

THE EXPERIMENTAL LANGUAGE OF G.M. HOPKINS  
AND E.E. CUMMINGS

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"HOME AT HEART":  
THE EXPERIMENTAL USE OF LANGUAGE  
IN  
THE POETRY OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS  
AND  
E.E. CUMMINGS

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## Abstract

Gerard Manley Hopkins and E.E. Cummings are both known for their innovative use of language. While each developed widely divergent styles, a study of their experimental approaches to language, particularly their use of deviant syntax, a syntax which violates existing linguistic norms, may provide valuable insight as to the comparative relationship between syntax and aesthetics in their poetry. Perceptual, emotional and conceptual aesthetic effects are achieved through the employment of similar syntactic devices such as deviant formation of words, shifts in the function of words and shifts in word order. The resulting dramatic and perceptual precision of the two poets' language is no less significant than its metaphorical and analogical functions. Spatial, visual and musical analogies from the arts provided both Hopkins and Cummings with paradigms for structuring the elements of language in new ways in order to achieve greater expressive power and imaginative precision. The 'housing' of the deepest areas of human experience in language, particularly through deviant syntax, is the achievement of each of these highly distinctive poets.

What is the word. What is the word. Hush. Hush. Hush.  
We are learning a language that has no words,  
of leaves, of laughter among the leaves, an earth spinning  
homeward through the broken heart of the spheres.

Lynn C. Jacox  
(from "The Second Language")

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## INTRODUCTION

Gerard Manley Hopkins and E.E. Cummings are both well-known as poets who significantly altered the structure of language in their poetry. Each saw the innovative use of language as crucial to the poetic 'music' and meaning of their work. Through the use of similar stylistic devices, they attempted to strip the English language of cumbersome conventions and rhetoric. In this process they formed new words, deviated from traditional syntax and developed new poetic devices. Each poet thus conceived a characteristic style, for which they have earned both praise and criticism.

In their creative and distinctive innovations in poetic language, Hopkins and Cummings invite comparison. However, such a comparative study has not yet been undertaken, although, as will be indicated, several critics of both Hopkins and Cummings have observed similarities in the two poets' use of language. One might attribute this lack of critical attention to a comparative study of Hopkins and Cummings to several significant factors.

In that they are both innovators in the use of form and language, Cummings and Hopkins have developed strikingly distinctive and original styles which almost defy comparison. One might discuss thematic parallels, or observe correspondence in imagery and metaphor between

Hopkins and other Christian poets, or poets of Hopkins's own nineteenth-century sphere of influence. However, Cummings's twentieth-century American idiom would at first seem to offer little basis for comparison with Hopkins. His frequent use of bawdy imagery and occasional use of obscure political and contemporary social references cause many to consider him a private and somewhat inaccessible poet. The individualistic vision and mode which Cummings reveals would seem to hold him at a distant remove from Hopkins's highly disciplined Christian vision and poetic form. Many find their impression of Cummings to be chiefly of one who scatters words somewhat barbarously over a page in a rebellious fashioning of his own typography. For this reason, many critics have failed to take Cummings seriously. They have thus overlooked the depth of meaning and the beauty and subtlety of form which are present in many, if not all, of Cummings's poems. Thus, while Hopkins's reputation as a major English poet has been well established, critical response to Cummings has been varied and hesitant.

With the differences between the two poets taken into account, along with the lack of previous comparative studies, there are nevertheless strong parallels which may be drawn between the two poets' innovative uses of language. In their syntactic deviations from traditional language structures, one may observe how they use such similar

devices as shift in word order, the compounding and coinage of words, and the use of words in a non-traditional context to restore life and vigour to language and poetry. For Hopkins and Cummings, the word is alive, and powerful to arouse in the reader emotional and aesthetic responses of great depth.

The validity of drawing a comparison between Hopkins and Cummings may be illustrated by observing that several Hopkins and Cummings critics have indicated correspondences between the two poets. W.H. Gardner, in Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy in Respect to Poetic Tradition, (1944) mentions the effectiveness of Cummings's typographical and orthological devices in comparison with Hopkins' use of language. However, in the same breath Gardner holds that Cummings went beyond the point at which Hopkins said, "I must go no further on this road."<sup>1</sup> Gardner later refers to Cummings briefly in a footnote as an example of the twentieth-century use of anastrophe and twist of syntax in poetry.<sup>2</sup> These correspond to Hopkins's own innovations in syntax. In his introduction to The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (4th. ed.), Gardner states: ". . . it is likely that James Joyce, E.E. Cummings, and Dylan Thomas were decisively influenced by a reading of Hopkins."<sup>3</sup> Irene Fairley, in her E.E. Cummings and Ungrammar

(1976), cites Hopkins's syntactic variations several times in the course of discussing corresponding variations by Cummings.<sup>4</sup> In the context of his study on E.E. Cummings's use of deviant syntax, Richard Cureton refers to Hopkins's use of syntactic breaks to achieve rhetorical emphasis of dynamic verbs.<sup>5</sup>

As early as 1944, in a review of Cummings's One Times One, Theodore Spencer compared Cummings and Hopkins with respect to their capacity to recreate perceptual experience. Spencer writes:

What we need is a Cummings to make us aware of the leaf. He wakes us up, and his poetry is full of that sense of musical delight which Coleridge calls one of the gifts of the imagination. Like the poetry of Hopkins it is real and alive and moving because it tries to capture the "inscape" of things. It does not wrench or tear us, like some of Hopkins --- Puck is not Satan, nor Ariel St. Ignatius - but it recreates, sinlessly, with American a-morality, the taste, the movement, the colour and shape of the individual thing or emotion just<sub>6</sub> as Hopkins' poetry recreates those things.

Spencer thus compares Cummings and Hopkins with respect to the aesthetics of their poetry; the manner in which their poetry "inscapes" the essential physical, perceptual and emotional essence of an object or experience. These similar aesthetic effects may be seen to have direct relation to the poets' unorthodox linguistic innovations. ✓

In spite of the above illustrations, the demonstrable lack of previous published attempts to compare the language

of Hopkins and Cummings would indicate both the problems and rewards to be had in initiating a comparative study of their poetry.

The limits of such a comparative study are always present. A comprehensive and unified understanding of the stylistics and aesthetics of either poet is continually limited and biased in viewing these aspects in the context of another poet, where differences are often jarring and flagrant. However, in considering Hopkins and Cummings together, with an eye to their experimental use of language, one also finds unexpected rewards. The relationship between poetic syntax and aesthetics and the analogy of language as an artistic medium to the visual and spatial arts are outgrowths of observing the poets' respective uses of deviant syntax. Implications of the limitations and possibilities of such radical experimentation are suggested by contrasting the degree of success and discipline with which these linguistic experiments were executed. At the same time, the uniqueness of Hopkins and Cummings may be appreciated in a new light. The reader's delight in the aesthetic and emotional depth and range of their poetry is increased as the language of each poet is illuminated and refracted through the mirror of a contrasting but surprisingly corresponding poetic vision and form.

The language of poetry has many facets in both

practice and theory. The basics of rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance, word-use and syntax are important. Symbol and metaphor may be included in a stylistic study as they relate to a poet's choice of words. Structural aspects such as verse form, typography and parallelism are also important. To treat all of these aspects of the poetry of Hopkins and Cummings in detail would be a cumbersome task. In order to provide focus to the comparison at hand, this study will concentrate on syntax as the aspect of the poets' use of language which may be most readily and fruitfully compared.

The concern for literary stylistics, including the form and language of poetry, has always been an important aspect of literary criticism. However, recent advances in the field of linguistics have brought about a reappraisal of the application of linguistics to literature and new understandings of the way language works in poetry. Noam Chomsky has particularly revolutionized the field of linguistics with his theory of generative-transformational grammar and the conceptualization of a deep and surface structure of grammar. His theories of grammar have been applied increasingly to the stylistic analysis of modern writers and poets. However, modern theorists in language and literature have noted that there is yet a great deal of work to be done toward developing a combined linguistic

and literary framework of analysis. As William E. Baker indicates in his Syntax in English Poetry 1870-1930, there is a need for linguists and literary analysts to "elaborate a common vocabulary and a general theory of style"<sup>7</sup> in order that neither discipline find itself too far adrift from the other, and thus less than complete. In the same vein, Roman Jakobson, a prominent linguist, has stressed the important relationship between the disciplines of literature and linguistics with his affirmation:

. . . a linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and unconvertant with linguistic methods are equally flagrant anachronisms.

The application of linguistics to the study of poetry has drawn attention to the specific role of syntax in poetry. Winifred Nowotny emphasizes that a poet's use of syntax ~~is fundamental to the structure, meaning and aesthetics of~~ his or her poetry. In The Language Poets Use she writes: ✓

Of all the elements necessary to make an utterance meaningful, the most powerful is syntax, controlling as it does the order in which impressions are received and conveying the mental relations 'behind' sequences of words . . . . Consequently, syntax, however little it is noted by the reader, is the groundwork of the poet's art. Often it supports a poetic edifice elaborated by many other means and the reader is content to believe that these other means are the cause of his pleasure. But when a passage relies chiefly on its especially compelling and artful syntax to make its effect, the reader and the critic who never expect syntax to be more than 'a harmless, necessary drudge,' holding open the door while the pageantry of words sweeps through,

will be at a loss to understand why the passage affects them as it does and at a loss to do critical justice to its art....

The understanding of a poet's syntax is thus important to an understanding of his or her aesthetics. According to Nowotny, and subsequently to Richard Cureton, there is a sense in which poetic language is "hypersemanticized."<sup>10</sup> The channels for communicating perception, thought and emotion are deepened and broadened. The poet's use of syntax is directly related to the process of conveying these thoughts, emotions and sensations as precisely as possible. Through deviations in syntax, a poet may further increase the levels of perception, awareness and cognition which are central to the aesthetics of poetry. Syntactic deviations contribute to the "hypersemantics" of language, where very complex ideas and perceptions are conveyed creatively and effectively in a compressed, poetic manner. Thus, the term "deviant syntax" is used by linguists such as Richard Cureton to describe a syntax which violates existing linguistic norms.<sup>11</sup> Where Hopkins and Cummings both deviate from traditional syntactical and grammatical norms to a marked degree, their syntax may be considered 'deviant'.

Baker, Chapman and other linguists have indicated that dislocation of normal syntax has been the prerogative

of poets throughout the ages. The literary process itself implies a high degree of selection and variance from the language of everyday speech. This is accomplished through the use of special devices including metre, rhyme, assonance, alliteration and syntactical variations. Dislocation of grammatical elements is thus a traditional poetic device for heightening everyday speech, where grammar is sacrificed primarily for the sake of rhythm, rhyme, or emotional and psychological emphasis.<sup>12</sup>

Baker cogently describes the nature and significance of the phenomenon of deviating in syntax in modern poetry as follows:

It is especially helpful to determine the function of syntax in modern poetry, because this poetry often seems to be designed to imitate the character of spontaneous speech, as in the dramatic monologue, or to rely on the reader's ability to recognize groups of words as images emerging from a certain "state of mind" or emotion, but not yet integrated into a grammatical statement. The understanding and appreciation of such poetry depends upon a recognition of the ways by which syntactic structures achieve emotional or psychological coherence through grammatical unorthodoxy.<sup>13</sup>

Baker's premise, as that of Nowotny and other recent critics, is that there are semantic, aesthetic and psychological values which are furthered by "grammatical unorthodoxy." 'Ungrammaticalness', as Fairley and other linguists have described syntactic and linguistic deviations, may then be seen not necessarily as an indication of dissolution in the formal structures of language and poetry

but as a formulation of new syntactic structures which achieve important aesthetic ends.

In considering the poetic use of deviations in syntax, Chapman has described some of the primary aesthetic effects in terms which include tension, ambiguity and polysemy. Tension is always present in any communication through language; a creative tension between the rules of grammar and form and the desired freedom to express a unique thought, image or sensation.<sup>14</sup> An author's mastery of this tension contributes to his unique style and aesthetics. The greater the degree of syntactic deviation, the greater the effect of tension, of straining the limits of language and thought. The creative interplay between manner of speech and matter or meaning is heightened when this linguistic tension is skillfully and artistically handled.

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Syntactic deviations may also be used to suggest ambiguity in thought, or polysemy, the possibilities of multiple meaning.<sup>15</sup> As well, simultaneity of thought or action with expression may be suggested where expected rules of sequential ordering of grammatical elements are broken. These and other possible results of deviant syntax are explored in more detail in following chapters as they may occur in the poetry of Hopkins and Cummings.

In the first chapter of the thesis, the foundational

framework for a comparative study of Hopkins and Cummings will be established. General comparisons will be made of the poets' respective linguistic and literary backgrounds and their innovative approaches to the language of poetry. With this background provided, some of the distinguishing characteristics of the poetry of Hopkins and Cummings will be considered in chapter two in a selective fashion as they indicate significant similarities in type of deviation.

In chapters three and four the linguistic innovations of the two poets will be examined in turn in more detail, with emphasis on their effectiveness as poetic and aesthetic devices. The concluding chapters will attempt to provide a synthesis of the interrelationships between syntax and aesthetics in the poetry of Hopkins and Cummings. While differing dramatically in many aspects of style and thought, the indication is that Hopkins and Cummings discover, in their respective restructuring of the language of poetry, important new channels for expressing emotions, thoughts and perceptions of great intensity and depth. The respective artistic and spiritual backgrounds of the two poets and their applications of the visual arts to language may be seen to have direct bearing on their non-conventional restructuring of syntax. The tension between linear and non-linear syntax allowed .

both Hopkins and Cummings the creation of new linguistic channels for aesthetic expression. In their continual grasping after new channels for communicating the deepest areas of human experience and cognition, Hopkins and Cummings found in the language of poetry a "home" for the heart, a place where that which is inexpressible could temporarily and partially reside.

## CHAPTER ONE

### TWO INNOVATIVE POETS COMPARED AND CONTRASTED

The linguistic deviations of Hopkins and Cummings often correspond both in terms of the type of deviation, and the aesthetic effect of their unorthodox use of grammar. These innovations may be seen as outgrowths of several factors: the poets' similar interests in language; their study and appreciation of foreign languages and literature, particularly ancient Greek; and their corresponding interests in the arts as providing structural analogies to the language of poetry. Along with their corresponding enjoyment of the technical aspects of language and the arts, both poets took a rebellious stance against outmoded conventions in literature. This provided the impulse for experimentation. For both poets, the increased expressive capacity of language which results if often counterbalanced by obtuseness, obscurity and fragmented statement. In their innovative stance toward the language of poetry, both poets at times approach or overstep the limits of coherence.

In the estimation of F.R. Leavis, Hopkins was "one of the most remarkable technical inventors who ever wrote."<sup>1</sup> Leavis laments the fact that Hopkins's poems were not

published by Bridges until 1918, almost twenty years after the poet's death. Perhaps, in that event, their shaping influence on English poetry would have been much greater. However, Leavis admits that "it would have been extravagant to suppose that he would have received such attention even had his poems been generally accessible."<sup>2</sup> The implication is that the language of Hopkins's poetry has continued to make him inaccessible to many readers and even to respected critics, who for Leavis at times evidence "a complete and complacent obtuseness with regard to the meaning of Hopkins's poetry."<sup>3</sup>

This obtuseness may be said to have had its beginnings with Robert Bridges, Hopkins's first publisher and critic. In his notes to the first edition of Hopkins's poetry, Bridges provides his own estimation of the poet's experimental idiom. He writes:

Apart, I say, from such faults of taste...which few as they numerically are yet affect my liking and more repel my sympathy than do all the rude shocks of his purely artistic wantonness -- apart from these there are definite faults of style which a reader must have courage to face, and must in some measure condone before he can discover the great beauties. For these blemishes in the poet's style are of such quality and magnitude as to deny him even a hearing from those who love a continuous literary decorum and are grown to be intolerant of its absence. And it is well to be clear that there is no pretence to reverse the condemnation of those faults, for which the poet had duly suffered. The extravagances are and will remain what they were. Nor can credit be gained from pointing them out: yet, to put readers at their ease, I will here define them; they may be called Oddity and Obscurity; and since the first may provide laughter when a writer is serious (and the poet is always serious)

while the latter must prevent him from being understood (and this poet has always something to say), it may be assumed that they were not a part of his intention.

Bridges chooses the terms "artistic wantonness", "definite faults of style", "blemishes" and "extravagances" to describe Hopkins's innovative stylistic devices. He expresses his concern that the nature of Hopkins's "oddity" and "obscurity" will prevent the poet from being understood. As a literary critic of his poet-friend, Bridges is wearing two hats. Speaking from the podium of conventional literary decorum, he classifies the innovations as "faults of style". However, he also advocates that only when the reader courageously faces these faults and in some measure condones them, can he appreciate the "great beauties" of Hopkins's poetry. Subsequent admirers of Hopkins would soon come to observe the intricate interdependence between the "great beauties" of Hopkins's poetry and his experimental linguistics.

Hopkins, as his letters and prose writings indicate, was very conscious of the difficulties in reading his poetry. In a letter to Bridges he writes:

No doubt my poetry errs on the side of oddness. I hope in time to have a more balanced and Miltonic style. But as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern, or what I am in the habit of calling inscape, is what I above all aim at in poetry. Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or inscape to be distinctive and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped.

Here Hopkins links his own syntactic and rhythmic oddness with design, pattern and inscape, as found in music and painting. Structure, inner coherence and distinctiveness are achieved, rather than forfeited by the innovations. In another letter to Bridges, Hopkins comments on his liberties with poetic language: "Only remark, as you say that there is no conceivable licence I shd. not be able to justify, that with all my licences, or rather laws, I am stricter than you and, I might say than anybody I know."<sup>6</sup> Each licence including deviations from traditional syntax was, in fact, embraced by Hopkins as a law; highly conscious, deliberate and disciplined in its execution. We find him writing further concerning his own obscurity:

Plainly if it is possible to express a subtle and recondite thought on a subtle and recondite subject in a subtle and recondite way and with great felicity and perfection,<sup>7</sup> in the end something must be sacrificed ....

Again, Hopkins reveals how much he was aware of the purpose and effectiveness of his linguistic distortions and innovations. If the reader's immediate comprehension and perfect clarity of thought were sacrificed, it was for much greater ends, "felicity and perfection" and "subtle and recondite" expression of thoughts too intricate and deep to be conveyed through any lesser channel.

Hopkins's boldness in restructuring the fibre of poetic language was part of his violent and revolutionary reaction to the tameness of the verse of his age. In a

letter to Bridges, we find his aversion to the use of archaisms in poetry. He writes:

...I cut myself off from the use of ere, o'er, wellnigh, what time, say not (for do not say), because though dignified they neither belong to nor ever cd. arise from, or be the elevation of, ordinary modern speech. For it seems to me that the poetical language of an age should be the current language heightened, to any degree heightened and unlike itself, but not (I mean normally, passing freaks and graces are another thing) an obsolete one. This is Shakespeare's and Milton's practice and the want of it will be fatal to Tennyson's Idylls and plays, to Swinburne, and perhaps to Morris.

Hopkins's concern for "current language heightened" is a reaction against outmoded Victorian conventions. He endeavoured to emulate the practice and principles of such poets as John Dryden, whom he felt had preserved "the naked thew and sinew of the English Language".<sup>9</sup> Toward this end, Hopkins employed a complex and vibrant "rhetoric of verse" which extended far beyond the traditional understanding of the language of poetry. This rhetoric, while uniquely Hopkins's own, could in a larger sense ideally be the property of every poet.

In his "Author's Preface", Hopkins introduces such poetic devices as Logaoedic Rhythm, Counterpoint Rhythm, Sprung Rhythm, Rocking Feet and Outriders.<sup>10</sup> Reading this preface and Hopkins's other detailed explanations of these devices, one encounters an almost indecipherable complexity. These innovative rhythmic devices are best seen in the light of one of the poet's primary aesthetic ends: a

brighter, livelier, more emphatic verse:

Sprung rhythm gives back to poetry its true soul and self. As poetry is emphatically speech, speech purged of dross like gold in the furnace, so it must have emphatically the essential elements of speech. Now emphasis itself, stress is one of these: sprung rhythm makes verse stressy; it purges it to an emphasis as much brighter, livelier, more lustrous than the regular but commonplace emphasis of common rhythm as poetry<sup>11</sup> in general is much brighter than common speech.

W.H. Gardner, in his two volume study of Hopkins's verse, demonstrates the direct influence of Greek poetry on Hopkins's theory and practice of sprung rhythm and other elements of his 'rhetoric'. As a student, teacher and professor, Hopkins was conversant with the language and literature of ancient Greece. His interest in Greek, particularly in Greek poetic rhythm, is demonstrated by his undertaking an intense study of the nature of Dorian and Aeolian rhythms between 1884 and 1889. Gardner notes Professor Tierney's observing a remarkable similarity between Hopkins's metrics and those of the Greek ode.<sup>12</sup>

Greek lyric poetry was closely allied to music. ✓  
The Greek poet possessed a large stock of metrical phrases which served as basic poetic or musical units. Four different types of rhythmical phrase were used to express certain specific moods, actions and reflections. Gardner indicates how in these variable choric measures, Hopkins found the prototype for his own complex sprung rhythm.<sup>13</sup>

An early antecedent of Hopkins's sprung rhythm may thus be found in the Paeonic phrases of Pindar's odes.

These, "with their undulating (or 'rocking') bacchic and cretics and their quick polysyllabic paeons .... are so suited for excited, agitated and dithyrambic utterance."<sup>14</sup> There is thus a subtle interplay developed between the metrical pattern and natural speech rhythms. While Dryden, Gray and Wordsworth all imitated the Greek ode, none broke away from conventional English metre in its use.<sup>15</sup> Hopkins, however, took full advantage of the range of rhythmic variations and counterpointing suggested by the unique rhythmical word grouping of the original Greek.

Gardner attributes a wide range of syntactical innovations in Hopkins's poetry to the influence of ancient Greek poetry. Like the Greek poets and thinkers, Hopkins demonstrated the Greek instinct for emphatic condensation of thought through language. He seems to have appropriated in his own poetry the freedom of Greek and Latin poets to place words where rhythm, emphasis and tone-pattern required, without being severely limited by formal structural restraints. Gardner further notes:

That "spontaneity of consciousness" which Matthew Arnold found in all Hellenism; and the rapid and excitable nature of Greek verse, together with that instinct "prevading and architectonic" which ensures restraint and repose -- these are qualities which are equally characteristic of Hopkins.<sup>16</sup>

One may find other significant sources of influence on Hopkins's language, including his knowledge and love of Anglo-Saxon and Welsh vocabulary and poetry. However, the influence of the Greek poets is strong and pervasive in its

suggesting to Hopkins an innovative metrical and musical patterning of sound and rhythm set in counterpoint to traditional poetic and linguistic structures.

In considering Hopkins's language of 'rhetoric of verse', then, one is concerned with a vast and subtle range of linguistic variations. The sound and quality of vowels and consonants is enhanced through alliteration, internal rhyme and 'consonant chiming', and the rhythmic innovations of sprung rhythm and overreaving lend tone, musical colour and dynamism to Hopkins's poetry. Hopkins's theory and practice of sprung rhythm and related rhythmical innovations are complemented by his grammatical, phonetic and lexical innovations. The use of dialect, non-poetic words, coined words, syntactical ellipsis, inversions and dislocations complement the rhythmic and phonetic devices and break new ground toward liberation from conventional modes of expression. The result is a purged, more 'stressy'

and vibrant language, the accomplishment of a master poet and linguist.

E.E. Cummings, like Hopkins, may be considered a revolutionary innovator in the language of poetry. His interest in languages and libertine attitude toward conventional norms of poetry may be considered as they correspond to Hopkins's career and poetic theories.

In the light of the Greek influence on Hopkins's language and poetics, it is interesting to note the

corresponding influence of Greek language and literature on Cummings's growth as a poet. In September, 1907, when he was twelve years old, Cummings entered Cambridge Latin School. His rigorous course of study emphasized ancient and foreign languages. Richard Kennedy in Dreams in the Mirror comments on the significant influence of Cummings's studies in classical languages on his poetry:

The language study made him intensely aware of the range and possibility of the English language; it made him conscious of the literal meanings, of etymological roots, and of cognates and related words in ancient and foreign languages. It stretched his vocabulary and embedded a sense of syntax in his very bones.... he came to understand linguistic theory in a practical way.<sup>17</sup>

Following his high-school studies, Cummings entered Harvard, and completed five years of study with concentrations in ancient Greek and English. From his readings in The Greek Anthology (New York, Putnam, 1917-27), Cummings derived models for epigrammatic verse with its incisiveness and use of linguistic work-play. Cummings also studied Latin writers and demonstrated originality and perception in his poetic translations of Horace. Kennedy, in his biography of Cummings, observes the importance of these translation exercises as a training ground in the use of metaphor, vocabulary and linguistic variation for the prospective poet.<sup>18</sup> It would not seem surprising, then, that both Hopkins and Cummings in their similar love of Greek literature and language would develop similar

linguistic innovations in their poetry.

Apart from his scholarly interest in ancient Greek, Cummings displayed an innate interest in language and poetry. As a boy he had already developed a talent for writing poetry, experimenting with a vast range of literary forms and styles. As a youth he wrote poems which were characterized by a variety of stanzaic forms and varying moods. He experimented with line length and rhyme, with alliterative patterns and creative use of word repetition. In the family's Joy Farm log, the boy Cummings demonstrated a unique facility and joy in coining his own words, such as "beanhamegg" and "short-cut-foot."<sup>19</sup>

In his later studies at Harvard, Cummings studied under Bliss Perry, using the textbook English Verse: Specimens Illustrating its Principles and History (1903) by Raymond Alden. Alden identifies all metrical forms and provides the theory behind accent in lines of verse. He also emphasizes tone quality, especially tone-colour, by means of which sounds of words can increase their expressiveness.<sup>20</sup> This theory finds expression in Cummings's own enjoyment of the onomatopoeic sounding of vowels and consonants, and other devices, including syntactical variations, by which he lends tone and pitch to words.

Robert E. Maurer in "Latter-Day Notes on E.E. Cummings' Language" characterizes Cummings as a "protestant" or protestor by nature. As a boy Cummings reacted against

the 'teacup society' of his home in Cambridge by making excursions into "sinful Somerville." He later chose prostitutes, stripteasers and gangsters as the subjects of some of his poems. While the libertine, undisciplined nature of Cummings's poetry may be considered the product of his own rebellious nature, Cummings may also be considered a product of his times. He developed his poetic talent in a period just after the First World War, in which experimentation was almost expected of serious young artists. Poets of this period were trying to get rid of clichés which made meaning deceptively accessible and facile.<sup>21</sup> Cummings readily fitted into this cultural and artistic environment of experimentation and change. As part of the trend toward modernism, he was concerned that the language of poetry reflect the current language of the day. In his early notes and jottings on poetic theory Cummings wrote:

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Poets, (with the exception of some few geniuses like Shakespeare) have felt it necessary, in order to give stability to their efforts, to avoid the language (which means the life) of everyday, and cultivate a hot house style suitable to the elevation of well-preserved thought which they dared express.<sup>22</sup>

Cummings's urgent straining for freedom from a "hot-house" language echoes Hopkins's rejection of archaic literary conventions, and desire for a 'stressy' language, a 'current language heightened.'

Like Hopkins, the outcome of this rebellion for

Cummings was found in a groping toward a new form of expression for poetry. The period between June 1916 and January 1917 was a time in which Cummings would consolidate the basic styles which he would use throughout his life. It was during this period that he also began to theorize about his art.<sup>23</sup> Cummings entered the European War in April, 1917 and during 1918 was situated at Camp Devans training camp, Massachusetts. At Camp Devans, he read James Joyce (another experimentalist) and theorized extensively about the new developments in literature and art. He wrote two essays during his stay; one on Joyce and one on modern art, of which only the notes survive. These notes suggest two foundational premises to Cummings's aesthetics. The concepts that the new movement in art mingles the arts of music, dance, poetry, painting and sculpture, and that one form of art may adapt the techniques of another would be reflected in Cummings's later borrowing of artistic devices from these fields.<sup>24</sup>

The above discussion has indicated corresponding linguistic and literary influences on Hopkins and Cummings which may be considered factors in their similar experimentation in traditional form and syntax of poetry. Their interest and facility in classical languages, where rhythm and syntax allowed for epigrammatic and spontaneous expression, suggested alternative structures to the conventions of English literature. As well, their interest

in the visual, spatial and musical arts provided a basis for reflection and experimentation in the capacity of language to function in a manner analogous to art and music. In addition, both poets were compelled toward a "current language", an assertive rejection of "hot-house" traditions which constrained spontaneity and life.

In the discussion of the linguistic deviations of Hopkins and Cummings, one is inevitably drawn to contrast the two poets in terms of the consistency, quality and effectiveness with which these deviations are employed. There is a sense in which this type of comparison has its own limitations. Differences in temperament, background, vision and mode of expression are part of the distinctive individuality and flavour of each poet. Each merits unique appreciation in his own right, and with respect to his unique historical, literary and cultural context. However, it would be negligent to overlook these differences without making some kind of judgement.

Cummings has merited the attention of linguists and literary critics, if only because his experimental language provides evidence of "modern" shifts and trends in the language of poetry. Julia Stanley indicates that, "The expansion of the semantic range of language is perhaps the most constructive direction in modern experimentation."<sup>25</sup> Stanley lists E.E. Cummings, Dylan Thomas, Wallace Stevens and Richard Wilbur as poets who tried to make language do

more than it can ordinarily express. These were poets "who understood the structure of English so well that their semantic and syntactic violations increased the expressive capacities of the language."<sup>26</sup> This positive appraisal of Cummings by Stanley would be echoed by such critics as Norman Friedman, Irene Fairley, Archibald Hill and Richard Cureton. However, Stanley, Hill and others balance their praise of Cummings by noting that in his experimental approach there is a destructive as well as creative tendency. Hill has rightly distinguished the difference between Cummings's well designed poems and efforts which one could classify only as cryptograms, displaying perhaps a curious ingenuity, but somehow betraying the function of a true poem, and unfortunately detracting from the reputation of Cummings's significant and often remarkable poetry.<sup>27</sup>

Richard S. Kennedy indicates that three distinct poetic styles may be discerned in Cummings's poetry. These styles often merge together so that one poem may be considered a blending of more than one style.

The first of these "styles" is Cummings's lyric and mythic style. This is characteristic of poems with an idealized, mythic approach to life. Diction is simple, with casual conversational phrasing and syntax. Any alterations in spacing or syntax are designed to enhance the significance of the idyllic atmosphere and imagery. Kennedy indicates that Cummings's most enduring work is

written in this lyric style.<sup>28</sup>

In the "Satyric" style Cummings most often expresses a rejection of life or society. Sex is treated as a dirty but necessary physical function. The dark side of human nature is satirized in all its ugliness. The unfortunate subjects of the poems include drunks, prostitutes, policemen, generals and national leaders. The elitism and prejudice which characterize social conventions are presented in all their ugliness. In this type of verse, Cummings often uses a well-established verse form such as the ballad or sonnet to create an ironic contrast between the subject and form of the poem.<sup>29</sup>

The third style of poetry, Cummings himself termed "modernist". Richard Kennedy applies the term Hephaestian to this type of verse. The "bending, breaking, twisting, mending, reshaping" functions of the mythic craftsman, Hephaestus, are analogous to the way Cummings bends and reshapes language to a marked degree. The influence of the new movement in the visual arts was important, as Cummings tried to incorporate the spirit of the spatial arts into his verse technique. Elliptical statements, distorted syntax and typography, and surprise and shock in the images are some of the characteristics of this Hephaestian style.<sup>30</sup> Cummings began to see the function of the poet in a new light, as indicated in his unpublished manuscripts:

The day of the spoken lyric is past. The poem which has at last taken its place does not

sing itself; it builds itself, three dimensionally, gradually, subtly, in the consciousness of the experienter.<sup>31</sup>

The results of Cummings's experimentation as a craftsman-poet are varied. Kennedy describes the ambiguity which characterizes this Hephaestian style throughout Cummings's career, where linguistic distortions are often habitual, automatic or jarring rather than graceful and skillful. However, when this style is under control, the results are of great complexity, displaying considerable aesthetic value and depth.<sup>32</sup>

The dilemma in reading and appreciating Cummings's poetry is complicated by the mixed quality and nature of his verse. The diversity in his style of writing on the one hand indicates his complex personality and creative vision. On the other hand, his failure to merge the three styles in a more consistent and successful manner may be indicative of a certain lack of discipline and maturity. Though in the same literary and social era as Auden, Eliot and Pound, Cummings's facility with language never attains their level of stylistic refinement.

Cummings's playful attitude to his poetry is demonstrated in his "Foreward" to "is 5".<sup>33</sup> While on the one hand, the more noteworthy aspects of his aesthetics; "that precision which creates movement" and the poet's craft as a Maker, are suggested, Cummings's off-hand comparisons of poetry with roses and locomotives or burlesque comedy

suggest that the level at which he writes and thinks has more in common with the world of play than with a disciplined literary vision.

Against the "adolescent" non-intellectual nature of Cummings's poetry, one must consider the mature, *disciplined* strength and intellectual vigor of Hopkins. Hopkins's refined critical judgement was derived from his firm grasp of all periods of English literature. Milton, Shakespeare, Spenser and Dryden served as distinctive prototypes for Hopkins as "masculine" in their skillful use of poetic language stripped bare of non-essentials.<sup>34</sup>

Hopkins consistently maintains a high level of aesthetic appeal and coherence of theme and imagery within a given poem and in the body of his poetry. Language, in its lexical, phonetic and syntactic properties, is also used in a consistent, unified and balanced manner. If new words are coined or compounded, they are designed to serve the symbolic, thematic and aesthetic functions of the whole. They are tied together alliteratively, rhythmically and syntactically with other units in the poem. Syntactic variations, though sometimes difficult, can most often be resolved. They enhance, rather than distort, the rhythm and unity of the poem. Any ambiguities, paradoxes, syntactic or symbolic puzzles usually become quite clear with the reader's increased familiarity with Hopkins's poetry.

Hopkins's vocation as a Jesuit priest expresses the orthodox, disciplined and ascetic side of his temperament.<sup>35</sup> While his asceticism in one sense posed a threat to his poetry, it was also a measure of the seriousness with which he viewed life and art alike. The refined critical judgement inherent to his personality and vocation served his poetry well. From his continual intellectual experimentation, theorizing and critical refinement of his own work, he would earn his place as a major Victorian poet, and one of the most valued and admired poets of the modern day.

Underlying the reading and critical interpretation of Cummings's poetry lies the perennial question: "To what extent can Cummings be taken seriously as a poet?" How much of his poetry is merely linguistic word play? His stylistic experimentation, while reflecting aesthetic sensitivity and ingenuity with words, seldom achieves the refinement and depth found in Hopkins's exploration of the potentialities of language.

The early criticisms by R.P. Blackmur of Cummings cannot easily be dispelled. Blackmur, while an admirer of Cummings, did not hesitate to judge the poet where criticism was due. In an early review in 1941 Blackmur writes:

My belief is that the high percentage of failures comes from his lack of a standard from which to conduct experiments, and

without which experiment in any true sense is impossible; so that in fact many of his oddities are merely the oddities of spontaneous play....<sup>36</sup>

It would be fair to say that a large proportion of Cummings's work may be categorized as "spontaneous play" more than poetry, due to the poet's lack of discipline and suitable poetic standards.

For Julia P. Stanley, the paradox of E.E. Cummings reveals a paradox of twentieth-century poetry and literature. While expanded power of communication is sometimes achieved through experimental linguistics, on the other hand, syntactical deviations and typography have produced a "poetics of fragmented perception."<sup>37</sup> The critical response of the contemporary age too often accepts and condones the extreme violations of poetic style and "the aesthetics of dissolution".<sup>38</sup> Concrete poets of the twentieth century, and Cummings, in a significant portion of his poetry, may be considered to violate the function of poetry as a communicative art:

We can no longer speak of the unity or the integrity of a work of art in an age in which we are presented with typographical experiments and asked to call them poems. When we begin to formulate the aesthetic principles of our century, when all has been said and done, we will have to make a choice between the two modern trends for no single aesthetics can encompass both the destructive and the creative. And it may be true that these two warring principles constitute a paradigm for our age.<sup>39</sup>

This is the paradigm or paradox with which one is left in considering Cummings's poetry. The two warring

principles in his art, the creative and the destructive, result in a fragmented and uncertain critical response. While at times the reader may find unprecedented heights of aesthetic awareness and communicative ability in Cummings's poetry, there is the need to draw the line between that which is poetic and that which is merely experimental in his language. Where Hopkins and Cummings often diverge represents a distinction between a poetic and a merely experimental language, the difference between coherence and dissolution in the language of poetry.

CHAPTER TWO  
HOPKINS'S AND CUMMINGS'S CORRESPONDING  
LINGUISTIC DEVIATIONS

Having established some basic similarities in their approach to the language of poetry, it remains for us to consider some specific areas in which Hopkins and Cummings employ common linguistic and stylistic deviations. These may be classified according to three broad categories in order to simplify a complex area of study. The poets' respective use of new word formations, deviation in syntax and word-order, and variations in traditional rhythm and stanzaic patterns will be considered briefly as they are handled by both poets. In subsequent chapters attention will be given to some of the more significant deviations, with emphasis on their aesthetic importance to specific poems.

Among other stylistic devices, Cummings is noted for his formation of new, non-dictionary words. This is accomplished primarily by the addition of prefixes or suffixes to words where they normally do not belong, or by compounding two words which are not compounded in Standard English usage. By adding "-est" in order to create "havingest", "livingest", "givingest" and "whirlingest", Cummings emphasizes the superlative quality of these words in the same manner a child would say "bestest" or "worstest" to give added emphasis to his point.<sup>1</sup> In this process of

affixation, the prefix "un-" is particularly important for Cummings. It is used to intensify the implications of a given concept, or to add additional aesthetic emphasis. Words created in this process include: "unbeautiful", "unexist", "unmake", "unworld", "unstrange", "undoom", "unwish", "unself", "unthing" and "unhands". Similarly, by adding the suffix "-ly", Cummings creates unusual adverbs from nouns or adjectives to derive: "songly", "moonly", "riverly", "sunly", "nothingly", "hugely", "innerly" and "outerly".<sup>2</sup>

Through compounding, Cummings combines two or more words in a non-conventional way. The reader finds himself challenged by the paradoxes and conceptual depth suggested by such words as: "fearruining", "flowerterrible" and "timeshaped" or awakened by the liveliness of "Just-spring".<sup>3</sup> One effect of Cummings's coining of compound words is the telescoping and condensation of imagistic impression,<sup>4</sup> as in "if in beginning twilight of winter will stand/(over a snowstopped silent world.)"<sup>5</sup>

A comparable stylistic device of Hopkins is his coining of compound words. In compounding words he often goes back to the Anglo-Saxon root forms. From his intense feeling for language, Hopkins creates compounds which convey a vivid aesthetic appeal, such as "fathers-forth", "sodden-with-its-sorrowing", "brown-as-dawning-skinned", "bone-house", "wanwood" and "heavengravel".<sup>6</sup> In "Pied Beauty", a sensuous

evocation of the landscape is created through such compounds as "chestnut-falls" and "fresh-firecoals".

While in their respective innovative use of compounds, Hopkins and Cummings employ similar poetic devices, it is also important to be aware of the differences in the end effect of these deviations. Hopkins, through his compounding, often creates a heightened aesthetic and ~~sensuous~~ awareness. His words correspond to vivid natural landscapes or objects, or to intense emotional and spiritual conditions. They are often formed with alliterative patterns and tone-quality in mind.

Cummings also creates aesthetic appeal in his word formations, but of a less tangible and precise nature. He employs a much simpler vocabulary base than Hopkins. His word formations at times become predictable and redundant, where the richness of Hopkins's vocabulary creates continual variety, texture and fibrous strength.

A distinctive trait of both Hopkins and Cummings is their deviation from traditional syntax. Irene Fairley notes that the shift of syntactic function is one of the natural processes of vocabulary expansion in English.<sup>7</sup> "Rain" may be used as both a noun and verb, as may "jump". Cummings and Hopkins each extend this process far beyond its normal limits. One of Cummings's characteristic linguistic devices involves converting other parts of speech into nouns. In doing so, he achieves a freshness

of style, which Mauer describes as a "linguistic shock".<sup>8</sup> The reader is forced to consider new possibilities in meaning for words he has taken for granted. Often abstract, metaphysical concepts are expressed more concisely and powerfully in the deviant use of a single word. Thus, "yes" suggests all that is powerful and admirable, and "if", all that is hesitating, uncertain and incomplete<sup>9</sup> in:

yes is a pleasant country:  
 if's wintry  
 (my lovely)  
 let's open the year.<sup>10</sup>

Hopkins, in a similar way, also occasionally forces words into a new function. Gardner cites instances of Hopkins using a bare verb as a noun, or using a ~~verb~~ with verbal force in "the achieve of, the mastery of the thing" (No. 36) and, "Let him easter in us." (No. 28).<sup>11</sup> In "To seem the stranger lies my lot", we find the use of the past ~~tense~~ ~~of the verb~~ in place of a noun in, "This to hoard unheard/  
 Heard unheeded, leaves me a lonely began."

Irene Fairley considers the manner in which Hopkins and Cummings both deviate from the conventional Subject-Verb-Object grammatical structure. The inversion of grammatical constituents may be seen in Hopkins's "Spring and Fall: To a Young Child": "Leaves, like the things of man, you/With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?" (No. 55).<sup>12</sup> This device is quite characteristic of Hopkins, and may be observed again in "Spring":

Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush  
 Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring  
 The ear, it strikes like lightning to hear him  
 sing. (No.33)

Cummings uses a similar deviation from traditional word order in the poem, "the great advantage of being alive", in the final line, "For love are in you am i are in we."<sup>13</sup> The poet might have said, "You are in love; I am in love; we are in love", but achieves in his variant patterning of words a more memorable statement, where both the separateness and unity of the lovers are emphasized.<sup>14</sup> Fairley indicates the function served by syntactic deviation in poetic language: "Considered in individual tokens ... syntactic deviance tends to reduce redundance. Since we expect a well-formed sentence the deviant provides tension, increases interest."<sup>15</sup> Hopkins and Cummings, as demonstrated in these brief examples, both use deviation from normal word order, and deletion of principle parts to create this sense of tension and increase poetic interest.

Similarities between Hopkins and Cummings may be extended to their interest in onomatopoeia, internal rhyming and elaborate word patterning. Without elaborating here on these and other possibilities of comparable stylistic devices, we may consider briefly the parallel between Hopkins's use of sprung rhythm, outrides and overreaving and Cummings's innovations in stanzaic division, line breakage

and use of parentheses.

In Hopkins's concern for making verse "stressy" and achieving a brighter and livelier tone, he initiated sprung rhythm, outrides and overreaving as alternatives to strict conventional adherence to stanzaic forms. MacKenzie, in discussing sprung rhythm, remarks: "The name suggests the natural grace of a deer springing down a mountainside, adjusting the length of each leap according to the ground it is covering."<sup>16</sup> The freedom and musical flow suggested here remind us of the rhythm of ancient Greek poetry, which served as one model for Hopkins's verse.

Hopkins himself describes another of his innovations in rhythm, overreaving, as it is employed in "The Loss of the Eurydice", as follows: "The scanning runs on without break to the end of the stanza, so that each stanza is rather one long line rhymed in passage than 4 lines with rhymes at the end."<sup>17</sup> As this quotation indicates, Hopkins was ignoring traditional stopping points and line divisions. By breaking lines where he felt would best complement the flow of words and thought patterns, Hopkins moulded his poetry into new energetic and musical rhythmical units. The effect achieved by Hopkins's variations in rhythmical pattern may be observed in the opening lines of "Hurrahing in Harvest" where sudden abrupt stops, followed by a flowing, seemingly endless phrase, achieve a sense of

immediacy, expectancy and movement:

Summer ends now; now barbarous in beauty, the  
                   stooks rise  
 Around; up above, what wind-walks! what lovely  
                   behaviour  
 Of silk-sack clouds! has wilder, wilful-waiver  
 Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies?(No.38)

S.V. Baum, in "E.E. Cummings: The Technique of Immediacy", suggests that Cummings uses parentheses as a stylistic device in order to achieve immediacy, the effect which Hopkins's use of rhythm has achieved in "Hurrahing in Harvest." According to Baum on Cummings:

One of the most important elements in Cummings' technique of immediacy is the set of parenthetical marks. Because of his extreme honesty as a poet he has been compelled to describe the complex unit of experience without the presence of falsifying temporal order .... In order to catch the effect of "all-at-oneness", Cummings inserts some part of the experience within the boundaries of parentheses and so suggests the simultaneousness of imagery.<sup>18</sup>

One may observe this sense of immediacy in the following:<sup>19</sup>

it's over a (see just  
 over this) wall  
 the apples are (yes  
 they're gravensteins) all  
 as red as to lose  
 and as round as to find.<sup>20</sup>

The combined effect of parentheses with line breakage and an innovative stanzaic form achieves a musical, quiet sense of movement and suspense.

This brief comparative overview has suggested that although their poetry is markedly different in style and language, Hopkins and Cummings employ remarkably similar

innovations in linguistic structure and language. In their respective deviations from traditional syntax, both poets developed distinctive styles, by which they made language come alive with new immediacy and vigour. While one must appreciate each poet on the basis of his individual merit, and recognize that in their respective themes and styles they retain major and significant differences in quality and appeal, it may also be maintained that in their innovative approach to the language of poetry, Hopkins and Cummings bear striking similarities.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### "EFFECTS OF BEAUTY": THE AESTHETIC EFFECTS OF HOPKINS'S USE OF SYNTAX.

In his introduction to Hopkins: A Collection of Critical Essays, Geoffrey Hartmann indicates that around 1930 criticism of Hopkins had become a 'test-case' for the critical reception of modern poetry. Literary critics such as I.A. Richards, William Empson and F.R. Leavis found confirmation that "poetry was language speaking about itself, language uttering complex words that were meaning as words."<sup>1</sup> Poetry of the early twentieth century exhibited this self-consciousness of language which the critics at the same time were discovering in Hopkins. Critics and readers of Hopkins from the 1930s to <sup>the</sup> present have been drawn to the enigmas and design of Hopkins's poetic language; a language which speaks about itself and holds its own meaning.

As seen earlier, Robert Bridges, Hopkins's friend and earliest publisher and critic, was the first to isolate and comment on many of the problems with Hopkins's language. While on the one hand Bridges criticizes Hopkins's deviant forms, he is also well aware that these indicate a skilled mastery of poetic language. Commenting on Hopkins's frequent omission of the relative pronoun, Bridges writes:

Writers who carelessly rely on their elliptical speech-forms to govern the elaborate sentence of their literary composition little know what a conscious effort of interpretations they often impose on those readers. But it was not carelessness

of Gerard Hopkins: he had full skill and practice and scholarship in conventional forms, and it is easy to see that he banished these purely constructional syllables from his verse because they took up room which he thought he could not afford them: he needed in his scheme all his space for his poetical words, and he wished those to crowd out every merely<sub>2</sub> grammatical, colourless or toneless element;....

Here, Bridges alludes to concision and forcefulness of expression as the underlying reason for one of Hopkins's characteristic syntactic deviations, the omission of the relative pronoun. Later in the same passage, he notes that other grammatical deviations were motivated by the poet's desire for "artistic effect". Their results could be measured in terms of such qualities as "Euphony" and "Emphasis".<sup>3</sup> Bridges writes apologetically it seems on behalf of his friend, but with a suggestion of his awareness of the nature of the poet's genius:

Now these are bad faults, and, as I said, a reader, if he is to get any enjoyment from the author's genius, must be somewhat tolerant of them; and they have a real relation to the means whereby the very forcible and original effects of beauty are produced.<sup>4</sup>

On the one hand, "bad faults", Hopkins's grammatical oddities are, on the other hand, the means for producing the forcible and original effects of beauty. The aesthetics of Hopkins's poetry, "the effects of beauty", are closely related to his syntactic and linguistic innovations. In a highly conscious manner, Hopkins uses language to increase perceptual, emotional and cognitive awareness through many types of deviations from the

traditional poetic norm.

In his poetic theory, one of Hopkins's primary concerns was that there be the closest possible tie between perception and its expression.<sup>5</sup> The perception of an object in nature is a function of its unique inscape, and the manner in which that is dealt out through instress. In his journals, Hopkins uses "inscape" to express such aspects as individuality, beauty, design and pattern bound together in perception and expression. He writes:

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

This interrelationship between perception and inscape corresponds with Hopkins's poetic use of language, where inscape is conveyed by stressing the perceived qualities of an object, quality or activity. Deviant syntax, for Hopkins, becomes a means of more precisely rendering the unduplicable thisness inherent in a given object or condition. Unusual syntax often provides the desired emphasis or stress on the single quality which best expresses an object's inscape. Through deviant syntax the poet creates such effects as dynamism, distinctiveness, focus and emphasis. As discussion of specific syntactic deviations will show, the relationship between these perceptual aesthetic effects and the poet's use of language is not insignificant.

Walter Peters indicates that for Hopkins, "the individually distinctive characteristic of any object is often bound up with one dominating quality."<sup>7</sup> The manner in which Hopkins alters linguistic forms may often be understood in light of the poet's desire to stress the quality which would best convey the unique nature of an object, activity or relation between objects. Thus, by taking liberties with the conventional order of adjectives in relation to the noun they modify, Hopkins uses deviant syntax to stress a particular quality or aspect of a noun. The deviant position of an adjective or adjectival group allows it to function in a restrictive way.

Restrictive adjectives may serve the functions of specification and emphasis. They may be seen in contrast to descriptive adjectives which express non-essential qualities of a noun. Descriptive adjectives (which also have their place in Hopkins's poetic language) are less intrinsic to the inscape or essence of a designated noun.<sup>8</sup> Adjectives or adjectival phrases may be given a restrictive function by means of their deviant positioning before or following the noun. With proper nouns, adjectives placed before the proper noun are more deviant, and thus more restrictive than in a post-adjectival position. Peters illustrates this principle with two examples from "The Wreck of the Deutschland", "Thou mastering me God" (st.1) and "past all grasp God". (st.32) In their initial position, the aspects

of the divinity become intrinsic and primary to the speaker's experience. The speaker's specific intuition or 'grasp' of God is essential. The forceful expression of God's nature is made more effective than were these attributes to follow the more abstract, undefined "God" in a weaker post-adjectival position.<sup>9</sup>

In the above instances, the adjectives become deviant and thus 'stronger' when placed before the noun. In other instances, the post-position of adjectives is more deviant and thus more emphatic. This occurs in such combinations as "cliffs of fall; frightful, sheer, no-man fathomed", "darkness wide", "womb-life grey" and "comfort kind".<sup>10</sup> Again, the deviant adjectival position allows the adjective to serve a more specific and emphatic function. The essential quality or qualities of a noun are given emphasis with the result that the object or condition is 'inscaped' to a greater degree.

The principle of restrictive adjectives may also be seen in Hopkins's manner of coining compound words. In a letter to Bridges Hopkins wrote, "This seems in English a point craved for and insisted on, that words shall be single and specific marks for things, whether self-significant or not..."<sup>11</sup> In many of Hopkins's compound word formations, adjective and noun become so fused that a 'specific mark' is created in the new word. The object and its qualities become inseparable, as seen in such words as "whitebeam",

"gay-gear", "gaygangs", "wanwood", "sweet-fowl", "silk-sack" and "silk-beech".<sup>12</sup> The restrictive, individualizing function of the adjectival is increased through the unconventional word formation.

Other compounds are formed through the combination of two nouns where the first noun serves an adjectival function. These formations include "heaven-handling", "hoarlight", "couple-colour" and "gold-wisp". In some of these compounds, the first noun replaces a genitive construction, as in "flockbells", "beechbole", "girlgrace", "meadow-down" and "wind-walk".<sup>13</sup> This initial genitive construction may denote the material of which the object consists, as in "foamfleece", "meal-drift", "bone-house", "fire-folk" and "hail-ropes". Through compounding, the restrictive, specifying attributes of the genitive constructions become succinct and forceful vehicles for conveying a noun's inscape.<sup>14</sup>

Another important syntactic device by which Hopkins inscapes an object or activity is the conversion of the functions of a word from one part of speech to the other. This device, like compounding, follows from Hopkins's understanding of inscape. The distinctiveness or thisness of any individual object or state of being is inconceivable apart from its inherent adjectival or adverbial qualities. By allowing one type of grammatical constituent to function

as another, Hopkins stresses the complete identification of the quality or manner of being with its noun complement. Thus, adjectives are converted into nouns to produce "the fair", "the green", "the steep" and "the deep". The adjectival quality is not only stressed, but is given substance and concreteness, in what Peters refers to as the 'substantiation' of a quality.<sup>15</sup> Thus, in "Carrion Comfort", "comfortless" and "dark" have unusual power to evoke the tangible and vivid terrors of these states of being:

I cast for comfort I can no more get  
By groping round my comfortless, than blind  
Eyes in their dark can day ....(Poems, 47)

Among the syntactical variations which Bridges most objected to in Hopkins's poetry is the omission of the relative pronoun. Through this syntactic device, an activity is bound so closely to the noun it modifies that the two become inseparable. In "Save my hero, O Hero savest" the emphasis is on the immediacy of Christ being here and now bidden and able to help. Hopkins prefers this rather awkward and obscure relative clause to the more conventional phrases possible to him, such as "men-saving hero" or "hero Saviour".<sup>16</sup> Through his omission of the relative pronoun here, Hopkins thus inscapes more completely the danger and immediacy of the shipwreck and the precise and dynamic saving quality of Christ, which is the object of this urgent prayer.

Hopkins's omission of relative pronouns and other

parts of speech is related to his inversion of normal word order and unusual groupings of words. In many of Hopkins's inversions, the verb is placed at the end of a sentence, allowing for a more emphatic juxtaposition of subject and object.<sup>17</sup> This may be observed in the following examples:

...why wouldst thou rude on me  
Thy wring-world right foot rock? (Poems, 40)

...all  
Life death does end.... (Poems, 41)

At times Hopkins uses inverted syntax to convey the dynamic interrelationships between objects. The relation of place between two objects is given life, its latent energy instressed through deviant inversion of verb, object and preposition.<sup>18</sup> Thus, in "Peace", the spatial component is stressed in the line:

When will you ever, Peace ... under be my boughs.  
(Poems, 23)

In the inverted syntax of "~~under~~ be my boughs" "under be" acts as a verbal phrase with expanded capacity to express the inscape and instress of the longed for undergirding of Peace.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, "overbend", "overvaults" and "overstood" are words formed from grammatical inversion. Through these expressive transitive verbs, the spatial and dynamic dimensions of activity are conveyed and 'inscaped'.

Hopkins's deviant use and formation of adverbs is another category of syntactic devices by which the quality of an activity is inscaped. Adverbs are either placed deviantly in the sentence or phrase, or appear in the

form of an adjective while retaining their adverbial function.

Frequently, where the syntax calls for an adverb, Hopkins uses the adjectival form to express an adverbial function. In the following examples, the omission of the -ly ending creates a jarring deviation from the expected adverbial form:

...the bright wind boisterous...beats earth bare  
(Poems, 48)

Some candle clear burns ... (Poems, 26)

...why would's't thou rude on me thy ...foot rock?  
(Poems, 40)

Christ's foot follows kind (Poems, 10)

As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend  
(Poems, 12)

In these examples, the fusion of adjectival and adverbial elements in form and function allows the poet to fuse the quality of a noun and the nature of activity in one. The wind is boisterous at the same time that it boisterously beats earth bare. The skate's heel is smooth, but also smoothly sweeps.

Peters uses the example "some candle clear burns" to illustrate the effectiveness of this type of deviation from traditional usage. If Hopkins had said "some candle burns clearly", Peters argues, "clearly" would have no direct relationship to the subject. However, the poet wishes to inscape not only the activity of the candle but the nature or essence of the candle itself. In fact,

truly inscaped, there is no separation between the candle's activity and its essence:

The predicate consequently points to both the activity and the thing: it looks both ways. Unless we take it in this twofold function -- of course the functions converge and fall together -- we cannot understand the exact expression of the inscapes of this world.<sup>20</sup>

The blurring of distinction between an object, its essence, and the nature of its activity which this deviation represents, is central to the meaning of many of Hopkins's linguistic deviations. The function of traditional language breaks down in order that it can be given new power of expression, just as the traditional distinctions between an object, its qualities, activity and manner of activity break down in order that they may be fused in an inscape which encompasses activity, quality and essence.

Hopkins's syntactical variations in the functions of words could be discussed at much greater length. His experimentations in this area are skillful and deliberate. Their primary aim is often that of more closely achieving the inscapes in nature, its objects, qualities and activities as they are perceived separately, or uniquely fused together as a distinctive and vibrant whole. Through words which "point two ways" by means of shifts in their conventional grammatical function, Hopkins creates new linguistic channels for conveying essential and distinctive

qualities of essence or activity with precision and depth. Language, newly cast in a more flexible and expressive mould, becomes a channel for knowing and communicating the inscape toward which the perception of sense-data leads.

Along with its function as a vehicle for expressing perceptions and 'inscape' in an effective and artistic manner, Hopkins's syntax is employed as a means of conveying emotional and cognitive processes. Sudden transitions in thought, psychological 'states of mind', multiple levels of meaning and ambiguity are often suggested by means of a syntax which is not confined to logical and conventional patterns of expression.

In the first chapter, the relationship between Greek and Latin rhythms and Hopkins's sprung rhythm was suggested. In his discussion of Hopkins's syntax, Gardner further indicates that the grammatical structures of Latin and Greek verse provided Hopkins with models for his 'eseplastastic' syntax.<sup>21</sup> In this new 'sprung syntax', Hopkins, like the classical Greek and Latin authors, would find freedom of expression for a complex range of dramatic and psychological processes.

Todd K. Bender, in Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Classical Background and Critical Reception of his Work(1966), describes the influence of the Latin and Greek hyperbaton on Hopkins's "non-logical syntax". In both Latin and Greek, the grammatical or logical relationship between words

is indicated by inflection, rather than position. Related to this is the tendency to place words in an unusual order within the sentence for artistic or rhetorical effect.

This device of hyperbaton, also referred to as transposition, has its correspondence in non-logical syntactical structures in English verse and prose.<sup>22</sup>

As Bender indicates, Pseudo-Longinus, in "On the Sublime", considered that the language of literature should be concerned with the "imitation of the workings of nature". By "nature" he meant primarily what he defined in "On the Sublime" as the "truest character of emotion in action."<sup>23</sup> Thus, one of the poet's primary concerns, according to Pseudo-Longinus, should be psychological verisimilitude. This he describes in a passage where he is concerned with what should be the matter and form of literature:

Just as when men are angry or frightened or displeased or are carried away by jealousy or some other passion for there are countless emotions, more than one can mention then putting forward one idea; many times they leap aside turning away from the point, inserting some illogical middle term, and then circle back to the first idea in every way driven before the anguish just as ships are driven before an uncertain wind, suddenly changing the direction of the words and ideas and changing the natural order of sequence into countless variations, thus by means of hyperbaton an imitation of the workings<sub>24</sub> of nature is made by the best prose writers.

Thus, for Pseudo-Longinus, the elevated sentence should be constructed according to the immediate, natural

flow of ideas (phusis), rather than the final, logical disposition of those thoughts (nomos). The assumption of Pseudo-Longinus is that ideas do not cross the mind in a logical order when it is excited, and that hyperbaton could be used intentionally as a literary device to imitate the non-logical sequence of ideas.<sup>25</sup> Thus, by means of hyperbaton, a Latin or Greek prose writer or poet was able to convey psychological and dramatic processes to a degree not possible through the sequential, logical ordering of words.

Without expanding extensively on the correlation between the theories and practice of classical Latin and Greek literature and subsequent developments in English literature, it may be seen that this correspondence has had many different facets. The influence of classical literature has found expression not only in the highly structured classical forms and ideals of Milton and his predecessors, but in the desire that language convey as closely as possible what Pseudo-Longinus termed the "imitation of the workings of nature", the close representation of human psychology and mental or dramatic processes. Wordsworth's definition of poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" may be closely paralleled to the theories of Pseudo-Longinus.<sup>26</sup>

The non-logical syntactical devices in Hopkins's English poetry such as inversion and interruption may

be seen in conjunction with the Greek and Latin use of hyperbaton. Hopkins's aim is often similar to that observed by Pseudo-Longinus, the imitation of mental processes in action. As well, by means of non-logical syntax, Hopkins often achieves a heightened sense of emotional intensity and a sense of the speaker's involvement in the action. Thus, the fragmentary diction in stanzas 27 and 28 of "The Wreck of the Deutschland" serves to imitate dramatically the psychological processes in the nun's experience of the shipwreck, as if they were happening in the present:<sup>28</sup>

...I gather, in measure her mind's  
 Burden, in wind's burly and beat of endragoned seas.  
 But How shall I ... make me room there:  
 Reach me a ... Fancy, come faster --  
 Strike you the sight of it? look at it loom there,  
 Thing that she ... there then! the Master,  
Iipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head. (st.28)

The syntax of "Carrion Comfort" serves a primary purpose of creating emotional and psychological effects.

Hopkins uses deviant syntax in this "terrible sonnet" to recreate the speaker's extremely agitated frame of mind.

The opening word of "Carrion Comfort", the adverb "not", is used where one would normally expect, "I'll not". This unconventional opening captures the anguished, frenzied cries of a man in despair, and is repeated for emphasis three times in the first line and six times in the first quatrain. "Despair" in the first line could be taken in this context as either a verb or a noun, meaning either, "I will not despair

or feast on thee, carrion comfort", or "I will not feast on thee, Despair, you carrion comfort." Thus, "Despair" combines both the verbal force and dynamism of the act of despairing and the concrete nominal substance of the state of despair in one syntactical unit. The capitalization of "Despair" personifies and magnifies its substantial, tangible qualities. In the first line, then, the syntactical distortions have the effect of precisely conveying the speaker's emotion with immediacy and force.

Similar distortions of syntax are found throughout the sonnet. "Can something" in the fourth line omits the main verb "do" and thus evokes the choppy desperate thoughts of a man's mental grasping. The use of parentheses in the poem provides interjections which act as ironic comments on the speaker's condition and emphasize the division within. Through parentheses the poet suggests subtle complexities in ~~meaning in the contrast between the early experience of~~ spiritual joy and the present submission to God's stern hand. "seems" in parenthesis suggests that it seems the speaker has had this "toil" and "coil" ever since he kissed the hand or rod, symbolic of his taking his vows. The parenthesis suggests the duality of the poet in writing the sonnet. He is loathe to admit that his trouble might be the direct result of his vows, that what seemed the hand was rather the rod. "(seems)" thus acts as an ironic comment, and

emphasizes the ironic, negative tone of the speaker.

Similarly, "(my God!)" is interjected to undercut the speaker's act of submission to God in the first line. It serves both as an exclamation of anguish verging on blasphemy, and ironically as an allusion to Christ's plea from the cross. In this cry of desolation, the speaker and reader thus suddenly reach an emotional climax of the experience of despair. At the same time a new spiritual perspective on the experience of mental suffering is realized.<sup>2</sup>

The compounds in this sonnet, "wring-world", "lionlimb" and "heaven-handling", are demonstrations of Hopkins's use of coined words to 'inscape' the qualities of a state of mind. "Wring-world" is particularly effective in conveying the oppressive grinding and destructive "world-wringing" power to which the speaker feels himself subjected. The poet places "I can no more" in italics, as if to indicate that it should be shouted or gasped. The immediate reality of the cry of despair thus breaks through just as the words syntactically disrupt the poem's structure.

As seen from the discussion of "Carrion Comfort", Hopkins often uses the language of poetry to communicate thought processes in a distinctively non-linear manner. Simultaneity in the communication of perception, emotion

and psychological drama is a characteristic effect of many of the poet's syntactical patterns. The imitation of emotional and perceptual processes is achieved in a manner analogous to the classical Greek and Latin hyperbaton. This dramatic precision along with an expanded capacity for 'inscaping' sensual and mental awareness are thus

major functions of Hopkins's deviations from conventional syntax.

Hopkins's syntactic deviations achieve another major aesthetic result; that of suggesting complexity and depth of meaning. Through a variety of syntactic devices, the poet is able to suggest the convergence and simultaneity of various semantic interpretations. It is often possible to read his innovative lexical and grammatical structures in more than one way. Ambiguity, convergence of meaning and hierarchical, non-linear structures of meaning are aesthetic results of carefully chosen syntactic patterns and devices. As the semantic range of interpretation is expanded, the reader's participation in the process of interpretation takes on a dimension of wonder. Aesthetic enjoyment is increased with the increased conceptual depth.

Ambiguity and multiple meaning in Hopkins's language may be considered firstly as achieved by the convergence of meaning in single words, and secondly as achieved through the hierarchical relationships of meaning which are developed by means of unusual, complex grammatical

structures.

Walter Peters demonstrates syllepsis, the convergence of various meanings in the single use of a word, to be an important syntactical device for Hopkins.<sup>29</sup> This device works in a similar manner to the pun and metaphor. In observing the poet's use of syllepsis, it is often difficult to draw the line of differentiation between the literal and the figurative. Here, the term 'convergence' is most appropriate and descriptive of the blending and correspondence of meaning which takes place. A few examples of syllepsis illustrate Hopkins's consciousness of the power of words to act simultaneously in more than one way. In "As kingfishers catch fire...", "ring" describes not only the noise made by the stones tossed in the well, but the action of their causing rings of water as they touch the water's surface.<sup>30</sup> Another example of syllepsis is found in Poem 54, where the verb "stead" has the double connotation of 'to steady' and 'to be of good stead':<sup>31</sup>

Where lies your landmark, seamarck, or soul's star?  
There's none but truth can stead you.

Christ is truth.

In "Hurrahing in Harvest", "mould" denotes both the white, mouldy colour of the clouds and their activity of forming and unforming various shapes and moulds.<sup>32</sup> In the same poem, "barbarous" suggests not only the primitive, undisciplined nature of the corn stalks, a pun on 'barbaric', but also their barbed, husky growth.<sup>33</sup> The description of

the heart "rearing" wings, Peters suggests, alludes not only to the raising of the wings, but also to their growing or sprouting.<sup>34</sup> A mystical and spiritual transformation is thereby implied, as the heart takes on the attributes of the mythical Pegasus.

As multiple levels of meaning may converge in one word, hierarchies of meaning may also be communicated by the patterning of words in unusual syntactical structures. Paul G. Arakelian, in "Charting Analysis, Ambiguity and Hopkins's 'Henry Purcell'", stresses that the manner of 'reading' poems such as Hopkins's is one in which 'continual' readings of the text are as important as literal readings.<sup>35</sup> Recognition of potential readings which may vary in terms of how much 'sense' they make, may significantly increase the range of interpretation of any given poem. The process may be likened to an orchestral performance in which the listener may be aware of one or two lines of melody on a conscious level, while the subtle harmonies and instrumentation are perceived on a ~~more~~ subconscious level.

Arakelian suggests that Hopkins's syntactical structures can often be read in hierarchical rather than linear manner. By 'charting' the complex syntax of Hopkins's "Henry Purcell", Arakelian demonstrates the manner in which multiple levels of meaning are implied through the momentary confusions or ambiguities in interpretation. At various crucial points in the overall syntactical structure of the

poem the syntax is such that it points in more than one direction sequentially or hierarchically.<sup>36</sup>

Whithout diagramming or charting "Henry Purcell" as Arakelian does in his study, it is yet possible to suggest the manner in which hierarchical syntax works in the poem. In the first line, "Have fair fallen, O fair, fair have fallen, so dear", Hopkins's use of the past form of the imperative demonstrates his keen consciousness of the logical possibilities of language and syntax. His own explanation of his use of syntax here elucidates the reading of this line:

Have is the sing. imperative (or optative if you like) of the past, a thing possible and logical both in logic and grammar, but naturally a rare one. As in the 2nd pers. we say "Have done" or in making your appointments "Have had your dinner before hand," so one can say in the 3rd pers. not only 'Fair fall' of what is present or future but also "Have fair fallen" of what is past.<sup>37</sup>

In the first quatrain of "Henry Purcell", the central ambiguity lies in the relationship between relative clauses:

Have fair fallen, O fair, fair have fallen, so dear  
 To me, so arch-especial a spirit as heaves in Henry Purcell,  
 An age is now since passed, since parted: with the reversal  
 Of the outward sentence low lays him, listed to a heresy  
 here.

Norman MacKenzie provides a paraphrase of this quatrain which may serve as a starting point for analyzing the syntax:

May so arch-especial a spirit as heaves in  
 Henry Purcell, so dear to me, have fallen fair,  
 O fair, fair have fallen, by the reversing of  
 the outward sentence which here lays him low,  
 enlisted among heretics, even though there  
 stretches a whole age since he passed away,  
 since he departed.

While this is a "proper" syntactical reading of the text, it does not provide the full range of the semantic tensions, "the tension between line and hierarchy"<sup>39</sup> which may be obtained through an understanding of the many possible syntactical relationships between clauses and constituents. Several possible readings of the ambiguous syntax may be suggested here.

A central ambiguity in this quatrain is created by the omission of the relative pronoun before "low". The most obvious reading would make "the outward sentence" the subject of "lays", with "which" understood as the connecting relative pronoun. However, the omission of this relative creates ambiguity concerning the real subject of "lays". The syntax suggests that either "age" or "reversal" may be the subject, although this may be less "logical" than the first reading.

With "age" taken as subject, we understand that Purcell is 'laid low' by the constraints of the religious beliefs and conventions of the poet's contemporary position in place and time; the perspective of 'here' from which he speaks. This reading, consistent with the past imperative

of the opening line, would include the future perspective from which the speaker looks back on his own time. The poet uses the tension created by this ambiguous syntax to suggest that, much more than the outward sentence, it is the whole age which lays low the spirit and genius of Purcell. The poet speaks from an imaginary future temporal and spiritual perspective in which Purcell's genius would not be found heretical. Thus, in the opening quatrain, the syntax creates a semantic and logical structure in which that which is fair fallen, laid low and listed to a heresy, is only temporarily bound by the age. This age, while it is 'here' and now to the poet, is itself already parted in the context of the more eternal perspective from which the poet/speaker views the accomplishment of Purcell.

By means of the syntax of the second quatrain, Hopkins forcibly defines those aspects of Henry Purcell and his music which impress and reach his own spirit. The quatrain begins with the emphatic "not", indicating the poet's desire for precision and force in recreating the distinctiveness of Purcell's mark of genius. The syntax is sparse: stripped bare of any non-essential elements. Thus, the essential contrast between "sweet notes not his" and "forged feature" is stressed, as well as the contrast between "nursling" and "finding":

Not mood in him nor meaning, proud fire or sacred fear,  
 Or love or pity or all that sweet notes not his might nurse:  
 It is the forged feature finds me; it is the rehearsal  
 Of own, of abrupt self there so thrusts on, so throngs the ear.

The omission of a personal pronoun before "own" leaves open the possibility of substituting not only the obvious 'his' but 'my' as modifier. The correspondence Hopkins feels with the spirit and genius of Purcell would allow for this potential reading. The syntax suggests the paradox that a distinctive and rare 'own' self may yet allow room for the admission and rehearsal of another own self of similar genius and sensitivity.

In the sestet there are several hierarchical levels of meaning. The "Air" of angels in line nine is a pun referring not only to Purcell's musical airs, but to the air of a sea breeze which carries the stormfowl aloft. The poet himself participates in the motion of the stormfowl. The lifting and laying are reminiscent of the laying low in the first quatrain. Hopkins, thus, uses the various meanings of 'lay' musically as a recurring fugal motif. It first signifies the symbolic defeat of Purcell and secondly denotes a submissive obedience, a passionate response and correspondence of the poet to the power and meaning of Purcell's forged feature. One type of laying is seen to have more power than the other in its eternal, enduring qualities.

The syntax of the final lines is characterized by the omission of relative pronouns. "Plumed purple-of-thunder" may thus modify either "stormfowl" or "seabeach", suggesting correspondence between the variegations of the bird's plumage and the wind-swept swirls and sweeps of a sandy beach as it reflects and holds the colour and motion of the stormy day. Similarly, as Arakelian suggests, "fans" may have either 'wuthering' or 'stormfowl' or 'motion' as its subject.<sup>40</sup> Even "colossal smile" would serve as a fitting subject for "fans". Aesthetically, these ambiguities serve to describe the complexity of meaning and manner of Purcell's distinctive self. The syntax is used to evoke the central metaphors of the poem; the stormfowl, the seabeach and the colossal smile, and their manner of motion and correspondence to one another. The process of the "forged feature" finding the poet, of the poet being lifted and laid in correspondence with the flight of the stormfowl, Purcell, and the spiritual implications of Purcell's music eternally soaring beyond the limits of time, heresy and convention are developed simultaneously as the poem unfolds. Thus, as Arakelian suggests:

The final complex clause of "Henry Purcell" cannot be reduced to one phrase marker or to one correct reading. To "hear" that clause, to appreciate its fugal qualities, we must suspend our instincts to choose and instead accept all the possibilities as part of the poem's structure.<sup>41</sup>

For Arakelian, most critical response to Hopkins's poetry has failed to appreciate the ambiguous simultaneity which characterizes his style.<sup>42</sup> A mark of Hopkins's use of syntax is "the concurrent apprehension of all the possibilities".<sup>43</sup> Through deviant syntax, a complexity of logical patterns becomes possible in simultaneous arrangements which would be impossible through conventional prose or poetry.

The potential ambiguities, puns and contradictions suggested by the syntax of Hopkins's poetry thus create a fuller orchestration of meaning. While some meanings may be rejected as non-sensical, and others held as simultaneous, sensible readings, the convergence of many layers of meaning creates a colour, texture and harmony of a linguistic and literary nature. The analogy of Hopkins's syntax to the music of Henry Purcell is appropriate, where hierarchies of sound in Purcell's music find parallels to hierarchies of sense in Hopkins's poetry.

Hopkins's use of deviant syntax has been seen to be multi-faceted, encompassing a wide range of forms and serving various poetic functions. In its many perceptual, emotional and semantic effects, his deviant syntax achieves "effects of beauty" which become the expression of the poet's own acute spiritual and aesthetic sensitivity. Syntactic deviations have been seen as a means of 'inscaping' physical or psychological perception. Objects and activities

'selve' themselves through language, taking on their own nature and relating in a dynamic way to their physical and spiritual environment. Along with these perceptual effects, Hopkins uses syntactic deviations to suggest dramatic effects. From literary prototypes extending back to the classical use of hyperbaton, Hopkins uses devices such as inversion and fragmentation to create immediacy and simultaneity of mental activity. Psychological depth and precision is recreated through the imitative capacity of language to convey non-linear sequences of thought.

Finally, deviations in syntax are a means by which the poet suggests complex levels of meaning. Hierarchical rather than linear semantic structures are developed, by means of which poet and reader reach beyond the conceptual limits of conventional language. The reader finds correspondence between the motion of the stormfowl and Hopkins, who through his poetry, soars in freedom, scattering the colossal smile of his artistic and spiritual achievement. The sensitivity of Hopkins's poetic language, his ability to convey the complexities of human emotion and perception by means of his unique syntactical "laws", invokes the reader to find the rehearsal of his own abrupt self echoed in poetry of lasting depth and beauty.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SYNTAX AS METAPHOR IN THE POETRY OF E.E. CUMMINGS

In the poetry of E.E. Cummings, syntactic deviations which are parallel to those of Hopkins may be seen to produce aesthetic effects which correspond to the perceptual, emotive and conceptual effects of Hopkins's deviations in syntax. In developing an argument for the correlation between Cummings's syntactic deviations and his aesthetics, the recent work of Richard Cureton will be of central importance. Cureton's doctoral dissertation, "The Aesthetic Use of Syntax: Studies in the Syntax of E.E. Cummings",<sup>1</sup> breaks significant ground, not only in the literary criticism of Cummings, but in developing an understanding of the interrelationship between syntax and aesthetics in poetry. This approach may also be seen to have considerable significance in understanding the deviant syntax of Hopkins's poetry.

Given the relative lack of consistency in the quality of Cummings's poetry as compared to Hopkins's, and the great thematic and stylistic differences between the two poets, it is yet possible to discern aesthetic results of increased perceptual, emotive and semantic

awareness emerging repeatedly as a result of Cummings's syntactic deviations. The linguistic deviations become effective channels of the poet's aesthetics to such an extent that it is possible to develop a strong correlation between Cummings's syntactic deviations and the aesthetic achievement of his poetry.

Richard Cureton has provided a useful approach to the syntax of poetry in demonstrating the variety of aesthetic effects which may be achieved through the poetic use of various syntactic structures. He uses the poetry of E.E. Cummings to develop his premise of the close inter-relationship between syntax and the aesthetics of poetry. The argument that poetic syntax is fundamental to the poet's art, Cureton develops from the seminal statement of Winifred Nowottny's:

Of all the elements necessary to make an utterance meaningful, the most powerful is syntax, controlling as it does the order in which impressions are received and conveying the mental relations 'behind' sequences of words....Consequently, syntax, however little it is noted<sup>2</sup> by the reader, is the groundwork of the poet's art.

Nowottny's statement implies the considerable influence of syntax over the cognitive processes involved in reading and responding to the text. Cureton uses the hypothesis of this close interrelationship between syntax and cognition to develop a detailed system of categorizing and analyzing the various aesthetic responses which may be

realized through poetic syntax.

Cureton's approach is a significant contribution to the literary study of syntactic deviance. Few previous critics had approached the complex aesthetic diversity resulting from a poet's use of syntactic structures. Cureton considers the negative outcome of this oversight where:

... this reductive tendency has directly contributed to overly simplistic treatments of the syntax of particular texts and, worse yet, has actively impeded any attempt to gain a full picture of the contribution of syntax (and other aspects of linguistic forms)<sup>3</sup> to the aesthetics of poetic texts in general.

Related to this failure of critics to perceive the interrelationship between the aesthetics and syntax of poetry, is the problem that poetic syntax has most often been approached in structural rather than aesthetic terms. This is particularly true of the criticism of Cummings's syntactical deviations, where linguists and critics have noted the various types of deviation without developing an adequate unified aesthetic approach to account for the use of these deviations.<sup>4</sup> Cureton's interest in Cummings corresponds well with his attempt to develop "a typology of syntactic aesthetic effects" which can be used as a practical critical tool for the study of the aesthetic use of syntax in literature."<sup>5</sup>

The various types of syntactic aesthetic effects discerned by Cureton may be described in conjunction with

the extent to which they are realized through Cummings's deviations. These fall into three general areas, corresponding to the above discussion of the aesthetic results of Hopkins's deviations: perceptual effects, emotive effects and cognitive effects. The various types of syntactic "channels" through which these effects may be produced determine more specifically the nature of perceptual, emotive or cognitive information which is to be conveyed.<sup>6</sup> As Cureton emphasizes, it is important not to attempt to link the aesthetic effects too closely with specific syntactic structures. While a variety of aesthetic effects may be produced through one syntactic channel, it is also possible that a given aesthetic effect be produced by any of several syntactic structures.<sup>7</sup> The syntactic channels are thus described aesthetically rather than linguistically, with reference to the nature of the perceptual, emotive or cognitive effects produced.

Three syntactic channels may be isolated which produce perceptual aesthetic effects: iconic syntax, rhetorical emphasis and nominal syntax. By means of these classifications, Cureton designates more specifically the nature of a sensation or perception and the syntactic means by which this information is conveyed.<sup>8</sup>

E.E. Cummings uses iconic syntax as a major channel for conveying perception and sensation. This channel is a representational channel, by which syntax is used in

a manner which "resembles" the meaning spatially or temporally.<sup>9</sup> A "picture" is presented of the sense of the word by syntactic means, and a palpable, tangible quality leant to the image. Words may be juxtaposed to suggest spatial and temporal juxtaposition. A representation or picture of the subject's form, image and movement are transmuted through the highly representational channel of iconic syntax.

The poem "what a proud dreamhorse pulling (smoothloomingly) through"(437) provides an excellent example of Cummings's use of iconic syntax.<sup>10</sup> The movement of the dreamhorse is 'pictured' effectively in the arrangement of words:

what a proud dreamhorse pulling (smoothloomingly) through  
 (stepp)this(ing) crazily seething of .this  
 raving city screamingly street wonderful

flowers

~~Here, the smooth, continuous dreamlike pulling of the horse~~  
 is extended by means of the lengthy cumulation of adjectives and adverbials postponing the object "flowers". In "(stepp)this(ing)" Cummings provides a syntactic picture or iconic rendering of the fragmented lifting and stepping motion of the horse, which paradoxically is simultaneous with his dreamlike forward motion. Through the unusual syntax Cummings is able to recreate both types of motion at once. While the parenthesis creates fragmentation, the

interpolation of 'this' in the word 'stepping' creates a new and longer word which corresponds to the horse's extended, flowing motion and parallels "smoothloomingly" in sound and structure. A grammatical rendering of this construction would have less effectiveness in conveying the immediate perception of the horse's motion.

The poem ends with an effective sensory and pictorial rendering of the interrupted, exultant stamping of the proud dreamhorse. This is achieved by means of the definitive placement of periods and the vertical typographical placement of the final word?

o what a proud dreamhorse moving (whose feet  
almost walk air). Now who stops. Smiles.~~he~~ stamps

The two parallel constructions, "now who stops" and "Smiles.he/ stamps" in juxtaposition syntactically reinforce the horse's quick movements.

Another channel for creating perceptual effects is rhetorical emphasis, by means of which a poet increases the 'perceptual salience' of words by manipulating the syntax. Thus, a normally unstressed word or constituent may receive unusually strong stress.<sup>11</sup> Rhetorical emphasis may be considered a major channel for Cummings's perceptual effects. By means of deviant morphology, parentheses and syntactical inversions and dislocations, the perceptual capacity of a word or words is significantly increased.

Some of these syntactic devices may be discussed in detail before considering other channels of aesthetic effects.

Deviant morphology is the syntactic device by which words are altered in form or function. Cummings often uses this device in a rhetorical manner to increase the perceptual capacity of words or images. A major characteristic of Cummings's deviant morphology is his formation of new words by affixation in a non-grammatical way. Standard English usage maintains fairly strict semantic and grammatical restrictions on the relation between a base word and its affix.<sup>12</sup> When the relationship is altered, the result is not only a linguistic shock, but an alteration in the semantic reading of a word. The base word receives new meanings derived from the subtle variations implied by the new affixation. Along with the new variations in meaning, the base word is given new aesthetic, emotive and perceptual qualities. Through the deviant combination of affix and base, the linguistic and rhetorical capabilities of the newly coined word become far greater.

Cummings's affixation of the suffix -ingly in a deviant manner indicates his ability to generate metaphor and produce subtle but powerful aesthetic effects simply by altering the principles of word formation. Words such as "weavingly", "crylaughingly", "hushingly", "perhapsingly" and "seekingly" have their own delicate and lyrical beauty.

Some of the most effective examples of the deviant use of -ingly may be seen in the poetic effects produced through "kneelingly", "kissingly", "knowingly" and "gatheringly".<sup>13</sup>

To observe these words in their poetic contexts suggests the aesthetic achievement of this deviation. Thus:

kneelingly

Nor any dusk but kneelingly believes  
thy secret and each morning stoops to bend  
her star with what huge merciful forms presume

kissingly(161)

Seeing how the limp huddling string  
of your smile over his body squirms  
kissingly, i will bring you every spring  
handfuls of little normal worms.

snowingly(559)

when you are silent, shining hose by guest  
a snowingly enfolding glory is  
all angry common things to disappear  
causing through mystery miracle peace:.

Along with his deviant formation of words, Cummings's shifts in word order are another means of lending perceptual and emotional emphasis to particular words and the qualities they represent. Irene Fairley has provided clarification of the manner in which Cummings alters traditional order of adjectives and adverbials in order to produce greater perceptual and emotional effects.<sup>14</sup> Cummings disregards the restrictions which conventional usage has placed on adjectival order. Whereas, 'a clear blue day' is grammatically acceptable, 'a blue clear day' would be some-

what deviant. Cummings often violates class order restrictions on the sequential ordering of adjectives, as in: "a blue true dream of sky" or "...like these/first deepest rare/ quite who are your eyes"(367).<sup>15</sup> In the latter instance, Cummings has displaced the modifier "quite" to follow "rare", achieving a high degree of deviation. The effect is to heighten the deep and rare quality of the eyes in a moment of perceptual and emotional intensity.

In a similar way, Cummings places adjectives in a deviant manner with respect to the noun they modify. In the following excerpt, the adjectives modifying "trees" should precede the noun:<sup>16</sup>

and these (i notice) trees winterbrief surly old  
gurgle a nonsense of sparrows, the cathedral  
shudders blackening. (282)

Gerundive adjectivals which should follow or directly precede the noun they modify are frequently separated from the noun in a deviant manner, as in "with writhing alive skies"; "the sprouting largest air"; "for the leaping greenly spirity of trees" and "the emerging now hills invent the air."<sup>17</sup>

Cummings's adverbial shifts correspond to his adjectival shifts in manner and aesthetic effect. Deviance is achieved through shifts in adverbial order relative to other adverbials, to the verbs, or to the entire sentence.<sup>18</sup> As with the adjectival shifts, Cummings uses adverbial dislocations both in more traditional ways and in ways which

are more deviant and unfamiliar.<sup>19</sup>

As Fairley indicates, adverbials usually follow the verbal in a relatively fixed order of place - manner - frequency - time.<sup>20</sup> They must also follow any substantive constructions.<sup>21</sup> Cummings's violation of these restrictions may be observed in the following:<sup>22</sup>

the little hands withdrew, jerkily, themselves (284)

do suddenly that (302)

placing  
carefully there a strange  
thing and a known thing here) (124)

A grammatical rendering of these examples would readjust the above adverbs and adverbial phrases to a final position. Through the violation of word order, however, Cummings lends subtle and effective emphasis to the adverbial qualities.

Cummings shifts adverbial position in other ways. ~~Adverbs are shifted to a pre-verbal position in instances~~ where this would normally be grammatically unacceptable:<sup>23</sup>

gaily go clean through me tickling aches (147)

will suddenly trees leap from winter and will (218)

The effect of the deviation in these instances is to lend emphasis to the qualities of gaiety or suddenness.

The poem "after all white horses are in bed" (302) illustrates the manner in which Cummings's dislocations of adverbial elements function in a cohesive and artistic manner

to produce aesthetic effects which enhance and develop the meaning of the poem.

after all white horses are in bed

will you walking beside me, my very lady,  
if scarcely the somewhat city  
wiggles in considerable twilight

touch (now) with a suddenly unsaid

gesture lightly my eyes?  
and send life out of me and the night  
absolutely into me .... a wise  
and puerile moving of your arm will  
do suddenly that

will do  
more than heroes beautifully in shrill  
armour colliding on huge blue horses,  
and the poets looked at them, and made verses,  
through the sharp light cryingly as the knights flew.(302)

Through dislocation of adverbs and adverbial phrases in this poem, Cummings is able to lend unusual emphasis to the nature and quality of an elusive moment in time. The movement of the lady's eyes and gesture of her arm are described with rare emotional precision by means of the careful syntactical distortions. The precision here is emotional rather than physical and concrete. Through the displacement of adverbs, Cummings is able to suggest the tentative gestures and feelings of love, and the dreamlike, mythic quality of the twilight setting.

Another channel for perceptual effects is nominal syntax. By means of nominal syntax a poet achieves imagistic

effects. An emphasis on the noun phrases results, where these are given greater emphasis than the narrative or sentential aspects of the poem. As Cureton indicates:

In this nominal form, the poem asserts nothing, equates nothing, but merely presents two contexts and leaves it to the reader to fuse these disparate experiences at some higher emotional or conceptual level. Given this nominal form, the narrative persona in the poem is totally effaced -- leaving the reader in a direct confrontation with the bare referents of the noun phrases.<sup>24</sup>

Nominal syntax is central to modern poetry, particularly Imagistic poetry, but would seem to be a less prominent feature of Cummings. However, in the poem "wherelings, whenlings" (512) Cummings creates an impressionistic setting of a farm at dusk, by juxtaposing images representative of the setting and mood. The use of other syntactic and lexical deviations contributes to the soft, reflective atmosphere inherent to the setting. Thus:

imagine how(only are shall be were  
dawn dark rain snow rain  
-bow &  
a

moon  
's whis  
per  
in sunset

or thrushes toward dusk among whippoorwills or  
tree field rock hollyhock forest brook chickadee  
mountain.Mountain

The emotive aesthetic effects of poetry may be achieved syntactically by means of three "channels"



Another channel for emotive effects, semantic tension, works in an obverse manner to syntactic tension. The poet uses the close interconnection between syntax and semantics to set up semantic expectations, only to frustrate or surprise these expectations. Cummings uses this channel to create anti-climactic, ironic effects.<sup>28</sup> Two poems illustrating Cummings's use of semantic tension are, "i've come to ask you if there isn't a"(572) and "open green those"(573). In both poems, syntactic and semantic expectations are continually frustrated right up to the unresolved ending. The sense of defeat which is left with the reader serves as a channel for reflection upon the sense and meaning of the poem. Where both poems are concerned with the undefined, dreamlike, timeless and impenetrable qualities of a love relationship, these qualities are reflected in the unresolved, open-ended nature of the syntactic structures.

A third channel for emotive effects is rhythm. As it serves to reflect movement, rhythm is closely related to iconic syntax. Syntactic inversions can slow down the movement of verse by cutting up intonational units. The changes in tempo and emphasis conveyed by means of rhythmic changes can affect the emotional quality and intensity of words or phrases.<sup>29</sup> Rhythm seems to work in close

correspondence with syntactic and semantic tension to create climactic or anticlimactic effects. As well, the rhythmic variety achieved by Cummings's syntactic deviations lends colour and variation to otherwise regular, less interesting lyrical structures.

Conceptual effects are those aesthetic effects by which the meaning is represented through the syntax. Meaning may be conveyed as a temporal and semantic process, occurring over a space in time or through various ranges and dimensions of mental activity. Cureton isolates the various channels of conceptual effects as semantic process, syntactic ambiguity, syntactic parallelism, metaphor and semantic interpretation. Each of these channels describes a particular way in which syntax may be used to evoke meaning in a dynamic, representational manner.

Cureton defines semantic process as the process by which

...poets exploit the slowly unfolding temporal dimension of syntax by arraying lexical meanings in dynamic patterns above and beyond the conventional static propositional content of a sentence.<sup>30</sup>

Non-conventional syntactic patterns may thus be used to suggest a dramatic, progressive unfolding of thought, emotions, events or dynamic motion. In the poem "so standing, our eyes filled with wind, and the" (378), Cummings achieves these aspects of semantic process. The movement

of the ship and the impressions and thoughts of the poet are given immediacy and dramatic progression by means of deviant syntactic structures. The visual and mental gaze of the speaker and reader are directed with the upward lifting of the ship's riggings toward the skies and toward contemplation of the identity of the ship's workmen. In the semantic process of the poem's linguistic, physical and metaphorical movement, the contemplation of the identity of the metaphysical creator of the universe is implied:

so standing,our eyes filled with wind,and the  
whining rigging over us,i implore you to  
notice how the keen ship lifts(skilfully  
like some bird which is all birds but more fleet)  
herself against the air--and whose do you  
suppose possibly are certain hands,terse  
and invisible,with large first new stars  
knitting the structure of distinct sunset

driving white spikes of silence into joists  
hewn from hugest colour

(and which night hoists  
miraculously above the always  
beyond such wheres and fears or any when  
unwondering immense directionless  
horizon)

--do you perhaps know these workmen?

Semantic interpretation, by Cureton's definition, seems to overlap semantic process in nature and function. Loosely defined, it may be considered as the process by which syntactic structures reinforce conceptual or thematic patterns in the text. This effect is parallel to what modern criticism has referred to as "style as meaning"

or "style as cognitive choice".<sup>31</sup> Semantic interpretation, like iconic syntax, implies a close representation of thought through style. Through appropriate use of syntactic structures the reader is brought closer to the meaning of the text. This may be observed in the above poem, where parentheses and interrupted syntax allow for the simultaneous merging of contemplation with the rising motion of the ship and the visual and spatial upward expansion of the spheres. Syntax becomes a subtle vehicle for establishing a metaphorical connection between the physical dynamics of a ship at sea and the metaphysical contemplation of the structure of the universe.

The contribution of syntactic form to metaphor, as Cureton illustrates, has been underestimated in most critical literature.<sup>32</sup> Metaphor may be achieved through deviant syntax when lexical and grammatical meaning is rearranged and associated in new ways which would be meaningless if taken literally. Syntax may be used to create associations between concepts, objects or activities. Cummings frequently uses deviant syntax for its metaphorical capabilities. Just as Hopkins, in "Hurrahing in Harvest" and "Henry Purcell", uses syntax to develop the analogy between the human spirit and the mythic Pegasus, between the stormfowl and Henry Purcell, Cummings creates metaphorical associations between childhood building blocks and the

blocks of memory which interlock two lives in "item:is"(371):

item:is

Clumsily with of  
 what manshaped whimpered how  
 laughing blocks when girllike

builds  
 its invisibly skil  
 ful toy Town  
 which upups in downdown  
 (and only where remembers

look,  
 this was of a child  
 's shy foot among cool ferns

)  
 therefore togethering ouw

wholly lives Givehurling  
 with your my most  
 :locking

foreverfully

blend  
 we a universe of gulls'  
 drift Of thickly  
 starhums wherefore

& wormSmile eternal;quite  
 perhaps as sternly  
 much not life nor stop as  
 a tear is darker than a mile

One of Cummings's most important syntactic devices is the functional shift. This is often used in a metaphorical capacity to describe one thing in terms of another. By this device, a given word undergoes a shift or transformation in syntactic function. Cummings's functional shifts are characterized primarily by the conversion to nouns of

other parts of speech --verbs, adverbs, adjectives, pronouns and conjunctions.<sup>33</sup> As with other lexical and syntactic devices, the functional shift works by the principle of analogy, where what the reader knows about conventional semantic processes and lexical attributes must be applied in an innovative way to interpret the shifts in these functions.<sup>34</sup> By analogy, words are given new meanings and new functions. The result is an extension of their descriptive capabilities.

In the poem "darling!because my blood can sing"(580), Cummings uses the functional shift to *depict metaphorically* the way of affirmation in love:

darling!because my blood can sing  
and dance(and does with each your least  
your any most very amazing now  
or here)let pitiless fear play host  
to every isn't that's under the spring  
--but if a look should april me,  
down isn't's own isn't go ghostly they

doubting can turn men's see to stare  
their faith to how their joy to why  
their stride and breathing to limp and prove  
--but if a look should april me,  
some thousand million hundred more  
bright worlds than merely by doubting have  
darkly themselves unmade makes love

armies(than hate itself and no  
meanness unsmaller)armies can  
immensely meet for centuries  
and(except nothing)nothing's won  
--but if a look should april me  
for half a when,whatever is less  
alive than never begins to yes

but if a look should april me  
 (though such as perfect hope can feel  
 only despair completely strikes  
 forests of mind, mountains of soul)  
 quite at the hugest which of his who  
 death is killed dead. Hills jump with brooks:  
 trees tumble out of twigs and sticks;.

The most obvious functional shift in this poem is conversion of the proper noun "April" to a transitive verb. In this manner Cummings depicts a concept for which there is no lexical equivalent. The look of the beloved creates a process in the poet, analogous to the blossoming, thawing, "unclosing" process of spring. In stanza one, the adverbs "now" and "here" function as nouns to describe a whole manner of being. The immediacy of the least or greatest action of the beloved is what stirs the poet's blood to sing and dance. The ver "isn't" converted to a noun serves as a metaphor of the way of negation. "They" is a pronoun which functions here as a noun to denote the anonymous masses of people who do not know the way of love. The suggestion here is that the "aprilling" look is enough to send those "ghostly they" down their own way of life-denying activity. Life and love metaphorically triumph in Cummings's compressed and suggestive poetics.

Cummings's conceptual vocabulary and functional shifts have been shown to be major syntactic vehicles for metaphor. Metaphor, syntactic interpretation and semantic process, as shown above, are all channels for conceptual aesthetic effects, when following Cureton's typology for

describing the relationship between syntax and aesthetics. Continuing with Cureton's paradigm for describing Cummings's syntactic deviations, syntactic ambiguity and parallelism may be seen to be further channels for conceptual aesthetic effects in Cummings's poetry.

Syntactic ambiguity results when a poet uses syntax to present two or more different semantic readings.<sup>35</sup> Ambiguity may be achieved by means of a wide variety of syntactic deviations.

Cummings's shifts in order of the major grammatical constituents of a sentence is one of his primary syntactic and aesthetic devices. Dislocation of subject, verb and object occurs to varying degrees throughout his poetry. The immediately desired effect of these dislocations seems to be a momentary suspension of comprehension. Irene Fairley describes the manner in which this is achieved:

~~In initial position the subject suggests to us~~ the manner of the predication, an expectation regarding the verbal, for example, so the S-V sequence is likely to predict what may follow. By shifting the verbal, and frequently also the object construction, and perhaps also modifier, in a manner we would not anticipate, Cummings lessens the predictability of items to the extent that it is dependent upon left to right ordering. Those crutches removed, as readers we come upon the poetic string with fewer of our preconceived notions.<sup>36</sup>

With the predictability of the order of grammatical constituents lessened, there is greater possibility for

ambiguity and multiple levels of meaning in the interpretation. Thus, ambiguity is the result of the confusion of the relationships between constituents in the following:

or (if begin the colours of your voice)  
 from some complete existence of to dream  
 into complete some dream of to exist  
 a stranger who is i awakening am. (559)

The confusion between the reality of existence and the reality of the dream is depicted by means of a syntax where subjects become indistinguishable from objects in their deviant and obscure positioning.

In the following instances, ambiguity is achieved as a result of the shifting of the object to a position before the verb, where in regular grammatical usage the object follows the verb:

a rose shall beget the spring (O-V-S)

quick i the death of thing glimpsed (S-O-V)

my love walking in the grass

their wings will touch with her face (S-O-V)

The momentary ambiguity in the above structures serves to lend emphasis to the paradox or mystery which is central to each statement. Syntactic ambiguity becomes a channel for mirroring a reality which in human experience is obscure and ambiguous, insofar as man is limited in conceiving the realities which transcend or inform external appearance.

A further channel of conceptual aesthetic effects,

Cureton has described as parallelism. By means of parallelism a poet may use syntactic structures in a poem to complement and contrast with each other. Lexical and semantic meaning may thus be "coupled" across sentences, when syntax and meaning extend beyond the traditional sentential boundaries.<sup>37</sup> Cureton indicates the complexity of parallelism when applied to syntax. Syntactic parallels may be constructed on different levels of the poem's structural and semantic readings.<sup>38</sup> Parallels which occur on a deeper level of meaning become less easy to discern and describe. Linguistic skill is needed in detecting and interpreting parallelism where it occurs at a "deeper" syntactic level.

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Irene Fairley uses Cummings's "All in green went my love riding" (14) as a demonstration of a poem in which deviant parallel structures contribute to the poem's cohesiveness, interpretation and aesthetic value. Several parallel deviant patterns work together in this poem. The first stanza introduces a syntactic and stanzaic pattern which in variant forms occurs four times in the poem. "All

in green", an adverbial phrase representing "she was dressed all in green", is varied by the parallel phrases "horn at hip" and "bow at belt". Following each of these parallel phrases is a verb/subject inversion corresponding to "went my love".<sup>39</sup> The inverted grammar of these parallel stanzas is mirrored in a fugal manner in the inversions of a slightly different nature found in those stanzas parallel to: "four lean hounds crouched low and smiling/ the merry deer ran before". Here the object is made to precede the subject and verb. This displacement serves to increase the sense of action at the same time it represents the spatial relationships which are part of the action. Fairley holds that in conventional terms a hunt is visualized as a left to right sequence, with the deer to the right, running before the hounds.<sup>40</sup> The close juxtaposition of subject and object in these constructions also represents the close proximity of pursued and pursuer.

The inverted syntax employed by Cummings in this poem not only creates a spatial and dynamic representation of the action, but also creates semantic ambiguities and 'confusion' between the nominal and predicate components of the syntax. This ambiguity is central to the meaning and structure of the poem. The identities of pursued and pursuer, stags and hounds, hunter and hunted overlap to

suggest the mutually destructive aspects of the love relationship. Parallelism enforces the complex correspondences and interrelationships between victim and pursuer.

By a system of parallel syntactic structures, the heart of the lover comes to be equated with the deer. The beloved, who is first seen moving away from the narrator ("All in green went my love riding") becomes the cruel hunter who is parallel to the four lean hounds pursuing and ultimately overtaking the deer. These in turn are parallel to the bugle, arrow and lucky hunter, who 'sing before' their victims. Ultimately the deer is overtaken. The parallel constructions 'run before' and 'sing before' iconically suggest the several types of spatial relationship and motion occurring in the chase. The poem's resolution "my heart fell dead before" employs the previous parallel constructions for its dramatic and climactic effect.

The manner in which Cummings's deviant syntax affects the semantic interpretations of his poetry may be observed by looking at two representative poems, "quick i the death of thing"(634) and "does yesterday's perfection seem not quite".(414) In these poems Cummings's syntactic dislocations, interpolations, inversions, interruptions and deletions are used to achieve complex conceptual effects. These devices work through channels such as ambiguity, metaphor and semantic interpretation so that syntax and meaning converge.

In "quick i the death of thing", Cummings makes use of syntactic dislocations to a greater extent than in most of his poems. The dislocations force the reader to disentangle the syntax in order to arrive at a meaningful interpretation. The concepts are not conveyed in a linear and logical manner. Rather, they are in a sense "locked into" the poem's structure and operate structurally to generate cognitive processes in the reader at both a conscious and an unconscious level:

quick i the death of thing  
 glimpsed (and on every side  
 swoop mountains flimsying  
 become if who'd

me under a opens  
 (of petals of silence)  
 hole bigger than  
 never to have been

what above did was  
 always fall  
 (yes but behind yes)  
 without or until

no atom couldn't die  
 (how and am quick i  
 they'll all not conceive  
 less who than love)

In this poem Cummings constructs a complex inter-relationship of paradoxes by means of the syntactical deviations. The syntax conveys the certain but unperceived manner in which the spiritual realities of affirmation, life and love triumph over death, chaos, destruction and void. Cummings uses deviant syntax to create the semantic

process by which this dialectic is enacted and synthesized.

Stanza one involves a fairly straightforward inversion, where the object complement, "the death of thing", is placed before the verb. In her analysis of this poem, Irene Fairley suggests that "death of thing" may be understood as the death of worldly phenomena. An internal inversion may be implied to produce "thing of death"; thus evoking the horror and immensity of a Judgement Day phenomenon. "Quick" functions simultaneously as adjective and adverb, meaning both "quickly" and "alive".<sup>41</sup>

In the second stanza, "me under a opens" involves two reversals of word order in the grammatical "under me opens a". The syntax creates the inverted, downward movement of the opening hole as the constituents "me" and "opens" are forced apart.<sup>42</sup> In the adjectival phrase, "bigger than/ never to have been", which modifies "hole", Cummings uses a verbal group "never to have been" where a noun or adjective would normally be expected. This verbal group is an effective periphrasis for ultimate void and chaos.<sup>43</sup>

This poem is one for which it is difficult, if not impossible, to describe the nature of all the deviant structures. To a great extent, the reader is forced to structure the relationship between words himself, supplying extra information where needed, and relying on a system of grammatical and conceptual referents which are derived

from outside the poem. The result is a structural and metaphorical construct; an architectural ordering and representation of the processes of dissolution and death, set against the paradoxical emergence of life and love from out of nothing.

Irene Fairley's summary of the manner in which Cummings uses language in this poem capsulizes the principles behind Cummings's use of syntactic deviations:

Cummings's use of discontinuous verbal structure can be regarded as a protest against linear, easy statement, and as such, an extension of his theme. His novel syntax is not irrelevant; it is language simulating action. Although the reconstructed strings form assertions, Cummings' intent is not to focus on the statement as such, but to engage us in the effort toward understanding. By disrupting the syntax, he encourages us to have ideas about the possible relations between words that we would have been denied by their normal left to right ordering.<sup>44</sup>

Fairley's understanding of Cummings's deviant syntax as "language simulating action" as a means of engaging us in the effort toward understanding the poem may be demonstrated in the interpretation of "does yesterday's perfection seem not quite". While many readings of this poem may fail to yield a logical semantic interpretation, the poet constructs a system of parallel mental images through which a meaning may be obtained. Though the cognitive processes are non-linear, the deviant syntax, as Fairley suggests, engages the reader in the effort of understanding.

In "does yesterday's perfection seem not quite", a syntax which on the surface does not make sense is artistically necessary for a poem whose meaning is so complex that linear channels of communication would be insufficient for communicating the total range of the imaginative experience of which it speaks. The poem's meaning may be unlocked by setting up parallel correspondences between linked or opposing concepts. Thus the vision and viewpoint of "this eternal mere one bursting soul" is set in opposition to the limited viewpoint of "men always men". In touch with dreams, with his godlike self, and the profound emotional and transcendent perceptions and longings of 'a ghost so deep', this eternal self tragically <sup>can</sup> never know the 'peace' of those who are merely men; who live in an 'unworld' which lends to such transcendent visions the 'stink of failure' and allows yesterday's perfection to seem but "the pratfall of a clown". The "lost shoulders" and "empty spine" in their obscure syntax function paradoxically <sup>to</sup> suggest both the loss of manhood and the loss of the god in man. The poignancy of this poem lies in its elusive recreation of a lost nobility and grandeur, and the anguish of one who can recognize this loss because he is sometimes still a god. The obscure syntax of this poem in a sense carries the reader into

realms of the imagination, where the unconscious, the dreamlike, and a godlike identity remembered only through dream or the intuition of the eternal soul may be sensed but not given linear expression.

Deviant syntax for Cummings has thus been seen to have representational, metaphorical and "engaging" functions. It is less a grammatical device than a dynamic process, engaging the reader in interpretation, perception and emotion. The poems "quick i the death of thing" and "does yesterday's perfection seem not quite" serve as examples of Cummings's use of deviant syntax to engage the reader in the process of interpretation. An interesting parallel to Cummings's use of syntax in these poems may be found in Hopkins's use of syntax in his sonnet "To what serves Mortal Beauty". Florence Riddle describes the manner in which this sonnet "illustrates as well as exemplifies Hopkins's aesthetics."<sup>45</sup> As Riddle demonstrates, syntax is one of the major components of the poem's carefully constructed design. The design and form of the poem complement the central metaphor of the dance and its illustrating the meaning of mortal beauty 'housing' God's grace.

According to Riddle, the two major aspects of the syntax of this poem are the strings of noun or verbal appositives and the balancing sequence of questions and

answers. The chief effect of these syntactical structures is the dramatization of thought processes. Thus:

In the first place the structure of the poem's sentences dramatizes the experience of vision (be it sensory or spiritual or both) that these sentences describe. All the sentences are thickly strung with noun and adjective appositives. These modifying words and phrases piled up singly or in strings after nouns suggest the mind's activity of first identifying an object seen (or imagined), then describing it and finding associations for it as the eye (or mind's eye) lingers on it.<sup>46</sup>

The reader is invited to engage in a proscribed activity, the meeting, contemplating and understanding of the visual forms of beauty. The series of questions and answers in the poem serves to draw the reader into the poem and dramatize the psychological and spiritual processes of 'balancing' the various results beauty may have upon the observer.

The sonnet on mortal beauty is a good demonstration of what may be described as syntax as process and syntax as metaphor. The non-linear syntactical structures allow for the meaning of the poem to develop in an associative and dramatic way. The simultaneity of visual processes, the abrupt transitions in thought, and the dramatic development of the speaker's line of argument find artistic expression in Hopkins's innovative use of syntax.

For Cummings, as for Hopkins, syntax may be understood as a process and as metaphor, representing its meaning,

and involving the reader in a type of 'dance', a participation in the interpretative process and aesthetic enjoyment of the poetry.

CHAPTER FIVE  
SPATIAL AND HARMONIC EFFECTS OF SYNTAX  
IN THE POETRY OF HOPKINS AND CUMMINGS

Earlier discussion has indicated the important, but often unrecognized role which syntax plays as a literary device. The modern attempts to fuse the disciplines of linguistics and literature have contributed to the awareness that syntax is an important component of the stylistics of poetry.

While Hopkins and Cummings demonstrate marked differences in the language of their poetry, they both distort traditional syntax to a significant degree. A comparison of the deviant syntax of the poetry of Hopkins and Cummings leads to important observations concerning the role of syntax as an aesthetic "channel" for perception, emotion and meaning. By means of deviant syntax the poets achieve perceptual, visual and spatial representation. At the same time, the cognitive and psychological processes of human thought are represented with depth and precision.

The representation of visual, spatial and sensual aspects of perception has been shown to be an important concern for both Hopkins and Cummings. Both poets were highly conscious of the analogies which could be drawn

between poetry and painting. Their use of deviant syntax may be seen as a means of rendering this analogy more precise. Hopkins's theories of wordpainting and inscape and Cummings's consciousness of the Imagist movement represent parallel attempts to approximate and imitate the functions of the visual and spatial arts through language. By means of deviant syntax, Hopkins and Cummings expand the shaping powers of language. The iconographic and architectural possibilities of words are discovered, as the syntax of poetry is allowed to extend beyond a linear, one-dimensional plane to the third and fourth dimensions of visual and spiritual perception.

In a letter to Bridges, 6 November, 1887, Hopkins introduces the concept of "wordpainting". He writes:

...As for modern novels I will only say one thing now. It is in modern novels that wordpainting most abounds and now the fashion is to be so very subtle and advanced as to despise wordpainting and to say that old masters were not word-painters. Just so. Wordpainting is in the arts the great success of our day. Every age in art has its secret and its success, where even second rate men are masters. .... And wordpainting is in our age a real mastery and the second rate men of this age often beat at it the first rate of past ages. And this I shall not be bullied out of.

Hopkins's likening the craft of the poet or writer to the craft of the painter provides a significant analogy for understanding his use of language. In another letter

to Bridges, Hopkins again relates the design of poetry to the design of painting:

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

Here "inscape" is applied not only to the design and distinctiveness of objects in nature, but also to the design of the arts, particularly poetry and painting.

In his art and poetry, Hopkins was influenced by Ruskin. In Elements of Drawing (1857), Ruskin advised the artist to recover "innocence of eye", to seize the leading lines of organic form and follow the laws of art strictly.<sup>3</sup> Ruskin, like the Pre-Raphaelites, had a medieval approach to art, in which the scientifically perceived reality coincided with the ideal type.<sup>4</sup> Hopkins's artistic concern for form and composition, his keen observation and portrayal of nature through his sketches and poetry, reflect Ruskin's concern for accuracy in the perception and portrayal of the natural world.

Hopkins's journals often indicate the relationship between inscape and visual perception. The sketch-mark jottings in his journals illustrate his attempts to recreate visually the inscaped patterns in nature. Accompanying a pencil sketch of swirled and billowing

curved lines is the December 19, 1872 entry:

The swills and hillocks of the river sands  
and the fields were sketched and gilded out  
by frill upon frill of snow -- they must be  
seen: this<sup>5</sup> is only to show which way the  
curve lies.

Jerome Bump, in "Reading Hopkins: Visual vs. Auditory Paradigms", provides a detailed consideration of the comparative importance of visual and auditory representation in Hopkins's poetry. The aesthetics of Hopkins's linguistic deviations may be understood in terms of the concern for the visual and auditory capacities of the language of poetry. As Bump indicates, the concern for visual representation is a major characteristic of modern literature and poetry. Modern critics have praised the spatial and synchronic effects of modern poetry and literature in contrast to the linear, diachronic aspects of the conventional language of poetry.<sup>6</sup> Techniques of spatialization have been developed by Joyce, Pound and Eliot which allow the reader to perceive the various elements of a poem or text in one moment of time. This exploitation of the spatial dimensions of language is analogous to the arts of painting and sculpture. The spatial effects in Hopkins's poetry, along with its rhythmic freedom and conciseness, have meant that his poems have been well received by modernists. Jerome Bump indicates that the imitation of painting in Hopkins's poetry and prose finds

strong parallels in the poetry of the Imagists:

Imitation of painting is even more obvious in Hopkins's lyrics, which often seem to be moving in the direction of Imagism in their use of the precise visual image not as mere ornament but as the essence of the poem. Modern readers have in fact responded to fragments of versified nature imagery in Hopkins's Journal as if they were indeed "poems" in the Imagist tradition. The apparently arbitrary order of the imagery in some of Hopkins's sonnets, moreover, seems to produce the "instantaneous" effects Pound expected from images, effects that could make poems like painting, "motionless in time".

By the beginning of Cummings's career, the Imagist movement in poetry had emerged, with Eliot and Pound its chief forerunners. Pound in particular provided a significant prototype for Cummings, in his free-ranging use of punctuation and spacing for aesthetic purposes. In "The Return", Pound begins lines uncapitalized in the middle of the page and uses space above the last line-unit to achieve the effects of separation, pause and dramatic emphasis.<sup>8</sup> Cummings's response to "The Return" was profound and personal: "...the inaudible poem -- the visual poem, the poem for not ears but eyes -- moved me more."<sup>9</sup>

Contemporary movements in painting and sculpture, particularly Cubism, also influenced Cummings's approach to space and form in poetry. A serious painter himself, Cummings's circle of friends included other serious artists and sculptors. His painter friends included Dos Passos and Arthur Wilson. An acquaintance, Edward Pierce Nagel (stepson

of the sculptor Gaston Lachaise) kept Cummings up to date on new trends in painting and sculpture. Cummings read avidly in the field of art criticism, particularly on the new movement in the visual and spatial arts. The new styles in art thus became incorporated in his own painting, to say nothing of the effect the techniques and spirit of Cubism had on his poetics.<sup>10</sup>

The tendency of the new movement in painting and sculpture was to concentrate on form, while reducing emphasis on motif or theme. The sculptor, Henri Gaudier Brzeska, who had also influenced Pound, had developed innovative theories concerning lines and planes. Working with these new approaches to space and form, Cummings began to impose form, visual structure and "sculptural" patterns in aligning words and sentences on a page of poetry. To a much greater extent than Pound, he began to use horizontal and vertical spacing to realize such aesthetic effects as hesitation, surprise, emphasis and subtleties in tone.<sup>11</sup>

With the visual, spatial and "architectural" dimensions of poetry and the arts taking on increasing significance for Cummings, he began to develop his own unique conceptual understanding of the poem. In his notes, he developed a new word for the poem, the fait. The poem is thus something which is made or built: the poet is the fauteur or maker.<sup>12</sup> In coining this term, Cummings implied

a new relationship between the poet and the linguistic material. A three-dimensional structural process is conceived as taking over where the linear progressions of language left off.

Cummings's early experiments and theory of poetry included sound patterns as well as visual arrangement. At the bottom of the page of the manuscript version of one of his early experiments in poetry is a detailed note which suggests the embryo stages of a fairly complex theory of sound patterning in poetry:

Note: in Music there are (12) units which differ in pitch, corresponding to the (19) vowel sounds; BUT the representation of the occurrence of any and all these units by a common symbol whose form (or picture) changes only to portray prolongation, confers a suitability to horizontal progression, which does not exist in the case of a fait where the sounds (units) are presented by visible equivalents (generally speaking) calling for vertical progression / wherein the faiteur's ability (not mere skill) appears, in the ordering of the units toward a harmonic perfection; which will only be attained when the nature of each unit (with reference to its use as a key) is known / i.e. - where the juxtaposition of units determines the (horizontal) direction (left or right) taken by succeeding words as ordered by the "sense" -- sense and sound enter into picturesque relations.<sup>13</sup>

This note is appended to an experiment in which Cummings lined up a series of fourteen vowel sounds, arranging the words of a dialogue underneath by vertically placing each syllable according to its sound.<sup>14</sup> As with many of Cummings's early "word ventures" this experiment

was hardly a success. However, it indicates the degree of subtlety and complexity toward which Cummings was striving in interrelating sound, sense and spatial arrangement.<sup>15</sup>

His awareness of the varieties in linguistic pitch and sound, vertical progression and arrangement in a poem, and the "picturesque" relationship between sound and sense, illustrate Cummings's poetic sensitivity to the various properties of words and their arrangement. Punctuation and spacing, as well as vertical and horizontal progressions in sound and sense, were incorporated as basic components of his technique. In a manner analogous to the Cubists and Imagists, to Cezanne, Pound and Eliot, Cummings restructured language as an artistic medium. The corresponding lexical, typographic and syntactic innovations of his poetry originated largely in the poet's early interest in form, space and sound.

The success of Hopkins and Cummings in conveying perceived awareness through language may thus be related to their concern for the representational arts and the application of artistic techniques to the language of poetry. However, the language of their poetry extends in function and range beyond the representational and mimetic function of art. The syntactic deviations of Hopkins and Cummings have an analogical and metaphorical function which includes and transcends empirical experience. The poets' respective

understandings of the visual, spatial and representational dimensions of language may be seen to complement and assist their linguistic communication of the processes and dimensions of intuitive awareness and cognition.

The capacity of language to represent spatial extension may be related to its capacity to suggest subtle and inchoate mental processes. Using this model of the language of spatial extension, Ellen Eve Frank, in The Analogical Tradition, suggests that the analogy of spatial dimensions may be applied to the dynamics of human thought.<sup>16</sup> This analogy is particularly applicable when considering Hopkins's poetry, where the activity and manner of perception is included in Hopkins's understanding of inscape and instress. As Frank suggests:

Instress and inscape require and depend upon architectural space concepts. Moreover, they suggest the possibility of access: what may be inner -- either as skeletal or soul self -- may speak, may be described, hence may be perceived. The act of perception, either as sight or cognition, becomes concretized into a kind of literal penetration to what we might call essence, the structural of soul "inscape" or person or thing.<sup>17</sup>

The act of perception, the mental grasping of the world through inscape and instress, thus has its own shape and design. The cognitive and psychological processes of conscious and subconscious thought have spatial dimensions which may be represented through language, in its capacity

for indicating relationships of depth, height, density and texture. Hopkins's deviant syntactical structures thus provide channels for conveying the inner dimensions of thought and emotion.

In "The Wreck of the Deutschland" the early stanzas convey the spatial dimensions of the speaker's soul in relationship to God, by means of parallel correspondence with the strained rising and falling of the ship's motion in the storm. The stress of the elements becomes analogous to the stress felt by the poet's soul. Thus, "His mystery must be instressed, stressed" is perceived through "Stroke and a stress that stars and storms deliver,/ that guilt is hushed by, hearts are flushed by and melt--."<sup>18</sup> The syntax in these stanzas, with the frequent ellipses and fragmentation, becomes a vehicle for forcibly conveying this instressed, spatial dimension of the soul's experience of God.

Ellen Eve Frank alludes to this shaping function of words to lend proportion and substance to both ideas and matter:

Just as an artist may mould, so may soul  
 shape; and just as rocks may be matter, so,  
 too, it seems may words and ideas assume  
 density, duration, resistance, resilience;  
 and the view-poet perceives tension,  
 distortion, perspective, always in a stressed  
 relationship with the things around him.<sup>19</sup>

The spatial aspects of Cummings's poetry are most evident in his typographical arrangements. Two parallel poems from "is 5" suggest that Cummings used his knowledge of space and form to suggest the ungraspable spatial reaches of the mind. In "if you and i awakening" (LXI, p. 370), the pauses and silences suggested by the typographical arrangement allow the poet to convey the subtle processes of communication between the two lovers. This profound and silent communication occurs through touch, memory, sleep and dream. The paradox of the two realities of time and timelessness as they are met in love is suggested in the line division of "time/lessness". This paradox undergirds the poem thematically and structurally, as the syntax allows the speaker to drift from one "world" into another.

The poem "item : is"(LXII, p.371) contains the same tension between the two worlds of time and timelessness. Typography and syntax are again used in a representational manner to suggest the interlocking of the two lovers through memory and imagination. The poem is constructed architecturally in the manner of "laughtering blocks", where blocks of memory and experience occur in juxtaposition.

The poignancy of a remembered impression is conveyed through parenthesis, ellipsis and spacing in the following segment:

(and only where remembers  
     look,  
         this was of a child  
 's shy foot among cool ferns  
     )

The subsequent unity of the lovers in heart and mind which extends backward and forward in time is expressed through the deviant words and structures of:

therefore togethering our  
 wholly lives Givehurling  
 with your my most  
 ; locking

foreverfully

The concluding line, "a tear is darker than a mile" expresses the poet's conception of feeling as having more substance than the empirical realities of distance and time. Thus, by means of deviant syntax and typography in "item: is", Cummings evokes the transcendental but deeply human dimensions of love, memory and timelessness. In these two sequential poems of "is 5" we find illustrations of Cummings's idea of a poem as a "fait", a spatial, visual and architectural structure. The constructions of language are used to evoke not so much externally perceived realities, as to evoke the inner spaces and dimensions of memory, emotion and thought.

Jerome Bump suggests that the visual and spatial analogy is insufficient as a tool for understanding the

language of Hopkins's poetry. Inasmuch as Hopkins's own definition of poetry describes poetry as "speech framed to be heard for its own sake",<sup>20</sup> the auditory, heard aspect of Hopkins's poetry, Bump argues, can not be underestimated in favour of the visual aspects. In reaching beyond the mere imitation and representation of nature which is the primary function of art and painting, Hopkins made full use of the dramatic, "musical" and auditory aspects of language.<sup>21</sup>

Bump endeavours to counteract any "modernist" trend which would emphasize the visual at the expense of the auditory aspects of Hopkins's poetry. Rhythm, alliteration, metre and consonant-chiming are intrinsic to the form and meaning of the poetry. The "musical" aspects of Hopkins's poetic language provide many of its distinct emotional and aesthetic effects. The capacity of language for abstract reference, for suggesting realities beyond those sensually perceived, in Jerome Bump's estimation, lies closer to the musical than the pictorial arts.<sup>22</sup>

A more complete understanding of the language of Hopkins's poetry would incorporate the visual, spatial and auditory aspects of language.<sup>23</sup> In Hopkins's prose writings on poetic diction and the origin of beauty, art, poetry and music find correspondence to one another as channels and echoes of beauty. Hopkins's manner of interrelating the language and theory of music and painting may be seen in

the following excerpt from a university paper, "On the Signs of Health and Decay in the Arts":

The beauty of an infinite curve is chromatic, of a system of curves parallelistic; of deepening colour or of a passing from one colour into another chromatic, of a collocation of colours intervallary; of the change of note on the string of a violin or in the strain of wind chromatic, of that on the keys of a piano intervallary.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, in his prose writings, Hopkins describes "the common analogy of colour and sound".<sup>25</sup> In his essay "On the Origin of Beauty" he defines beauty in terms of relation: "Beauty therefore is a relation and the apprehension of it a comparison."<sup>26</sup>

Language, like colour and sound, for Hopkins would have an analogical function in relation to beauty. He expresses a primary aspect of language, its relational function, in the words, "All words mean either things or relations of things."<sup>27</sup> In the apprehension of beauty through language, (as through art and music), Hopkins indicates that two types of activity are involved; that of contemplation and that of transitional energy. Thus:

Art exacts the energy of contemplation but also the other one transitional, and in fact they are not incompatible, for even in the successive arts as music, for full enjoyment, the synthesis of the succession should give, unlock, the contemplative enjoyment of the unity of the whole.<sup>28</sup>

Hopkins continues his theoretical consideration of the referential and comparative functions of art:

The more intellectual, less physical, the spell of contemplation the more complex must be the object, the more close and elaborate must be the comparison the mind has to keep making between the whole and the parts, the parts and the whole. For this reference and comparison is what the sense of unity means.<sup>29</sup>

Hopkins's poetic syntax becomes a major device for communicating the two "energies" of art. The transitional or more simultaneous and immediate effects of deviant syntax complement its power to assume a more contemplative mode. Where the object of contemplation, or for our purposes, the thought of the poem is very complex, deviant syntax, in its capacity to suggest intricate relations and ambiguities, becomes a channel for the "close and elaborate" comparisons the mind has to make in order to contemplate the whole.

The syntactical complexity of Hopkins's poetry derives from the poet's need to encompass fully the range of elaborate interrelationships, whether they occur in a chromatic fashion as the notes of a scale, in a visually perceived inscape, or in the subtle conceptual complexities and ambiguities which may be conveyed by means of grammatical flexibility and distortion. If analogies between language, the arts and music may be made, it is by way of making the relations and comparisons between the physical and metaphysical aspects of beauty more precise.

In Hopkins's poetic theorizing, he understands a

fundamental coinherence of language, thought and being. In the following excerpt from an essay on poetic theory he expresses the manner in which language can serve as a means of "coming at" the "inscape" and "instress" of that which is perceived and known:

But indeed, I have often felt when I have been in this mood and felt the depth of an instress or how fast the inscape holds a thing that nothing is so pregnant and straightforward as simple yes and is. "Thou couldst never either know or say/ What was not, there would be no coming at it.' There would be no bridge, no stem of stress between us and things to bear us out and carry the mind over.<sup>30</sup>

As a "stem of stress" uniting thought and being, language serves in a metaphorical capacity. The manner in which it is structured syntactically, phonetically or symbolically, can be central to its meaning.

The understanding of 'syntax as metaphor' may serve as a focal point for interrelating the use of deviant syntax by Hopkins and Cummings.<sup>31</sup> With painting, sculpture and music providing analogies to psychological, metaphysical and conceptual realms of thought, the poets use language in a similar way to represent the subject of their poetry in a kinetic, visual, spatial, chromatic or diachronic manner. A syntax which participates in the meaning and at times creates the meaning becomes in itself a metaphor for the creative, intuitive capacity of man to explore and represent reality. Jerome Bump describes the metaphorical and dramatic

use of language in Hopkins's "Picture of St. Dorothea":

...his aim is ultimately to dramatize the fact that the realms are not merely parallel but interpenetrating, capable not only of juxtaposition but also of mutual metamorphosis. Quince is not merely compared to moon, flowers to stars; they become them. The earth is not merely juxtaposed with heaven; rather, the part of it represented by Dorothea ascends into heaven. In this and in his later poems Hopkins emphasizes the dramatic vertical actions possible in metaphor. The upward motion from man to God is stressed here, but there is also evidence of the downward motion from God to man possible in metaphor, the opportunity for sacramental<sub>32</sub> symbolism, the ultimate verbal synthesis.

This "ultimate verbal synthesis" is that toward which the innovative language of Hopkins and Cummings strives -- a metaphorical synthesis of life and thought, a linguistic representation of meaning with the greatest possible precision. The dramatic, analogical and physical properties of the poetic language of Hopkins and Cummings has been shown to engage the reader in the mental, emotional and spiritual processes of their poetry in a manner analogous to the dance of "To What Serves Mortal Beauty". The non-linear, highly deviant syntax of Hopkins and Cummings thus extends the imaginative capacity of the reader in order that the reader participate more fully in the aesthetic and intellectual function of poetry as a literary and linguistic 'home' for the intuition of truth and beauty, thought and being.

## CHAPTER SIX - CONCLUSION

### SYNTAX AND THE LANGUAGE OF 'HOME AT HEART'

The language of the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins is an expression of the sacramentalism which was fundamental to his life and thought. In the sacramentalism of the Catholic faith, particularly as it was illumined by Duns Scotus, Hopkins found the closest possible reconciliation between his ascetic vocation as a Jesuit and his aesthetic delight in beauty and the arts. In its broadest terms, sacramentalism encompasses the indwelling presence of God in all creation. The delight in preceiving the beauty of the natural world becomes a vehicle of praise and a means of somehow 'taking in' the divine, in the same manner in which Christ is received by man through the Incarnation and the sacrament of the Eucharist.

This was Hopkins's sacramental approach to life. While this understanding of sacrament extends beyond the traditionally proscribed sacraments of Church ritual and theology, the underlying premise of God's immanent presence in creation would be consistent with Catholic teaching. In the Old Testament the concept of creation speaking of the glory of God is found in the psalms:

The heavens are telling the glory of God,  
the vault of heaven proclaims his handiwork:  
day discourses of it to day,  
night to night hands on the knowledge  
No utterance at all, no speech,

no sound that anyone can hear;  
 yet their voice goes out through all the earth,  
 and their message to the ends of the world.<sup>1</sup>

This psalm is echoed in a passage from Hopkins's

Sermons:

God's utterance of himself in himself is  
 God the Word, outside himself is this  
 world. This world then is word, expression,  
 news of God. Therefore its end, its purpose,  
 its purport, its meaning, is God and its  
 life or work to name and praise him.<sup>2</sup>

While the influence of Ignatian spirituality proved a mixed blessing for Hopkins, in the philosophy of Duns Scotus the poet found consistent affirmation of his aesthetic leanings. Hopkins's own estimation of Duns Scotus as the one "who most sways my heart to peace" is apt description of the measure of the consoling and encouraging effects of Scotist philosophy on the poet. In the philosophy of this medieval Franciscan friar (1265-1308) Hopkins found intellectual and spiritual justification of his own theory of inscape. This correspondence is recorded in Hopkins's journal in 1872:

At this time I had first begun to get hold of the copy of Scotus on the Sentences in the Baddely library and was flush with a new stroke of enthusiasm. It may come to nothing or it may be a mercy from God. But just then when I took in any inscape of the sky or sea I thought of Scotus.<sup>3</sup>

Scotist philosophy may be characterized as sacramental in its teaching that intuition of the divine

may be gained through the sensuous perception of objects which partake of God's essence. The thought of Duns Scotus ran counter to the ideas of the medieval scholastics of his day, particularly Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas and the medieval scholastics discounted knowledge which was gained through sensuous perception. The only true knowledge was the knowledge of the universal. The medieval concept of God as an abstract Being without distinctive parts favoured intellectual, abstract and universal knowledge over intuitive, sensuous knowledge of the concrete and particular.<sup>4</sup>

To this remote and abstract conceptualization of God and the means of knowing, Duns Scotus brought a concrete and vital way of knowing and experiencing God. The "earthiness" of his philosophy at the same time encompassed the immanent and transcendent.

Scotus's reply to Aquinas was that the intellect can have direct knowledge of particular things. This intuitive cognition is a primary, experiential way of knowing.<sup>5</sup> The object of perception is thus known for its unique qualities rather than as a representation of a more general species or its more perfect ideal. The distinctive qualities belonging to any object are what gives the object its individual essence. This essence Scotus referred to as haecceitas or thisness. In its

thisness, an object of the natural world partakes of the divine essence.

The synthesis of Hopkins's sacramentalism in Scotist thought is represented in the language of his poetry. Syntactical deviations have been shown to derive from Hopkins's desire to 'inscape' the essence or 'thisness' of an object to the greatest possible degree. The Scotist concept of intuitive cognition also may be directly related to the language of Hopkins's poetry. The poet's desire to express simultaneity of perception, cognition and knowledge often produces variant syntactic forms. Thus, in "Harry Ploughman" the syntactical deviations represent the attempt to capture the sense of the ploughman's motion and the sensation of his windswept hair:

He leans to it, Harry bends, look. Back, elbow, and liquid  
waist  
In him, all quail to the wallowing o' the plough. 'S cheek  
crimsons; curls  
Wag or crossbridle, in a wind lifted, windlaced---  
See his wind- lilylocks -laced.

Hopkins's delight in the form and movement of the ploughman indicate a Scotist appreciation of sensuous perception as a means of knowing deeper realities of existence. Spurr describes the inherent sacramentalism of "Harry Ploughman": "The world of this sonnet is a world in which man and horse and wind and soil are, in their connected aliveness, at one and -- by virtue of their common life force - in One." 6

Similarly, in other poems, Hopkins attempts to recreate by means of deviant syntax, the simultaneity of perceiving and knowing both visible, external qualities and the unperceived essence or indwelling presence of an object or landscape. Thus, the indwelling presence of Christ in all creation is inscaped in such poems as "Hurrahing in Harvest" and "The Starlight Night" by means of a deviant syntax which stresses the unity of perceived and unperceived realities. In "Henry Purcell", a syntax which aims at compression and movement suggests the simultaneity of the stormfowl's motion in flight and the wonder of the observer:

" Let him oh! with his air of angels then lift me, lay me!  
only I'll/ Have an eye to the sakes of him, quaint moonmarks,  
to his pelted plumage under/ Wings." Thus, the reader comes to understand the manner in which the music and spirit of Purcell touch the speaker; "It is the forged feature finds me." The manner of this finding is a matter of perception rather than intellect, as Hopkins's syntax and imagery suggest. The language here may be considered sacramental in that it recreates simultaneously both the substantial and the insubstantial. Intuitive cognition, the Scotist manner of discerning physical and spiritual realities, governs not only the manner of knowing but the poetic language through which Hopkins elects to express that knowing.

When Hopkins through the tall nun "finds" Christ himself in "The Wreck of the Deutschland," the syntax becomes strained and fragmented to an exaggerated degree in correspondence with the immense dimensions of the psychological and spiritual moment:

But how shall I ... make me room there:  
 Reach me a ... Fancy come faster----  
 Strike you the sight of it? look at it loom there,  
     Thing that she ... there then! the Master,  
Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head.

The paradox of God's immanence and transcendence presented Hopkins with a problem of linguistic reference. While in one sense his 'sacramental language' allowed Hopkins to grasp the nature of God and the particularly distinctive aspects of his creation with precision and vitality, the poet's recognition of a God who was "past all grasp" infused his language and thought with the paradox of expressing but not expressing that which can not be wholly grasped by thought or language. Philip Endean conveys the difficulty which Hopkins's sacramentalism posed for his poetic language:

The belief that a feature of the created world is in some radical sense one with the Creator resists clear linguistic expression. The claim that bread and wine, or the azurous hung hills, are, truly speaking, Christ, must involve a collapsing of categories of space and time and a suspension of normal categories of identity. Even though we may wish to refer to the world in which we live here and now, our belief undermines the empirical basis of linguistic reference.

The difficulties of the poet's expressing and the reader's interpreting the poetic language of Hopkins's sacramentalism may be discerned by considering some of Hopkins's twisted linguistic structures and metaphors. In "Hurrahing in Harvest", the metaphor of the winged horse is transferred from Christ to the heart of the beholder so that the distinction between the two becomes blurred.<sup>8</sup> The obscurity in the syntactical relationships between Christ, the natural world and the beholder corresponds to the 'logical' blurring of distinction between the three identities:

And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder  
 Majestic --as a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet! --  
 These things, these things were here and but the beholder  
 Wanting; which two when they once meet  
 The heart rears wings bold and bolder  
 And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him off  
 under his feet

The logic of the syntactical structures first implies the meeting of "these things" and "the beholder", but then subtly twists the meaning to the meeting of the heart and Christ. The syntax is both clever and difficult. Its sacramental intent becomes clear along with the paradox that the words which have been chosen to describe the transference and sharing of identities, fail in the end to convey the totality of the experience.

In "The Windhover" there is a degree to which the ambiguities created by Hopkins's 'sacramental' language are

central to the poem's meaning. In a metaphorical reading of the poem, the syntax and imagery of the sonnet are precise and effective channels for conveying the poet's inscaping of the spiritual meaning of the kestrel's flight simultaneously with its motion.

Paradoxically, the language also contains an intrinsic weakness in its communicative function. The ambiguities are so complex as to defy definitive interpretation. This type of ambiguity can work for or against a poem. In "The Windhover" the negative results of obscurities in language cannot be ignored. Critical interpretations of "The Windhover" have varied widely as to the nature and extent of its Christological references. As Endean indicates:

The relationship between Christ and the kestrel is left indeterminate, so that it is unclear whether "O my chevalier" refers to one or other of them, or even both.

Hopkins was aware of such inherent difficulties in his experimental use of language. In a letter to Bridges he describes the problems posed by his deviant use of syntax in "Harry Ploughman":

I want Harry Ploughman to be a vivid figure before the mind's eye; if he is not that the sonnet fails. The difficulties are of syntax no doubt. Dividing a compound word by a clause sandwiched into it was a desperate deed, I feel, and I do not feel that it was an unquestionable success.<sup>10</sup>

In another letter to Bridges concerning "Tom's Garland", Hopkins writes:

It is plain I must go no farther on this road:  
if you and he cannot understand me who will?...  
And I think that it is a very pregnant sonnet  
and in point of execution very highly wrought.  
Too much so, I am afraid....<sup>11</sup>

However, in this same letter to Bridges, Hopkins describes his conscious employment of syntax to achieve aesthetic effects such as dramatic intensity by means of hyperbaton, and a symbolic rendering of man's position in the hierarchy of being.

The immensity of Hopkins's spiritual and aesthetic vision presented the considerable challenge of conveying this vision in poetic language. Hopkins pressed language to its limits in order to grasp and convey the full measure of his sacramentalism. The mark of Hopkins's success is that his language becomes a "forged feature" in itself; a channel through which Hopkins's own unique selfhood finds and grasps the reader with power, precision and delight.

If Hopkins's spirituality may be considered sacramental, Cummings, by way of comparison, may be considered a transcendentalist in his spirituality. While maintaining a form of Christian humanism, the poet was prelapsarian and Unitarian in his outlook.

Cummings's transcendentalism and Hopkins's sacramentalism may be compared in their affirmation of the numinous in human experience. In their respective spiritualities, Hopkins and Cummings both allowed and emphasized the role of "intuitive cognition" or perception as a means of apprehending the significant matters of existence. For Cummings this intuitive approach to life tended toward an emphasis on human emotion and romantic love. The deepest realities of life, whether transcendent or psychological, are approached in the context of moments of profound personal feeling and insight. Romantic love is most often associated with transcendent awareness:

except in your  
honour  
my loveliest  
nothing  
may move may rest  
--you bring

(out of dark the  
earth)a  
procession of  
wonders  
huger than prove  
our fears

...

so is your heart  
alert  
of languages  
there's none  
but well she knows;  
and can

perfectly speak  
 (snowflake  
 and rainbow mind  
 and soul  
 november and  
 april)

who younger than  
 begin  
 are, the worlds move  
 in your  
 (and rest, my love)  
 honour (p.575)

Here, a tentative, parenthetical syntax corresponds with the hesitant, worshipful attitude of the speaker. The heart of the beloved is in tune with wonders beyond those perceived or expressed in the common pattern of life.

In Cummings's transcendentalism the 'real' world becomes 'unreal'. His vocabulary and syntax lead the reader beyond the world of rational and scientific analysis into an 'unreal' world, which for Cummings is more real than empirical boundaries, a world of dream, timelessness, mystery and love.<sup>12</sup>

The relationship between spirituality and language in the poetry of Hopkins and Cummings is significant in terms of the critical discussion of the representational and mimetic functions of language in their poetry. The perceptual and emotional precision which both poets achieve has been noted as evidence of their skill in using deviant syntax as a mimetic device. Thus, Elizabeth Schneider describes Hopkins's skill as a mimetic poet:

his effort was to name, to pin down with utmost precision, the individual thing of which there could be no duplicate, the distinctive pattern and design that made the living individual or the natural scene unique....<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, in describing an evident growth in Cummings's poetry, Wegner implies the poet's precise use of language to recreate sensuous experience:

the poet's language becomes far less extravagant; the rich and vaguely sensuous gives way to the more precise and definite, yet manages to convey impressions that are sensuous and emotionally charged. Word spacing, syntactical distortion, and all the typographical oddities for which Cummings is known are motivated by the same desire to capture, by heightening the impression, the essence of the phenomenon perceived.<sup>14</sup>

While the language of Hopkins and Cummings has important mimetic and imitative functions, its capacity to reshape and redefine reality in an abstract, imaginative way is equally important. Jacob Korg, in his analysis of Hopkins's language, stresses that language is not only mimetic, but "a reflection of man's creative capacity to bring things into relation, to shape and define reality."<sup>15</sup> Hopkins's syntactic deviations, Korg suggests, are a particular vehicle for this process. The linguistic deviations become a means of extending the consciousness beyond the empirically perceived dimensions of life.<sup>16</sup> The imaginative, shaping powers of poetic language thus allow for the expression of the full range of Hopkins's aesthetic and spiritual vision.

Cummings's language, like Hopkins's, extends beyond its mimetic capacities. George Haines characterizes Cummings as an "expressionist", where an expressionist is defined as an author who uses language to penetrate beyond the conventional linguistic terms and concepts of phenomenal analysis.<sup>17</sup> Language becomes an imaginative channel for conveying the relation between the empirical and the noumenal. It thus incorporates at the same time as it transcends its purely mimetic function.

David V. Forrest in "E.E. Cummings and the Thoughts that Lie too Deep for Tears" associates Cummings's "syntactic play" with his "unprecedented contribution to the pursuit of depth in poetry."<sup>18</sup> As a psychiatrist, Forrest provides keen analysis of Cummings's profound awareness and communication of the depths of human emotion and cognitive experience. In the context of this study he considers the manner in which Cummings's innovative approach to language becomes a channel for communicating the inexpressible.

As Forrest observes, much of Cummings's theoretical understanding of language may be gathered directly from his poetry.<sup>19</sup> Thus, in "since feeling is first" we find the poet relating conventional syntax to a rationalism which opposes feeling:

since feeling is first  
 who pays any attention  
 to the syntax of things  
 will never wholly kiss you;

wholly to be a fool  
 while Spring is in the world

my blood approves  
 and kisses are a better fate  
 than wisdom  
 lady i swear by all flowers. Don't cry  
 -- the best gesture of my brain is less than  
 your eyelids' flutter which says

we are for each other: then  
 laugh, leaning back in my arms  
 for life's not a paragraph

And death i think is no parenthesis.

In this poem, the one who pays attention to "the syntax of things" never wholly gives himself over to love and feeling. It is the flutter of the lady's eyelids which tells the speaker all he needs to know: "we are for each other". The poem's statement that life and death are beyond paragraph and parenthesis expresses the limits of language and of man's wisdom in defining the deepest realities. In poem "70" of 73 poems, we find poetic capsulization of the communicative task to which Cummings's best poetry responds:

pity his illimitable plight  
 who dies at any moment to be born ---  
 some for whom crumbs of colour can create

precision more than angels fear to learn

and even fiends: or, if he paints with sound,  
 newly one moving cadence may release  
 the fragrance of a freedom which no mind

contrives (but certainly each spirit is)

and partially imagine whose despair  
 when every silence will not make a dream  
 speak; or if no millionth metaphor  
 opens the simple agony of time

--small wonder such a monster's fellowmen  
 miscalled are happy should his now go then (842)

The characteristic syntactical forms in this poem contain a moving evocation of the grandeur and despair of Cummings's poetic vision. The poet uses the analogies of painting and music as metaphors for his new poetic language, a language striving for spiritual freedom above the limits of logical expression. The poet implies the tension evident as the language of timelessness wrestles with the language of time, and the despair in the failure of language, "when every silence will not make a dream/ speak".

The precision in communicating transcendent and psychological realities, the releasing of "the fragrance of a freedom which no mind/ contrives" is the achievement of a significant proportion of Cummings's poetry. In the incongruities of his language, a new domain of expression is found.

Cummings's poem "pity his illimitable plight" represents the poet's struggles to wrest spiritual realities from the agony of time. Michael Edwards describes in prose

this same dilemma of language bowing to silence while at the same time paradoxically exerting its creative function with awesome precision:

From a writer's point of view the whole dialectic is travelled in two fundamental sequences: silence-speaking-silence, and blankness-writing-blankness. He may discover, in the silence that precedes speech and in the blankness of the page, the perfection that should be unattainable and accusing, waiting for his move. It hints at a word, or a Word, before and above our words, essential to language yet missing from the elaboration of linguists.<sup>20</sup>

As Edwards argues, man's language is flawed in the same manner that his ability to define and interpret his existence is flawed. The dialectic of the universe corresponds with a dialectic of the spoken word, in which language, like Creation, is made, unmade and awaiting recreation.<sup>21</sup>

This dialectic, by virtue of the marked distinctiveness of the syntactic deviations in Hopkins's and Cummings's poetry, becomes highly significant in understanding their experimental use of language. Where incongruity, tension and distortion are most evident, the possibilities of change and a 'remaking' of outworn imaginative linguistic structures are greater. As Edwards indicates:

The incongruity of language is precisely our chance. The flaw between word and object,

the flaws within words (the apartness of sound and sense, for example), and the complex obscurities of meaning, impel the imagination. Explored, language becomes a domain of suggestions, fragments of a novel reality emerging with fragments of a novel speech.<sup>22</sup>

The degree of syntactic deviation in the poetic language of Hopkins and Cummings becomes precisely their chance of creating a novel speech capable of housing a novel reality.<sup>23</sup>

A pervasive metaphor with Hopkins is that of the house or home. In "The Habit of Perfection", 'housing' Christ is an expression of the sacramental receiving of Christ in the Eucharist. Scotism and sacramentalism led Hopkins on to affirm the housing of Christ not only in the Eucharist, but in the natural world, and in 'this poor jacksel', man, who was also immortal diamond. In a journal entry, the poet expresses the manner in which his often divided aesthetics and religious faith meet:

As we drove home the stars came out thick:  
I leant back to look at them and my heart  
opening more than usual praised our Lord<sup>24</sup>  
to and in whom all that beauty comes home.

In his syntactical deviations and rhythmic devices Hopkins created a corresponding linguistic 'home' for his poetic imagination. Language could be shaped and patterned

in innovative ways so as properly to 'house' nature, human thought, and Christ's transcendent presence. Through the language of his poetry, Hopkins communicated the intuited mystery of 'home at heart', the soul's finding correspondence in beauty to its own deepest longings.

The 'home' may also be used as a metaphor for understanding Cummings's use of language. In the poem "what if a much of a which of a wind", Cummings describes the leashing of apocalyptic forces against man, wreaking the havoc of wind, storm and rain, stripping all of creation bare. The images are those of the storm scene in King Lear where madness and dissolution pose the ultimate threats to the king. For Cummings, the outcome of this madness is the triumph of life, and man's abiding and eternal place in the universe. His exultant affirmations are "the single secret will still be man" and "all nothing's only our hugest home".

This "hugest home" emerges as the triumph of Cummings's language. From a syntax which borders on dissolution and chaos, Cummings creates new shapes, moulds and 'homes' for the deepest perceptions and emotions of the heart. His is a "heart's eager dim enormous language" which continually seeks and forms new modes of expression, drawing from the arts, as does Hopkins, for the means of

shaping and formulating these intuited realms of thought.

To return to Ellen Eve Frank's description of language as expression of the shaping power of the soul, we may see in both Hopkins's and Cummings's use of deviant syntax a means of restructuring new channels of communication and thus 'housing' the deepest areas of human thought and cognition. Language 'selves' itself, creating and recreating a place where imagination and spirit meet and are 'sacramentally' embodied in poetic form. The paradigm of language as sacrament may be more comfortably applied to Hopkins than to Cummings. But the coinherence of the transcendent and the material, the divine and the human, which sacrament implies, is no less central to the thought and language of Cummings than to the Jesuit priest and poet. Breaking through conventional linguistic boundaries with dynamism and precision, each of these distinctive poets calls the reader to awareness and participation in 'home at heart', the finding and expression of life and self.

## Footnotes

### Introduction

<sup>1</sup>W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889): A Study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy in Relation to Poetic Tradition, (London: Oxford University Press, 1949, 1958, 1969), I, p.265.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., v.II, 131n.

<sup>3</sup>W.H. Gardner, his introduction to: The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, eds. W.H. Gardner and N.H. MacKenzie, (4th ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p.xxxviii.

<sup>4</sup>Irene R. Fairley, E.E. Cummings and Ungrammar: A Study of Syntactic Deviance in his Poems, (New York: Watermill, 1976), pp.90, 106, 126, 155.

<sup>5</sup>Richard Cureton, "The Aesthetic Use of Syntax: Studies in the Poetry of E.E. Cummings" Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1980, pp.34-35.

<sup>6</sup>Theodore Spencer, "E.E. Cummings", The New Republic, CX (April 3, 1944), 475-76.

<sup>7</sup>William E. Baker, Syntax in English Poetry 1870-1930, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p.4.

<sup>8</sup>Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics", Style in Language, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok, (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1960), p.377.

<sup>9</sup>Winnifred Nowotny, The Language Poets Use, (London: University of London, 1968), pp.9-10.

<sup>10</sup>Richard Cureton, "Poetic Syntax and Aesthetic Form", Style: xiv, no.4. (Fall, 1980), 319.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp.2-6.

<sup>12</sup>Baker, pp.26-27, and Robert Chapman, Linguistics and Literature: An Introduction to Literary Stylistics, (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), pp.2-4.

<sup>13</sup>Baker, pp.10-11.

<sup>14</sup>Chapman, pp.48-49.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp.64-66.

## Chapter One

<sup>1</sup>F. R. Leavis, New Bearings in English Poetry: A Study of the Contemporary Literature, (Penguin, 1932, 1967) p.130.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.130.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.130.

<sup>4</sup>Robert B. Bridges, his introduction to The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, 2nd. ed., p.96.

<sup>5</sup>Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, (London: Oxford University Press, 1935, 1955), 15 February 1879, p.66.

<sup>6</sup>Hopkins, Letters to Bridges, 21 August 1877, p.44.

<sup>7</sup>Hopkins, Letters to Bridges, 6 November 1887, p.265.

<sup>8</sup>Hopkins, Letters to Bridges, 14 August 1879, p.89.

<sup>9</sup>Hopkins, Letters to Bridges, 6 November 1887, pp.267-268

<sup>10</sup>Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Author's Preface", in The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, 4th ed., pp.45-49.

<sup>11</sup>Gerard Manley Hopkins, Letter to Everard appearing in The Times Literary Supplement, 8 December 1972, p.1511, cited in John Robinson, In Extremity, (London: Cambridge, 1978), p.68.

<sup>12</sup>Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins, v.II, p.98.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p.101.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p.104.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p.110.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p.121.

<sup>17</sup>Richard S. Kennedy, Dreams in the Mirror: A Biography of E.E. Cummings, (New York: Liveright, 1980), p.39.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp.56-60.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p.51.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p.64.

<sup>21</sup>Robert E. Mauer, "Latter-Day Notes on E.E. Cummings's Language", in Norman Friedman, ed., E.E. Cummings: A Collection of Critical Essays, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1972), pp.79-80.

<sup>22</sup>E.E. Cummings, bMS Am 1892.7 (Miscellaneous Notes [for a poetic theory], p.4), in Kennedy, p.115.

<sup>23</sup>Kennedy, p.115.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp.115-129.

<sup>25</sup>Julia P. Stanley, "The Aesthetics of Dissolution", Bucknell Review, v.22, no.2, (Fall, 1976), 157.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 152.

<sup>27</sup>Archibald A. Hill, "Some Further Thoughts on Grammaticality and Poetic Language", Style, 1, (Spring, 1967), 90.

<sup>28</sup>Kennedy, pp.124-25.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp.125-26.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p.126.

<sup>31</sup>Cummings, bMS Am 1892 (Miscellaneous Notes [for a poetic theory], p.42), in Kennedy, p.128.

<sup>32</sup>Kennedy, p.126.

<sup>33</sup>E.E. Cummings, "'Foreword' to 'is 5'", in E.E. Cummings, Complete Poems: 1913-1966, (New York: Harcourt Brace and Jovanovich, 1972), p.223.

<sup>34</sup> Hopkins considers John Dryden, "the most masculine of our poets". (Letter to Bridges, 6 November 1887, p.267). John Robinson provides a useful perspective on Hopkins's tendency to overgeneralize in thus categorizing poets as to the 'masculine' nature of their verse: "Hopkins's poetic theory was his way of relating to a norm when his own poetry was so obviously at odds with any norm then current. It was his means of reaching behind contemporary poetry -- the poetry of Swinburne, Tennyson, and the rondeliers -- in attempting to give himself definition with relation to officially great poetry, that of Milton and Shakespeare. We should be foolish to accept uncritically his own estimations (obviously his verse is not Miltonic, and his claimed affinity with Dryden is best judged as a statement of allegiance -- for example, it separates him from Arnold, who thought Dryden no poet...", John Robinson, In Extremity, (London: Cambridge, 1978), p.58.

<sup>35</sup> Milroy writes: "Despite his apparent 'freedoms', Hopkins imposed upon himself rigid conventions of stanza-form, metre and' rhyme scheme. Paradoxical as this may seem, it is wholly in tune with the character of this earnest and scrupulous man.", James Milroy, The language of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (London: Deutsch, 1977), p.129; ~~and~~ John Robinson speaks of "Hopkins' attempt to fuse moral strenuousness with aesthetic inscape in the way he wrote poetry", Robinson, In Extremity, p.52.

<sup>36</sup> R.P. Blackmur, "Twelve Poets", (Omnibus Review), The Southern Review, 7, (Summer, 1941), 202-205, in Lloyd Dendinger, ed., E.E. Cummings: The Critical Reception, (New York: B. Franklin, 1981), p.220.

<sup>37</sup> Stanley, 163.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 163.

## Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup>Robert E. Mauer, "Latter-Day Notes on E.E. Cummings' Language," in Norman Friedman, ed., E.E. Cummings: A Collection of Critical Essays, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), p.84.

<sup>2</sup>Irene R. Fairley, E.E. Cummings and Ungrammar : A Study of Syntactic Deviance in his Poems, (New York: Watermill, 1976), pp.8-10.

<sup>3</sup>Mauer, p.85.

<sup>4</sup>S.V. Baum, "E.E. Cummings: The Technique of Immediacy", in Norman Friedman, ed., op.cit., p.110.

<sup>5</sup>E.E. Cummings, E.E. Cummings: Complete Poems : 1913-1962, (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), p.808.

<sup>6</sup>Gardner, in his introduction to The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, 4th ed., p.xxxl.

<sup>7</sup>Fairley, p.11.

<sup>8</sup>Mauer, p.91.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p.90.

<sup>10</sup>Cummings, Complete Poems, p.578.

<sup>11</sup>Gardner, p. xxxii

<sup>12</sup>Fairley, p.91.

<sup>13</sup>Cummings, Complete Poems, p.664.

<sup>14</sup>Fairley, p.32.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p.125.

<sup>16</sup>Norman H. MacKenzie, A Reader's Guide to Gerard Manley Hopkins, (London; Thames and Hudson, 1981), p.238.

<sup>17</sup>Hopkins, Poems, p.270..

<sup>18</sup>Baum, p.112.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p.112.

<sup>20</sup>Cummings, Complete Poems, p.543.

### Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup>Geoffrey H. Hartmann, "Introduction: Poetry and Justification", in Geoffrey Hartmann, ed., Hopkins: A Collection of Critical Essays, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p.1.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Bridges, "The Oddities of Genius", in Hartmann, op.cit., pp.72-73.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.74.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.74.

<sup>5</sup>Walter A.M. Peters, S.J., Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Critical Essay Towards the Understanding of his Poetry, (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), p.120.

<sup>6</sup>Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (London: Oxford, 1937, 1959), 11 March 1871, p.205.

<sup>7</sup>Peters, p.120.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p.108.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid. p.114.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p.115.

<sup>11</sup>Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, (London: Oxford, 1938, 1956), December 1882, p.165.

<sup>12</sup>Peters, p.115.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p.116.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p.117.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p.112.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp.130-31

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp.88-89.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p.134.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p.137.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p.139.

<sup>21</sup>Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins, I, 142.

<sup>22</sup>Todd K. Bender, Gerard Manley Hopkins; The Classical Background and Critical Reception to his Work, (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1966), p.104.

<sup>23</sup>Pseudo-Longinus, On the Sublime, in Bender, p.104. Pseudo-Longinus, or Longinus (fl. early 1st c. A.D.), was author of On the Sublime, a Greek work of literary criticism and guide to excellence of style: "The problem of authorship embraced scholars for centuries... The solution has been to name him Pseudo-Longinus." Encyclopaedia Britannica, Micropaedia. Volume VI. (Chicago: Helen Hemingway Benton, 1978).

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p.104.

<sup>25</sup>Bender, p.105.

<sup>26</sup>William Wordsworth, "Preface to the Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads" (1800), in David Perkins, ed., English Romantic Writers, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967), p.328. Bender draws from Wordsworth's poetic theory in relation to Hopkins's use of syntax, Bender, p.105.

<sup>27</sup>Bender, p.112.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp.118-19

<sup>29</sup>Peters, p.155.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p.159.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p.161.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p.161.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p.162.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p.162.

<sup>35</sup>Paul G. Arakelian, "Ambiguity and Hopkins's Purcell",  
Style xiv, No. 3, (Summer, 1980), 235.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 235.

<sup>37</sup>Hopkins, Letters to Bridges, 3 February 1883, p.174.

<sup>38</sup>MacKenzie, p.115.

<sup>39</sup>Arakelian, p.238.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p.241.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p.241.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p.243.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p.244.

#### Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup>Richard Cureton, "The Aesthetic Use of Syntax:  
Studies in the Syntax of the Poetry of E.E. Cummings",  
Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1980.

<sup>2</sup>Winifred Nowotny, The Language Poets Use, (London: The Athlone Press, 1962), pp.9-10. (Cited in Cureton, p.1.)

<sup>3</sup>Cureton, p.27.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.2. As examples Cureton includes Friedman (1960), (1964), Marks (1964), Wegner (1965), Lane (1976), Kidder (1974), articles collected in Baum, ed. (1962) and Friedman, ed. (1972).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.27.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.28.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p.29.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp.29-39.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p.29.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp.172-73.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p.34.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p.71.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp.84-87.

<sup>14</sup>Irene R. Fairley, E.E. Cummings and Ungrammar, (Searingtown, New York: Watermill Publishers, 1975), p.52.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp.65-66

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p.62.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp.55-57.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p.69.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p.71.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p.70.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p.73.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp.73-75.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p.75.

<sup>24</sup>Richard Cureton, "Poetic Syntax and Aesthetic Form",  
Style xiv, No. 4, (Fall, 1980), 322.

<sup>25</sup>Cureton, "The Aesthetic Use of Syntax", pp.39-48.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p.39.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp.40-41.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p.44.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p.42.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p.48.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p.59.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p.56.

<sup>33</sup>Fairley, p.11.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p.12.

<sup>35</sup>Cureton, "The Aesthetic Use of Syntax", p.46.

<sup>36</sup>Fairley, pp.91-92.

<sup>37</sup>Cureton, "The Aesthetic Use of Syntax", p.50.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p.50.

<sup>39</sup>Fairley, p.132.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p.133.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p.45.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p.45.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p.46.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p.52.

<sup>45</sup>Florence K. Riddle, "Form as Meaning in Hopkins's Sonnet on Mortal Beauty", Bucknell Review, v.25, no.2, (1979), 70.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 76-78.

## Chapter Five

<sup>1</sup>Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, (London: Oxford University Press, 1935, 1955), 6 November 1887, p.267.

<sup>2</sup>Hopkins, Letters to Bridges, 15 February 1879, p.66.

<sup>3</sup>Alan Heuser, The Shaping Vision of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1968), p.9.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.21.

<sup>5</sup>Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (London: Oxford, 1957, 1959), December 19, 1872, p.228.

<sup>6</sup>Jerome Bump, "Reading Hopkins: Visual vs. Auditory Paradigms", Bucknell Review, v.26, no.2, (1981), 119-120.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>8</sup>Richard S. Kennedy, Dreams in the Mirror: A Biography of E.E. Cummings, (New York: Liveright, 1980), p.106.

<sup>9</sup>E.E. Cummings, "Notes for nonlectures", (bms Am 1892.7[90], in Kennedy, Dreams in the Mirror, p.106.

<sup>10</sup>Kennedy, p.197.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp.180-182.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p.116.

<sup>13</sup>E.E. Cummings, *bms Am* 1823.7(23), p.201, cited in Kennedy, p.119.

<sup>14</sup>Kennedy, p.118.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p.121.

<sup>16</sup>Ellen Eve Frank, Literary Architecture: Essays Toward a Tradition, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1979), p.245.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p.57.

<sup>18</sup>Hopkins, "The Wreck of the Deutschland", in Poems, p.

<sup>19</sup>Frank, p.75.

<sup>20</sup>Hopkins, "Lecture Notes; Rhetoric; Poetry and Verse", in Journals, p.289.

<sup>21</sup>Bump, 126.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 133-136.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 142.

<sup>24</sup>Hopkins, Journals, p.67.

<sup>25</sup>Gerard Manley Hopkins, Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (London: Oxford, 1937, 1959), Letter to Patmore, 25 October 1883, p.324.

<sup>26</sup>Hopkins, "On the Origin of Beauty", Journals, p.95.

<sup>27</sup>Hopkins, Journals, 9 February 1869, p.125.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p.126.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p.126.

<sup>30</sup>Hopkins, Journals, p.98. This thought Heuser synthesizes as follows, "Language is the stem of stress which carries the mind over into things and things over into the mind. The same energy of being manifests itself in thinking, in language and in things". (Heuser, p.109)

<sup>31</sup>Paul Kiparsky, "The Role of Linguistics in a Theory of Poetry", in Einar Haugen and Morton Bloomfield, eds., Language as a Human Problem, (New York: Norton, 1974), 238.

<sup>32</sup>Bump, 137.

### Chapter Six

<sup>1</sup>Psalm 19: vs.1-3. New Jerusalem Bible.

<sup>2</sup>Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p.129. Also the following, "Neither do I deny that God is too deeply present to everything ("Tu autem, O bone omnipotens, eras superior summo meo et interior intimo meo") that it would be impossible but for his infinity not to be identified with them, or, from the other side, impossible but for his infinity so to be present to them. This is oddly expressed, I see; I mean / a being so intimately present as God is to other things would be identified with them were it not for God's infinity or were it not for God's infinity he could not be so intimately present to things." (August 20, 1880, Sermons, p.128.).

<sup>3</sup>Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (London: Oxford, 1937, 1959), p.221.

<sup>4</sup>Donald McChesney, A Hopkins Commentary: An Explanatory Commentary on the Main Poems 1876-89, (London: University of London, 1968), p.21.

<sup>5</sup>Stephen Edward Wear, "John Duns Scotus and Gerard Manley Hopkins; The Doctrine and Experience of Intuitive Cognition", Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 1979, pp.7-21.

<sup>6</sup>Barry Spurr, "G.M. Hopkins: The Poet as Sacramentalist", Sydney Studies in English 4, (1978-1979), 48.

<sup>7</sup>Endean, 198.

<sup>8</sup>John Robinson, In Extremity: A Study of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp.42-43 .

<sup>9</sup>Endean, 118. Representative critical comments of both the pitfalls and achievements of language in "The Windhover" include the following:

"This poem has become the crossword puzzle of English letters, made such because a blurring on the reader's part of the meaning of one word puts the meaning of others, and hence of the whole poem, in doubt, so numerous are the offered alternatives. "The Windhover" does have a damaging change in direction in the final tercet and also other blemishes, but many of the difficulties of interpretation have been imported." (Robinson, In Extremity, p.42.)

"In the outline of its thought, then, The Windhover, is simple, direct, and explicit. Its complexities lie, on the one hand, in the elaboration of the visual imagery interwoven with elaborately echoing patterns of sound, and, on the other, in the play between two counterpointed sets of opposites. The dominant pair is that of the material and the spiritual which are expressly brought together by the dauphin - Son parallel and, more literally, by the primary theme of the poet's being stirred by one into more intense awareness of the other." (Archibald Hill, "An Analysis of 'The Windhover': An Experiment in Structural Method," 156).

<sup>10</sup>Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), November 6, 1887, p.265.

<sup>11</sup>Hopkins, Letters to Bridges, February 10, 1888, pp.272-274.

<sup>12</sup>Norman Friedman, E.E. Cummings: The Art of his Poetry, (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins Press, 1960), pp.16-22.

<sup>13</sup>Elizabeth Schneider, The Dragon in the Gate: Studies in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp.11-12.

<sup>14</sup>Robert E. Wegner, The Poetry and Prose of E.E. Cummings, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1965), p.83.

<sup>15</sup>Jacob Korg, "Hopkins's Linguistic Deviations", PMLA, 92, No. 5, (1977), 983.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 985.

<sup>17</sup>George Haines, in Geoffrey H. Hartmann, ed., Hopkins: A Collection of Critical Essays, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p.28.

<sup>18</sup>David V. Forrest, "E.E. Cummings and the Thoughts that Lie too Deep for Tears", Psychiatry (43), 24.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 22-23

<sup>20</sup>Michael Edwards, Towards a Christian Poetics, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), p.160.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p.13

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p.11.

<sup>23</sup>Thus Howard Fulweiler relates Hopkins's use of language to his groping for new theological and aesthetic understanding, where previous linguistic, literary and spiritual conceptions were found inadequate. Fulweiler writes, "Hopkins's vision of God in nature, his sense of God within the self, his Tillichian description of God as "the ground of being" in "The Wreck of the Deutschland", all indicate the poet's deep dissatisfaction with the system of thought so general in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."; and, "His theological and his artistic debates are analogous and serve as brilliant examples of the development of language, poetry, and Christianity in the modern world. All three were and are in crisis." Fulweiler, Letters from the Darkling Plain, (1972), pp.94-95.

<sup>24</sup>Hopkins, Journals, 17 August, 1874, p.254.

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