurity
while 'quickgold', 'whitebeam', 'shocks' and the com-
pounds the characteristics of his diction. The common
word 'purchase' of Richard III, (III, 7.187) where a
'distressed widow' is 'made prize and purchase of his
wanton eye', is heightened in the sacred context.

I think 'fire-folk' is the key image to knit the
sonnet into a whole. 'No man or God' says Heraclitus,
"has created the universe, but ever there was and is
and will be the everliving fire." This is Vedic Fire,
Agni, who becomes the other immortals, himself becomes
and contains all Gods.

First of all we have the description of the
night full of stars, conveying to us something of the
ecstasy the poet felt. We see the stars in their fresh,
essential beauty and then through a succession of images
become aware of their other values besides beauty -
order, mystery and movement. They are 'fire-folk', 'birght-boroughs' and 'circle-citadels'. They are 'diamond-delves' and 'elves'-eyes' too. Thus we are slowly brought down to the earth and another succession of images paint the scene.

At the turn now is pointed out that the star-world, brilliant, beautiful is Christ's home. 'What' hyphenated on either side makes us also question the poet, now in a Christ-transported mood, "what did he say?" or "what is Christ to buy?" It is resolved - with what to buy? 'With prayer, patience, alms, vows' one can fully experience the beauty of Christ's home. May, with its blue skies, star-studded and its overhanging fruit trees bringing its harvest of produce, reinforces the comparison to the Christ's home bringing a harvest of loveliness and spirituality. One must house Jesus in heart as a barn stocks corn. This is Hopkins, the mystic turning from nature to God.

SPRING

NOTHING is so beautiful as Spring-
When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy? A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden - Have, get, before it cloy, Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

Opening in much the same assertive way: "Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant King" of Thomas Nosh's anthology-piece 'Spring', this sonnet has a powerful rendering of painfully fresh and delicate rapture. With a summary statement of subject and imagery, it looks like its companion piece 'The starlight night'.

The octave devotes, as in other nature sonnets, to description of nature's variety: weeds unaided by the hand of man, grow quickly and luxuriantly, birds fill the atmosphere with music, thrush's eggs are tiny pools reflecting the green-blue of heavens, its sharp note pierces one's ear and seems to clean it, the pear-tree in blossom brushing the blue sky enhancing its splendour and the lovely lambs.
The rapidity of movement till now suits the ecstatic feeling. It is that of the growing Spring contrasting with the sluggish Winter. The weeds grow in wheels, the bird's song seems to dart out more with the impulsive speed of light rather than of sound, striking the tree-trunks and rebounding (in contrast with 'simple passage of weak notes' of the Winter bird in 'Winter with the Gulf Stream,' No.3, 1. 13); the azure of the sky is not only descending (in contrast with winter skies 'hard as any stone' in A Voice from the World' 81, 1.8), but in a rush; and the lambs frisk and play.

This earthly spring dissolves for the poet into a flash-back of Adam and Eve' of far nobler shape,' 'God-like erect' and 'in naked beauty' roaming happily before they sinned. The seasonal visitant Spring is a yearly reminder of Eden. In this season of joy and innocence, boys and girls show that purity of mind which makes them worthy of being admitted into Christ's fold.

Critics have felt that feeling (great joy) is here too great for its motive, the landscape and the perfunctory moral is appended as a kind of justification. Instead of a movement into a larger recognition' says B. Hardy, 'we turn into the reduction of allegory, of dogma, of message.'
Prof Mackenzie interprets the octave to justify the theocentric sestets: 'wheel' is a frequent symbol of the divine, eggs are a microcosmic reflection of the divine heavens, the song of the thrush is associated with lightning, the lashed rod of Lord (28, St.2).14

Hopkins is as daring as Shakespeare for his praise of weeds rather than flowers; cf. Henry VI, Part II, iii. 1. 31-32. Simile for the thrush’s song and the ecstasy of May growth are as original as the standard rhythm with sprung leadings:

/ / / \
Nothing is so beautiful as Spring -
\ / /
What is all this juice and all this joy? -

BINSEY POPLARS felled 1879

My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled,
Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun,
All felled, felled, are all felled;

Of a fresh and following folded rank
Not spared, not one
That dandled a sandalled
Shadow that swam or sank
On meadow and river and wind-wandering
weed-winding bank.

O if we but knew what we do
When we delve or hew -
Hack and rack the growing green!
Since country is so tender
To touch, her being so slender,
That, like this sleek and seeing ball
But a prick will make no eye at all,
Where we, even where we mean
To mend her we end her,
When we hew or delve:
After-comers cannot guess the beauty been.
Ten or twelve, only ten or twelve
Strokes of havoc unselve
The sweet especial scene,
Rural scene, a rural scene,
Sweet especial rural scene.

This is an acute feeling of bereavement foreshadowed of course, by those pathetic and sincere lines in the poet's Journal for April 8, 1873: "The ash tree growing in the corner of the garden was felled. It was lopped first: I heard the sound and looking out and seeing it maimed there came at that moment a great pang and I wished to die and not to see the inscapes of the world destroyed anymore." The Ignatian teaching that God meant the world a garden, to praise, to reverence and service, to give him glory; and contemplation of individuality or markedness of things that influenced his admiration of the inscapes of the world and helped him to develop a deep, almost personal love for objects; lie behind
Six years have now slipped by and the man 'dogged' in his den has defaced the Binsey poplars. It was the landscape, thereby that was subject to chopping and changing; the inscapes of his former delight were clasped in his heart's casket and so they are still 'My aspens dear' as if the trees were no less his, by reason of their dearness to him than of the village. 'Dear' may combine a note of pity with. The poet's affection for the trees. The disruptive sprung rhythm of the third line.

All felled, felled, are all felled
haunts us like the ring of the labourers' blows'.

The shift is now, to the former days when the poplars, in full form 'new-nestled at heaven most high' and as they moved in the wind wrapped up among their leaves the leaping sun, and leafwhelmed the passerby and won his gratitude. The poet's imagination transforms the row of aspens into the bars of a cage to capture sun like a wild animal. Taken passively 'quenched' speaks of the aspens that they have been unselved in the same way as when nature's bonfire... quench her bonniest, dearest to her, her clearest selved spark, man." And this lament 'All felled,
felled, are all felled" already sufficiently ominously foreshadowed by 'quelled', is all the keener as the felling of 'the hearts of oak' of aspens is not by the divine 'one stroke', nor by a natural course, but by the dear man who does not reckon world after. Amidst sobbing recurs the thought of the trees when, they, with their fresh and hung-heaven-ward boughs reached outwards and upwards to make the riverscape quite sightly. They are fancied to be children sitting by the river-side friskily dandling their sandalled feet in water.

'We' of the 2nd stanza makes us share the poet's sorrow, and speaks of man in general. Conjoined to "if what we do" it purposes further a disapproval of his vandalism in setting his axe to the inscapes of "sweet Earth, sweet landscape" - 'tearing from Nature's book/ this precious leaf'; and a deliberate allusion to Christ's words on the Cross concerning those who were destroying His physical life, 'they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34). His evil inclination in distorting natural beauty into unseemly wrinkles, in 'bidding reel' the river and 'over giving all to rack or wrong' so other rods Herod that when he delves or hews or hacks
and racks the growing green, he but transfixes her lashtenderness.

The second stanza is longer than and not symmetrical with the first thus seeming sympathetically the maimed nature and to protest against maiming nature as irreversible change. Legends say that the aspen trembles with horror because the Cross of Calvary was made of its wood.

In comparing the world to the eyeball, Hopkins is not simply following a metaphysical image of Donne. In spite of its bigness, the world is as sensitive as the eye ball. Such outrages against the divine inscapes will surely cause spiritual blindness, the religious Hopkins is afraid. Wherever the seared hand of man means to better Nature only batters her. It will be rendered unrecognizable by the after-comers who cannot guess the beauty been.

The monosyllabic explosives 'ten' and 'twelve' in the poet's sprung rhythm most effectively suggest the strokes of the axe. The reduplication of ESPECIAL pointing to species specialissima (fresh and following folded rank of the aspens) the poem comes to a close, with a note of God's mysterious ways in rewarding the human beings unawares for their sacrifices in 'where we mean.'
SPRING AND FALL

to a young child.

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

'Hopkins names feelings' says B.Hardy, 'but leaves their complex action unimpeded by the action of naming'. The first couplet sets out 'golden grove unleaving' and 'Margaret grieving'. The rhetorical figure of apostrophizing that this poem draws on and the analogy between the human and floral life that it treats of, are as old as the Bible. 'Unleaving, 'Wanwood', 'leaf meal' are instances of Hopkins's characteristic formation and 'ghost guessed' his oddity. And readers have put "you, can you, with your fresh
thoughts care for the leaves, like the things of man? for the contortion in lines 3 and 4. Then there is fancifully conceived Margaret (evoking its two-fold meaning of 'pearl' and 'daisy' and a child's association with them) grieving over the defeatures of an equally fanciful Golden grove.

Fictitiously it is given to a child to be 'the mighty prophet, a seer blest, on whom these truths do rest to probe into such eternal deep' and Margaret cares for the leaves falling as much as she cares for her toys and picture books with unobscured vision and primal sympathy, as it were. Such care, metaphysical on the part of the undead girl does not extend for long, for, it is precisely the human tragedy that as the heart goes on aging, it is sure to be assailed by "the heavy and weary weight of all this unintelligible world". Thought is as quick as Time, stealthily running. 'By and by' says the poem, the heart will be unchangeable by any such autumn effect and impervious to sad reflection though worlds of wood defoliate, disfigure and decay.

Now feeling differently ordered says "you WILL weep and know why". Adult Margaret, hard to 'such sights colder', will, inferring what of the human life
the falling leaves symbolize, have a master-cause to bemoan her human or womanly condition. Being a victim to change by herself, she will be able to know the reason for the chief woe, world's sorrow. At present her weeping is just a child's cry. The poet, though marking it a premonition of the inevitable sorrow of the human lot, deems it neither advisable nor expedient on his part to warn her of it.

At this point the deeper implications of the poem become clear. More than any 'beauty's canker' what the poet does not like telling Margaret, I suspect is, the harrowing account of the author of "The Imitation of Christ": man defiled with many sins, enslaved by many passions, harassed with many cares, distracted with many curiosities, entangled with many vanities, encompassed with many errors, broken with many labours, troubled with many temptations, enervated with pleasures, tormented with want..." No such horror for a girl for the present. A thoughtless repetition of 'coming events cast their shadows" will do. The spring of all such sorrows is the same. The poet knows it in Thomas A Kempis's words "having fallen through the first man, Adam, and corrupted by sin, the punishment of this
stain has descended upon all mankind". No mouth, no quirks of the blazoning pens have spoken of this. The poet too adroitly reverses: "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard..." (I Corinthians, 2:9). But in the inmost recesses of heart (the mother of being) there is an inkling of this rankling grief.

The child Margaret responding to the falling of the leaves and reacting philosophically, with of course the prophetic, seer-bless Wordsworthian insight (in spite of the highly critical Coleridge of such powers) to the harsher verities of life revealed by such unleaving; combined with "the innocent mind and Mayday", in her; is the 'spring' of the title; the 'fall' may be taken to mean the fall of man (with the nostalgic evocation of golden age). Or the word 'spring', looking forward to the final couplet of the poem, may mean a spring of human sorrow, 'a chief woe, world's sorrow'. Then the 'fall' would be the fall of man consequent on his first disobedience.

The blight of original sin and the ineluctable death and dissolution of human beings are, through the unified whole of the poem, intuitively and vaguely known by a child. It is a poem of sad contemplation, not of boisterous joy; its form is appropriate.
Justus quidem tu es, Domine, si disputem; 
Verumtamen justa loquar ad te: Quare via 
impiorum prosperatur? fc.

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

We note in this sonnet, written in a mood of
frustration, the prayer at the end contrasting with the
complaint at the beginning. The underthought seems to
derive from the ardent, passionately ethical poet-prophet
Jeremiah, who, with a view to reconcile himself to the
mystery of the ways of God that he might answer both his
own and others' objections against them; chose but to
plead with Him, not quarrel with Him or find fault with
His proceedings; and complained to Him against the injus-
tice of allowing the wicked to compass their malicious designs and gain their point and the good to fail.

At the start itself, the truth of unquestionable certainty 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee' is laid down, just to make us keep right thoughts of God when we are most in the dark concerning the divine dispensations, and feel confident that his judgements are unsearchable as a great deep and his righteousness conspicuous as mountains. Nevertheless the mysterious ways of that justice so puzzle the poet that he thinks they would bear a debate.

The argument continues that though the wicked deal treacherously they see their affairs and concerns in a good posture and that the poet, in spite of his dedication to the service of God is frustrated. This is an instance of the misgovernance of the world. In fact the poet has been badly dealt by God. The sinners, favoured by the benignity of the Divine Providence smiling upon them achieve more in their leisure hours than what the poet has been able to do by the dedication of the whole of his life to the service of God.

With the sestet, the shift is now, from the images of desolation and lugubrious argument about the
injustice of God, to the Spring going on its trumpet
that it is growth in everything; and to the activities
of the fur and feather; but again the worsted poet's
reflection on the contrast with his own pitiable state,
echoing Milton recurs. The banks and the bushes in
their spring finery, pretty chervil flaunting in the
breeze, and the birds building their cosy nests - seem
to smile all the more ironically on the frustrated poet,
who, blighted by misfortune was only conscious of more
such failures.

There is a reply by God in the Book of Jeremiah.
Though this sonnet does not claim to have received such
an answer, the reply to Jeremiah that God will show
compassion to the people, if they recover faith in Him:
"Then shall they be built in the midst of my people";
is a key to the progression of thought in this sonnet.
The transition from a complaint at the beginning to a
prayer at the end clearly implies that the poet would
have been convinced of the purifying effects of suffering
by tracing back to those days when nobody was his com-
panion in Gethsemane and none stood near Him on the
Calvary. The poet's desire to build may have been
suggested by this verse of Jeremiah (Jeremiah, 12:16).
His frustration will end, when God's mercy is showered on him. This will happen when God wills it. And he can only pray for grace.

Noticeable is the fact that as the mystic of the Svetasvatara Upanishad Hopkins too, at first has an extrovert's feeling in taking to heart the dark night experience of his total abandonment from God in expostulating with Him about the mysterious providences; then like an introvert, realizing that the sure way to see Him is love, prays for grace that his frustration would end when God's mercy dawns. Thus his prayer is a note of reconciliation, thus knitting the sonnet to be a wholesome experience of a mystic.

The poet is expectant of the rain of grace, even as plants are, of rains of water. The changes in moods are skilfully effected, and the sonnet leaves us with the final impression not of despair or rebellion against God but of hope and faith.

The imagery in Jeremiah is that of desolation with plants withering and beasts and birds dying. We have the picture, reversed here, of plants flourishing and birds building. After much feeling of desolation, the religious Hopkins must have recited in himself
"though sometimes clouds and darkness are round about Him, yet justice and judgement are always the habitation of throne" (Psalms 97:2); "it is the strain that ever brings the strength" (George Adam Smith), and the like for such reversal.
CHAPTER - 3.
ORGANIC FORM

NOTES


3. loc. cit. p. 21.


9. T.K. Bender, op. cit, pp 92-5.


11. Loyola, The Spiritual Exercises, p. 100.


15. B.Hardy, loc, cit, p. 5.