It must be indicated at the very outset that in this chapter, we do not pretend to entirely original work. We rely on various authorities for the history and meaning of the concept of Nature, and these are frequently referred to in the back-notes.

In any interpretation of the word 'Nature', one is faced with a tremendous ambiguity. The following, meanings are distinguished by Prof. A.O. Lovejoy:¹

1. The objective as opposed to the subjective.
2. An objective standard for values, as opposed to custom, law and convention.

3. The general cosmic order, usually conceived as divinely ordained, in contrast to human deviations from this.

4. That which exists apart from and uninfluenced by man, in contrast with art.

5. The instructive or spontaneous behaviour of man as opposed to the intellective.

The interpretation of the word "Nature", therefore, is fundamentally a matter of individual conviction. To give a fully comprehensible and adequate definition of the term would be as baffling as Life itself. In the widest sense, "Nature" can mean "the totality of things", all that would have to appear in an inventory of the universe. It can also refer to the laws or principles of structure by which the behaviour of things can be explained. In some contexts, man is contrasted with Nature, in others he is taken as a part of Nature. The difference is not trivial. To set man against Nature is to emphasize his distinctiveness, his rationality,
creativity and freedom. On the other hand, to count man as part and parcel of Nature emphasises the continuity of the human, animal, organic and inorganic worlds and suggests that human behaviour may be amenable to the same kinds of investigation that are effective in studying other domains of Nature.

In other contexts, the natural world, man included, is contrasted with the supernatural. The idea of the supernatural has tended to be constructed from allegedly miraculous events which the power and laws of Nature could not bring about.

The history of the philosophical ideas of Nature almost coincides with the history of philosophy. When the Ionian pre-Socratic Philosophers asked "What is Nature?" they assumed that the question demanded an answer in terms of primitive substances of which the world is composed. One of the more reasonable answers was that of Anaximander, who claimed that the ultimate world-stuff must be indeterminate and infinite, and could not be identified with familiar substances like water, air or earth. Far more fruitful was the Pythagorean concern with the question, "What is structure?"
where "structure" means geometrical form. We need to know only that the constituents of the world are able to receive mathematically describable form, and the way is open for investigating how natural objects are related to their underlying geometrical structure.

To Plato the possibility of the knowledge of Nature (or of the nature of things) rests on the intelligibility of the Forms that things imitate. The Creation story in the Timaeus represents God and the Forms as distinct from each other. It is a world necessarily deficient in important respects; the very existence of time makes it unstable and incomplete. On the other hand, it is a product of a divine creativity. God in his goodness does not withhold being from anything that might exist, and therefore, Nature displays His fecundity. Here is the initial statement of the vision of Nature as a great chain, or ladder, of being.

Aristotle's Unmoved Mover stands to Nature as its final or teleological cause, inspiring Nature to imitate the divine activity as far as its various constituents are able. Particular things are therefore, forms, and in so doing, they
realise their own natures. Underlying this view of Nature is a clear analogy with biological growth.

To the Christian thinkers the primary distinction has been between the underivative creativity of God and the derivativeness and dependence of Nature. St. Augustine, for instance, contrasts the divine "first cause that causes all and is not caused itself" with "the other causes" (the world of Nature) that "both cause and are caused" (created spirits) or are primarily passive effects, corporeal causes. This does not preclude a wider use in which temporal Nature is contrasted with divine Nature, "the Nature which is immutable is called Creator". In St. Thomas Aquinas, too, God can be called Natura Naturans, the creating contrasted with created Nature.

It was the Pythagorean-Platonic stand in the philosophy of Nature that furthered and came to dominate the rise of modern science. In Kepler, for example, Nature appears as the realm of the quantitative, a realm amenable to mathematical study. Such a view of Nature could co-exist with a religious interpretation of things, for the mathematical
structure could be taken as supplied and sustained by the mind of God.

Although in one way the growth of science promised to unify Nature by bringing widely diversified phenomena under laws, in another way it produced new problems about the relation of man to his world, problems that led to dualisms. Descartes gave the world of mind distinct ontological status alongside corporeal Nature. He introduced the problem of how this bifurcated Nature can yet be one, how the processes of mind and matter can impringe on each other. The interpretation of Nature in Spinoza and Leibniz both try strenously to deal with this problem. Spinoza affirms a partheistic position (Deus sive Natura); while in Leibniz's Pluralist world the relation between mental and material aspects of monads is no more intelligible.

Berkeley's account of Nature involves a radical criticism and rejection of the action of material substance. Our experience could, he argued, be argued simply in terms of minds and their ideas, including, crucially, the Divine Mind, in which the totality of sensible things exists.
In the philosophy of Kant, the burden of creativity further shifts to the human percipient. If we ask Kant why Nature presents to us the persistent basic structure that it does present, his answer is that we are here dealing with the inescapable conditions for any explanation of Nature at all "for the understanding is itself the source of the laws of Nature". The natural world, in the sense of the totality of things, is not in Kant's view a given whole, an object of knowledge.

In Hegel, the dominant language is of development, towards the realization of the absolute Spirit, the end for which Nature exists and labours. Necessary transitions are made from level to level, from Nature as inert matter with its externality to life, conscience, inwardness of spirit. Subsequent philosophies of Nature, as those of Bergson, Samuel Alexander and Whitehead were avowedly evolutionary, understandably so in an age that saw rapid development in the biological sciences, and had a new historical awareness of human existence. Alexander saw the evolutionary process as the continuing "emergence" of the qualitatively new: God was to be conceived not as initial creator or sustainer of Nature but
Philosophical views of Nature can be relevant to problems of evaluation in complex ways. One's conception of how man is related to the rest of the natural world may help to determine one's sense of the importance or unimportance of human life, the roles judged reasonable and unreasonable for men to adopt. More generally, reference to man's place in Nature, for example, to his physical minuteness, could be used to depreciate the quest for "worldly" glory as a preparation for spiritual discipline. "Who can be great" asked Drummond of Hawthornden "on so small a Round as this Earth?" And Pascal asked "Qu'est ce qu'un homme dans l'infin?" (What is man in the face of the universe?) The vastness of Nature could equally well be taken as evidence of man's importance in God's eyes, for the whole of Nature could be seen as primarily a dwelling place for man.

In the history of European thought, as we have seen, there have been these great periods of constructive cosmological thinking: these periods when the idea of Nature has come into the focus of thought, become the subject of intense and protracted reflection, and
consequently acquired new characteristics which have
given a new aspect to the detailed science of Nature
that has been based upon it.

II

Having examined the philosophical development
of the term "Nature", we shall now proceed to the
Christian attitude to Nature. Since one of the fundamental
chapters of this thesis is Hopkins's attitude to
and treatment of Nature, it will be necessary to point
out the Christian concept of Nature in its totality,
beginning with the teachings of the Old Testament.5

1. Antecedent factors: Christianity entered into
a heritage of ideas about the world consisting of a
background of Semitic mythology, the revelation of
the Old Testament, certain elements from Persian
thought, and ultimately the whole framework of Greek
philosophy.

It developed from the Old Testament
doctrine that the one universal God created all
things out of original chaos and darkness. It gives a mythical account of the method and process of creation:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep; and the spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters..........."  

The Old Testament also establishes God's providential rule over all things upon His creatorship. The world is therefore a manifestation of God's power, glory and goodness:

"The heavens are telling of the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork"  

"Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings
Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength
Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;
Worship the Lord in holy array".

But the God of the Old Testament is no Nature-God. He was not involved in natural laws or cosmic principles that limited or qualified his action, nor was His being dependent on the world. The Old
Testament does not argue from the world to God in the manner of the cosmological and teleological arguments, but it descends from the idea of God into the world, and in its manifold beauty, power and goodness it apprehends the free sovereign activity of God.

2. **Ancient Christian Teaching:**

(a) **Common elements:** In the New Testament, as in the Old Testament, there appears a sense of the beauty, majesty and order of Creation as a product of God's infinite goodness, love and mercy. They were not philosophical or scientific principles, but a manifestation of the customary and normal processes of Nature. Extraordinary events (miracles) were therefore regarded as signs and wonders, but not as violations of a natural law or order. They presented no intellectual problem, for they were manifestations of the power of God working fully and freely according to His inscrutable will. They were neither contrary to nor above nature but a part of the totality of the divine operation which sustained and governed the whole world. It was also believed that angels might intervene and direct the course of nature for man's benefit, but they too were
subject to the will of God. On the other hand, demons and evil spirits could work injury to men.

(b) Jesus Christ adopted such ideas and terms of his time. But whatever dualism or pluralism was involved in them, he eliminated by bringing all the processes of Nature into the most direct and intimate relation with the idea of the Fatherhood of God. This governed his fundamental attitude towards Nature. God’s love and care for man determined all his activity in the world, and nothing happened except by the Father’s will. The order in nature is the process of divine love and mercy. Jesus Christ’s view of the world is teleological and optimistic. God directs all Nature to fulfil his fatherly purpose and nothing exists or happens, which cannot be subordinated to that purpose.

The sayings of Jesus Christ are unique in their time for their appreciation of Nature’s glory. His parables and sermons reveal that intimate communion with Nature which enabled him to see in her face the symbols and the effulgence of divine truth. There might be certain enemies in Nature’s realm, but Christ taught that all such enemies would be eradicated if one placed complete trust in God’s love and power.
Apostolic theories: Christ's ruling ideas appear in the writings of the Apostles, but as they addressed Jews and Gentiles alike they had occasion to develop in a more speculative way the conception of the relation of God to the world. St. Paul, in several places, expresses the principles that were subsequently developed into the teleological and cosmological proofs of the being of God. He declared that the living God 'made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that in them is' and that 'he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with good and gladness'. The point of the argument is not the being of God, which is assumed, but His nature and operation. Creation, providence and Nature are manifestation of the unity, power, goodness and glory of God.

Or to put it conversely, Paul's conception of God becomes his interpretation of Nature. Paul is acutely conscious of evil and depravity in the world, yet his view of the universe as a whole is optimistic: 'To them that love God all things work together for good'.

Judaism had over-emphasised the transcendence of God and His arbitrary rule over the world. Greek thought tended to merge God in the world, which then
became a necessary manifestation of divine reason.

Christ and his apostles qualified Jewish transcendence by the revelation of God in Christ, and of His immanence in Nature and man. Yet, it was not the essential and necessary immanence of Greek thought but the personal and moral immanence of love and grace. Christ interpreted Nature through his own filial consciousness of the Father, and the Apostles through Christ's moral and redemptive personality. Nature, therefore, could not be merely a system of mechanical uniformity and necessity, but it was a moral order in which God's purpose of grace is realised in His activity through Christ. In such a system the antithesis between the natural and the supernatural could not arise, for with God all things are possible and natural, without Him nothing is possible.

3. **Hellenistic - Christian Theories:**

(a) **Assimilation:** When the Christian Church entered the heathen world, it came face to face with a long tradition of Greek cosmology and science. Plato had established a dualistic separation between the sensual and the supersensual, between the world and God. Aristotle had defined their relation theistically: God was the First cause of the world. The Stoics had
conceived the world as a system of law and necessity wherein the process of the universe was governed and ordained by the divine Logos. In the more developed system of Philo, God's Logos and his powers are at once the media of his action and the principles of order and being in the world. His fidelity to the Old Testament ideas prevent Philo from merging God and His powers in Nature as mere immanent principles. Philo gives profuse descriptions and discussions of the world as it actually exists. He follows in the main the teaching of the Greek scientists of his time, but expresses it in the allegories of the Old Testament language.

Both the natural tendency to assimilate prevalent ideas and the necessity to commend itself to contemporary intelligence compelled Christianity to assume a scientific and philosophical form, which it did by adopting current Greek ideas and by adapting to its use such philosophical principles as would best harmonize with its own principles.

(b) The Greek Apologists and Fathers: God in his goodness created the world for the sake of rational beings. From Plato downwards the world was conceived teleologically as the process whereby man realised
His purpose of goodness towards himself, for man as a rational being is essentially superior to all creatures, and the whole of Nature is organised to supply his needs. The Greeks were duly impressed with the unity, harmony, order and beauty of the universe. Although the Greek theologians had little scientific interest in Nature, they make frequent references to its beauty, harmony and unity as evidence of the being and nature of God.

Yet the harmony in Nature was manifestly marred by evil. All Christian doctrine involves the doctrine of the Fall, whereby the processes of Nature as well as the lives of man were turned aside from their proper and natural course. But apocalyptic hopes proved the way of escape from despair for the early Church. Because of the Original Sin, the world was under the dominion of evil, but it was a temporary phase to pass away speedily, and a restored and renovated world after God's perfect plan would soon be ushered in with the New Age. Though the world was bad, Nature was good and able to cast off its evil condition.

(c) St. Augustine: For St. Augustine, God and the soul are the two poles on which the whole system
revolves. His interest in external Nature and his theories of it are therefore secondary to and dependent upon his view of the relation between God and the soul. Nature, as a system of law and order, is "an order of causes in which the highest efficiency is attributed to the will of God".  

Yet Augustine is intensely conscious of the reality of evil both in himself and in the world around. He sees external nature as involved in the calamity of sin as the instrument of its punishment. God has not withdrawn all of his creative goodness, for he has filled the misery of the human race with the rich and manifold blessings of nature. Yet the whole framework of Nature has been irretrievably disordered by sin. Nature as it is, therefore, stands in a double antithesis:

i) to original nature as God created it.

ii) to the realm of grace into which the select are delivered from the misery and corruption of the present world. St. Augustine's doctrine of the Two Realms of Nature and Grace, or of natural and supernatural, has held sway over Christian thought up to the present times.
(d) **The medieval metaphysics of Nature:** This doctrine is, in all its essentials, the one propounded by St. Augustine. God created all things by an act of will after the exemplar that He had in mind. He created all nature as good, but according to St. Augustine, evil is neither a being nor a good, but the absence of being. The causality of God extends to all things, and specifically, to all individuals. The order of the universe is good, and this order involves a gradation of being which admits the possibility of evil. But all actual evil stems from evil wills. Such beliefs propounded by St. Augustine have been criticized as implying a deistic separation between God and the world, which limits His being and negates His immanence, and that they tend to empty the world of its reality, for its substance or nature which was good, was the activity of God, while the evil in it was the negation of divine activity.

(e) **Practical Dualism:** While the metaphysical theory of evil presented it as a negation, the dualistic trend of thought ran riot in the Middle Ages under the two branches of (i) Asceticism and (ii) Diabolism:

(i) **Asceticism:** The Chief underlying principles were that the world of sense was evil, and therefore
to be avoided, and that the normal processes of Nature were, if not essentially evil, at least occasion of it.

(ii) **Diabolism**: This was the belief that the present world was the dominion of the devil and his host of evil demons. Evil spirits swarmed upon the earth, ubiquitous and nearly all-powerful, Nature and man were their playthings. The notion of diabolism submerged Christian monotheism and every idea of a world created, ordered and ruled by divine wisdom and love.

(f) **Symbolism**: The remedy to diabolism was sought neither in science nor in teleology, but in a symbolic interpretation of nature. If actual nature had been reduced to vanity by evil spirits, it still retained the form and image of the true and good, and so could still be the efficacious instrument of divine grace. But the symbolic interpretation of Nature did not really reconcile it to God, nor present a Christian theory of it. It was but a magic bridge cast over the abyss of dualism, and it availed only so long as the illusion lasted. When men brushed away the cobwebs of such an illusion and gazed upon Nature herself, they entered into a universe very different from the supernaturalism and symbolism of the Church.
4. Humanism and Science

In the fifteenth century, the study of the classics led men to a new appreciation of Nature and a free investigation of it, which, in the sixteenth century, produced the beginning of modern science.

(a) The Philosophy of the Renaissance:— This was not so much a new theory of Nature, as a new attitude to it. The scientific discoveries of Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, and Kepler transformed the existing concept of Nature and came into conflict with much that had been embodied in Roman Catholic dogma. Since the church would not reconstruct dogmas, a deep cleavage was made where Nature was abandoned, if not to the devil, to what was confessedly a non-Christian interpretation. From the stand-point of Roman Catholic dogma, the modern conception of Nature is essentially un-Christian, and in most respects even anti-Christian.

(b) Protestantism as represented in theology was only partially and gradually liberated from medieval metaphysics but the new spirit of free enquiry into nature's secrets found expression in science, philosophy and literature. Hence arose the so-called
conflict between science and religion, which was really a conflict between the old and the new systems of science and philosophy.

(c) **Rationalism**: The preoccupation with external nature exclusively in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries produced materialism, sensationalism, and rationalism, systems which altogether denied any spiritual meaning to Nature.

(d) **Pantheism**: In the other extreme, the doctrine of Pantheism identified God as *Natura Naturans*, and the world as *Natura Naturata*, and also made all reality an impersonal, non-moral system of necessity. According to this concept of Nature, all is God and God is all; but since thought may move from all to 'God or the reverse, it can assume two forms. If it begins with the religious belief or the philosophical faith in God as the Infinite and Eternal Reality then the finite and temporal world is swallowed up in God, and Pantheism becomes *Acosmism*, i.e. the world is an illusion in comparison with God as Reality. If it begins with the scientific conception or the poetic vision of the world as unity, then God is lost in the world and Pantheism
becomes Pancosmism. The first is theistic, the second atheistic; for the first there still survives a vague apprehension of God as theism conceives Him.

(e) **Deism**: The deists, both heterodox and orthodox, accepted the current scientific views of Nature as a uniform system of properties and laws which worked automatically, but by virtue of God's creative act. They found in it therefore evidence of certain universal truths of religion—God, virtue, future rewards and punishment. The orthodox school affirmed in addition certain special revelations and acts of God by which He remedied the defects that had entered into Nature's mechanism along with Sin. Both schools accepted the two-fold dualism of God and the world, of natural and supernatural and both placed God normally outside the universe. Nature and the Christian Revelation were also distinct operations of God, and the tendency was to regard the independence of God as self-sufficient and self-explanatory.

(f) **Naturalism**: In the nineteenth century, naturalism together with agnosticism, became the successor of deism. Physical science in itself need not be religious or irreligious, but if it is put forward
as a philosophy, as a complete and adequate account of the world as a whole, it involves the denial of any moral or spiritual significance in the world. Writers like Huxley and Spencer limited all knowledge "in the proper sense of knowing" to phenomena; and religion, the spiritual and the supernatural were relegated to the region of the unknown and the unknowable. The knowledge of Nature could therefore have no religious significance.

5. **Idealism and Theism**

But modern thought has not been content to rest in a view of nature which leaves the knowledge of nature unrelated to religion, or which makes Nature a complete antithesis both to God and to the spiritual being of man. A long succession of philosophers—Descartes, Leibniz, Kent, Berkeley, Butler, Hegel, Lotze, Rudolf Eucken and James Ward—have striven to interpret Nature in correspondence with the conception of God as living and personal, free and immanent in the world, by His power, wisdom and goodness continually forming and guiding it to fulfil His perfect purpose of holiness and love. Even then, this theistic philosophy has not solved
all its problems. The relation of the finite to the infinite, of the eternal to time and the process of evolution, of the One to the many, the existence of evil, moral and physical, are yet no more than formulated questions without answers. Theism is more a faith than a science, though it may not altogether be a Christian faith. The speculative methods of theistic philosophy move towards Christ's idea of the world as the Father's home and workshop. All in all, it may be said that theism represents Nature in a way more congenial to Christian expression and thought than any other system, and that its line of progress is set in the direction of the Christian ideal of a world in which "all things work together for good to them that love God". (St. Paul).

Throughout history, men have thought of natural processes as having intentions, and as capable of being influenced, exactly in the manner of human beings, by prayer and entreaty -- either by way of an anthromorphically conceived God or directly. Foresters thought it only prudent to explain to a tree they were about to fell, exactly why it had to be cut down. In Ibsen's play "The Wild Duck", Old Ekdal is convinced that the forest will "seek revenge" for
being ruthlessly thinned down. In recent ecological studies, the view that nature will "have its revenge" on mankind for their misdeeds operates as something more than a mere metaphor, just as old ideas of hubris, sacrilege, pollution are still potent concepts amongst man.

The fact remains that the Christian tradition insisted on the absolute uniqueness of man, a uniqueness particularly manifest, according to Christianity, in the fact that he alone has been 'addressed by God' and can, therefore, either be saved or damned. Nature, then, has been created by God for man to use. Animals and plants can, for that reason, be assimilated to, at least in certain respects, to the class of beasts or tools, but none the less obedient to man's will. The devout Christian will argue that as man was made for the sake of God, that he may serve Him, every natural process, therefore, exists as an aid to men materially or as a spiritual guide, recalling, as in the case of flood, tempest, volcano, their corrupt state.
III

In keeping with the line drawn within the framework of this thesis, the Christian attitude to Nature has been closely examined. Christian thought believes that the world was created by God in the manner set forth in the early chapters of the Book of Genesis, and modified by the Church Fathers. Hopkins' view of Nature is this Christian view of the world, and he goes back to one of the most important medieval schoolmen, Duns Scotus, in formulating his theories of Inscape and Instress in Nature.

Duns Scotus, the "Subtle Doctor" possessed one of the sharpest minds produced by Scholasticism, the Christian philosophic movement of medieval Europe; but he was, at the same time one of the chief reasons for the end of scholasticism. The aim of scholasticism had been the demonstration of the harmony of reason and biblical revelation, of theology and philosophy; but Duns Scotus came to the general conclusion that there was much in Christian theology that philosophy could not support and one of the chief consequences of his work was that philosophy and theology again
went separate ways.

Thomas Aquinas, "the Angelic Doctor", and the founder of Thomism, had died in 1274. His magnificent system of philosophy and theology, in which he had woven as one grand unity the philosophy of Aristotle and the theology of the Church, and which marked the culmination of scholasticism, was as complete as St. Thomas (who died relatively young) had time to make it. Probably partly because Duns Scotus was a Franciscan monk and Thomas had been a Dominician (the two orders were rivals in every European university faculty) and also because Duns Scotus was of a highly critical bent of mind, he devoted much of his attention to the criticism of St. Thomas's system. The criticism was carried on by Duns Scotus's pupils and followers, who were known as the Scotists, with the result that the debate between the Thomists and the Scotists was continued to the time of the Protestant Reformation.

The fundamental differences between the Scotist and the Thomist systems may be noted in the following points.

1. Faith (or authority and reason): Albertus Magnus, the teacher of Thomas Aquinas, laboured earnestly
to show that reason and revelation are neither identical nor mutually opposed, but harmonious, in the sense that certain doctrines, while not contrary to reason, are yet beyond reason. There are some truths inaccessible to unaided human reason. Aquinas develops this fundamental conclusion and defines more precisely the doctrines which are beyond reason. He finds them to be the trinity, the creation of the world out of nothing, the Incarnation, and the immediate inferences which follow from these. (Contra Gentiles, i, 3) Further, he says that it is possible for natural reason to refute arguments against these suprarational truths and even to produce considerations determining the mind towards their acceptance, since natural reason cannot be contrary to the truths of faith. Our unaided reason can discover and establish by argument a great body of truth, but the truths distinctive of faith are revealed to, not discovered by the human mind. The principle underlying the supernaturalism of St. Thomas may be expressed thus: God is the chief end of man, but He is a transcendent end (finis superexcedens). (Summa, Iqu, i. art. 1). This principle shows that Thomas never intended to assert an absolute separation, much less an opposition, between two kinds of truth.
In the hands of Duns Scotus the distinction widens and deepens; the range of philosophical and religious truth that can be demonstrated by the unaided reason is significantly restricted. This consequence follows from his theory of the primacy of Will. For him, theology is essentially practical: it points to salvation from sin by an appeal to the will. The part played by the intellect is reduced and Duns Scotus finds that in addition to the Trinity, the Incarnation, the creation at the beginning of time, the following articles cannot be rationalized: the knowledge of God as omnipotent; the knowledge of God not only as infinite but as the chief end of man; and the knowledge of the incorruptibility and immortality of the soul. In this there is applied the assertion of a breach between faith and reason, which had effects more far-reaching than Duns Scotus intended. Reason could claim unlimited scope and freedom so long as the finality of faith was formally granted. This position taken by Duns Scotus was generally regarded as the beginning of the decline of Scholasticism.

2. **Intellect and Will:** In this regard, the opposition between Aquinas and Duns Scotus is precise. The former
teaches that intellect and will are never separated in God or man, but in man their union is imperfect. Intellect is superior to will because it involves knowledge, contemplation, rational intuition and is per se related to reality; Will is determined by the perception of good, and this perception is an intellectual act so that will is dependent on intellect. In God, the union of will and intellect is perfect. Moral freedom means that by an intellectual act of analysis and comparison, various possible lines of action are revealed, and one of them is perceived to be the best; the will then decides for the intellect. For Aquinas, God acts as He does because He sees that it is right. That is, God's intellect is prior to, and determines His Will. For Duns Scotus, on the other hand, what God wills or does for any reason or for no reason at all is right simply because He wills or does it. For Scotus, the chief thing to be known about God is that He is Will, even arbitrary will. "And, therefore, there is no reason why His will wills this", he wrote, "except that His will is will". God has absolute freedom; the sole cause for anything to be good is that God freely wills it.

Duns Scotus thought that the will, rather than the intellect, is primary in mankind, just as much as
in God. Since everything about a person, in ardly or outwardly, is subject to that person's will, a person is totally responsible for all his conduct. "Nothing else than the will", he wrote, "is the cause of the entire volition in the will". If the will is free at all, its action must be wholly unrestricted. The intellect presents to the will the possibilities of its choice, but the will is absolutely autonomous.

Two statements with regard to Duns Scotus require qualification:

(a) it is said that he places the intellect at the mercy of arbitrary will.

(b) according to his teaching, a thing is good only because God has willed and commanded it, which is understood to mean that God might have made good evil and evil good:

"This anti-moral conclusion was, however, actually derived from the statements of Duns Scotus. It was argued that nothing is, in itself, either righteous or sinful, but only because God has commanded or forbidden it, and that the divine commands are made known to men only by the Church". (Windelband)\textsuperscript{11}. 
3. The Principle of Individuality: This principle involves the distinction between matter and form which the schoolmen derived from Aristotle. All beings in Nature are composed of matter and form. 'Matter' is indeterminate and merely potential - it may be this or that. 'Form' is in all individuals of the kind or class and are essentially general.

With regard to matter and form, the conclusions of Aquinas may be summarised as follows: Pure forms, real and active, exist only in the immaterial world. God is pure form and is unique and is absolute genius and individual per se. The angels are relatively pure forms, each of whom is at once a species and an individual. Mankind belongs to both worlds and consists of matter and form in individual union. Hence men are members under a genus. How does their individuality arise? The matter of a man's body has been determined by ante-natal hereditary and other influences. Matter, so determined, requires form to produce the individuality of this man. Albertus Magnus and Aquinas strenuously defend the incorruptibility and immortality of the soul against the conclusion that individuality depends on matter in a sense which puts immortality out of the question.
Scotus affirms that all finite or created beings consist of matter and form, but there is an incorporeal matter. Formless *materia primo-prima*, i.e. matter as God created it, does not exist in isolation. Scotus believed in a conception of Nature as consisting of beings ever striving towards more complete and perfect individuality. Its unity consists in the order of its parts and the harmony of all bodies. The highest type of embodied existence is the human organism, because it is the organ of the soul.

In criticising the principles advocated by Aquinas, Scotus introduced a third principle, neither matter nor form, which he call *haecceitas*, and which is spoken of as if it produced or created the concrete individuality of the self-existent thing:

"The individual form (*haecceitas*) is for Duns Scotus an original fact; no further question as to its ground is permissible. He designates individuality (both in the sense of individual substance and in that of individual occurrence) as the contingent (*contingens*), i.e. as that which cannot be deduced from a universal ground, but can only be verified as actual fact. For him ........ the individual is the form of all reality by means of which alone universal matter exists!" (Windelband)
At one period of his life, 1875-79, Hopkins drew his poetry almost entirely from Nature. In this he was, without doubt, aided by Scotus, for in 1875, he wrote

"I was flush with a new enthusiasm. Whenever I took in an inscape of the sea or sky, I thought of Scotus...."^{13}

Again in 1879, he wrote of Scotus:

"he who of all men sways my spirits to peace."^{14}

It may be queried as to how, through the murky air of the medieval lecture-room there dawned the revelation to Hopkins. There are some vital points where the minds of Hopkins and Scotus found themselves in unison. A convenient stand-point is the Scotist formal distinction between the Nature in a thing and its Individuality. Each man's nature is the nature of all the world, elemental, vegetative sensitive, human. (Opus Oxoniense, 11, 3.1) But one man differs utterly from another because by his Individuality he possesses the common nature in an especial degree. (Quaestiones supra Libros Metaphysicos, VII, 13). The individual degree is the degree in which he lacks the Infinite...
it knits together in the one man all his natural activities, animal and rational (Quaest. Lib. Met. IV.2) and gives them God-wards (Op. Ox. III 8.1.). It is important to note that according to Scotus, Christ as Man possesses His created Nature in the highest degree possible summing up all other degrees. Fittingly, Hopkins's sonnet on individualities ends with:

"Christ - for Christ plays in ten thousand place
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not His,
To the Father through the features of men's faces".

Hopkins drew heavily on Scotus's analysis of the distinctive individuality, the inscape of objects of perception. Scotus's haecceitas is the individualizing difference restricting the specific form of a being and finally determining its essential individuality.

If the Scotist theory of Individuation serves as a helpful analogue of inscape, Scotus's Theory of Knowledge is equally helpful as a philosophic parallel to Hopkins's notion of Instress. Scop'tus, eager to preserve a close contact between the mind and external reality, and postulating a principle of individuation
or thisness, allows direct and preliminary knowledge of the individual being of an object, before knowledge of its universal essence. Scotus describes a "first act" in which the intelligence and the senses, simultaneously acting, grasp the immediate reality of the object. This first act is intuitive, neither intellectual alone nor sensitive alone, but both at once (Op. Ox.I.d. iii. qu. 2,8.). Direct knowledge of the concrete individuality is made possible only by the existence in the object of a multiplicity of distinct metaphysical entities, which he calls formalitates.

Johannes Duns Scotus and Gerard Manley Hopkins meet, philosopher and poet, rather as fellow-pilgrims than master and disciple. Both were trying, in their unique ways, to express the vision of St. Francis of Assisi. In a sense the philosopher's tenet is realised in the poetry unique to Hopkins.

NOTES

2. The development of the philosophical ideas of Nature has been taken mainly from

(i) S. J. Curtis - A Short History of Western Philosophy (The Newman Press, 1950)

4. St. Augustine, Epistolae, 18, sec. 2.

5. In dealing with the Christian attitude to Nature, we refer mainly to the following:

(i) Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church.
(ii) Dictionary of Philosophy, ed. D. D. Runes

7. Psalm 19.


10. The authorities cited here are


