GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS' INFLUENCE ON THE POETS OF THE 1930'S

THE INFLUENCE OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS ON THE POETS OF THE 1930'S

By

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ABSTRACT

Many modern poets have acknowledged the influence of Gerard Manley Hopkins upon their work. This thesis examines the poetry of four such poets, the "Auden group" of the 1930's--W.H. Auden, Cecil Day Lewis, Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice--to determine the character and extent of this influence. This study illustrates the ways in which Hopkins' example taught the Auden group how to use the raw materials of poetic tradition to create dynamic, vital verse that explores the full potential of the English language. All four poets borrowed Hopkins' technical innovations, as well as some of his images, yet they did not simply imitate Hopkins. More than just superimposing Hopkinsian techniques onto modern themes, they assimilated what they gained from Hopkins into their own styles, different from Hopkins and each other; the most important lesson that they learned from Hopkins was that the quality to be prized above all was individuality. Through an analysis of the work of these four representative poets, it may be seen that Hopkins has made a considerable impact on the direction in which modern poetry has developed.

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INTRODUCTION

"About Hopkins as a direct influence there seems little to say. The use of him by Left poets in the 'thirties was not of a kind to demand serious attention." --F.R. Leavis, "Metaphysical Isolation" (1944),

Since the publication of his poetry in 1918, Gerard Manley Hopkins has had a considerable influence on poets from the mid-1920's to the present, poets such as Ezra Pound, The Oxford poets of the 1930's--W.H. Auden, Cecil Day Lewis, Stephen Spender, and Louis MacNeice--Rex Warner, William Empson, Dylan Thomas, Robert Lowell and the Canadian poet Ralph Gustafson. Their poetry reflects in both technique and mood the vital qualities of Hopkins' poetry that set him apart from his own contemporaries, qualities which those influenced felt reflected their own feelings, in their own particular place in history. Even more important than the stylistic influences, however, was the strong sense of individualism which they learned from Hopkins, enabling them to create diverse poetic voices.

The distinctive qualities that these poets derived from Hopkins resulted in poetry which, like Hopkins' own, is difficult not because it is vague, but because it is concentrated, revealing a sense of urgency and passion. Devices such as Sprung Rhythm, which employ a juxtaposition of strong stresses, often without syllables

between them, produce an abrupt effect and allow the tone to rise with the subject-matter, an effect which is reflected in the form of the poetry. The strong feeling invoked forces the rhythm out of any predictable smoothness. This technique is important to Hopkins because, as with other features of his poetry, "stress is the life of it."[1] The creation of dramatic poems was part of an attempt to return to the common speech patterns of the English language, while at the same time, as revealed by the sustained sensuous rhapsodies of poems such as "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo", evoking a musical quality and concentration that raises poetry above the ordinariness of prose. Hopkins' extensive use of alliteration, assonance, inverted syntax, internal rhyme and ellipses gives his poetry a distinctive and emphatic form that is a manifestation of his acute sensibility and honest feeling.

Hopkins' poetry is far from the smoothness and complacency of many of his fellow Victorians. Even his literary friends Robert Bridges and Coventry Patmore found his verse difficult to appreciate and considered his style decidedly "odd"[2] and, for the time, unpoetic in their accepted, Victorian sense. Once his poetry was published, Hopkins' technical innovativeness caused him to be considered a "modern" poet born before his time. Although a few of his poems appeared in anthologies prior to 1918, his complete works were not in general circulation before that time. Even then it took approximately twelve years to deplete the limited number of copies of the first edition. The comments of his editor, Robert Bridges, then Poet Laureate, could not have aided the acceptance

of Hopkins' innovative works. In his Preface to the notes of the first edition, Bridges refers to Hopkins' "mannerisms" as "errors in taste" and "faults in style"; his "affectation in metaphor" reveals a "perversion of human feeling", and his "freakish" and "indefensible" rhymes form a poetry that is often "obscure"[3]. It is no wonder that the early reviews of Hopkins' poetry were, though often appreciative, sometimes baffled.

I.A. Richards, William Empson, F.R. Leavis and Herbert Read are probably the critics most responsible for the rise of Hopkins' reputation. In The Principles of Literary Criticism (1924)[4] and in The Dial of September, 1926, Richards defends Hopkins' "oddity", ambiguity and "obscurity" as virtues of his poetry. Empson, in Seven Types of Ambiguity (1930)[5], also defends Hopkins, fitting him into a new "modern" notion of what poetry ought to be. Leavis says that Hopkins "was one of the most remarkable technical inventors who ever wrote, and he was a major poet"[6], and Read, also speaking of Hopkins as a "major poet" in Form in Modern Poetry (1932) expresses the opinion that "no poet of recent times is likely to exercise such a potent influence as Hopkins--meaning by that an influence on the structural development of English verse."[7] By the time a second edition of Hopkins' poetry was printed in 1930, the "faults" of style that were barely tolerated by Bridges became, to Charles Williams, the editor of the second edition, examples of a "true poetic power of phrase."[8] Williams stressed the freshness and vigour of Hopkins' innovations, rather than their oddity, and Hopkins reputation grew from that of a minor Victorian poet

to that of a "great master"[9] of Modernism.

The growth of his reputation that led to the printing of a second edition, has also been attributed to his being adopted by a small group of poets at Oxford as an example of a modern poet. As students at Oxford between 1923 and 1930, Auden, Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice were among the first members of a new generation of poets to be impressed by Hopkins' verse. As undergraduates they had a common desire to break away from the established techniques of their redecessors and to form their own poetic movement. The controversy surrounding Hopkins' style proved intriguing to them. Hopkins showed that one could, indeed, break free from convention and establish one's own voice.

Robert Graves, one of the most important poet-critics to emerge from Oxford during this period, classifies Hopkins as a modernist because the words of his poetry "had to be understood as he meant them to be, or understood not at all."[10] This characteristic was not always admired. One critic of the time, George O'Neill, refers to Hopkins' innovative technique as a "fantastic misuse of the English language."[11] Hopkins' poetry continued to be considered by many as too obscure and too difficult for the average reader. Yet, it was precisely these qualities that attracted the young Oxford poets.

Too young to have fought in the first World War, they were, like the rest of the world, drastically affected by it. They were also acutely conscious of the tense social climate brought about by the rise of Fascism and the shadow of an imminent second World

War. The mood of Hopkins' poems of conflict, personal crisis and individual spiritual drought was easily transferred not only to their own personal feelings, but also to a society that had refused and abused its responsibilities. As Lawrence Binyon writes, the edge and poignancy, the liberation from convention inherent in Hopkins' "audacities" of diction and construction, "could not fail to attract a generation born into a changed, a shaken and still heaving world, and craving for new molds into which to pour their emotions."[12] Added to this, the inwardness of Hopkins' poetry was attractive because of the rise in interest in Freud at this time, with its focus on the individual and the conflict of opposing forces within him. Hopkins' technique helped the young Oxford poets to establish a new poetic voice for the world of their time.

Wystan Hugh Auden (1907-73) soon emerged as a leading figure in English poetry in the 1930's. Always associated with him in the public mind were his friends, the novelist Christopher Isherwood (1904-), and the poets Cecil Day Lewis (1904-72), Stephen Spender (1909-), and Louis MacNeice (1907-63). They have been variously named "the Oxford Poets", "the 'Thirties Poets", "the 'Pylon' Poets" (because of their use of modern imagery), and, because of the overwhelming and unifying presence of Auden, "The Auden Group". Although it is now claimed that the notion of a "group" is rather exaggerated, it is true that they shared many ideas and influences. All were caught up in the Freudian-Marxist spirit of the times, yet each was original in his way. All were influenced in one way or another by Hopkins, yet each established his

own poetic voice. Auden, for example, added wit and irony to Hopkins' concentrated, often jarring, style. Strongly religious, he tempered a devotional vein with an intellectual and scientific detachment that enabled him to delve deeply into the human psyche. Day Lewis was greatly concerned with politics, and applied Hopkins' technical innovations to his presentation of themes of social struggle. Spender and MacNeice both wrote personal, subjective poetry--Spender's lyrically sensuous, MacNeice's highly crafted and rhythmical.

In their enthusiasm for the new sound that they heard in Hopkins' poetry, their early verse often approached pastiche. Auden's poem "Culture", for example, echoes Hopkins' "I Wake and feel the fell of dark": "Happy the hare at morning, for she cannot read/ The hunter's waking thoughts, lucky the leaf/ Unable to predict the fall, lucky indeed." Elsewhere he echoes Hopkins' "wring-world right foot rock" of "Carrion Comfort", with "Me, march--you do with your movements master and rock with every--whirl, whale-wallow, silent budding of all." Day Lewis' absorption in the rhythms and rhyme of "The Windhover" and "The Wreck of the Deutschland" are obvious in "A Time to Dance" (1935):

> Hot in their face they fought; from
> three thousand feet they tilted
> Over, side-slipped away--a trick for an ace, a race
> And running duel with death: flame streamed out behind,
> A crimson scarf of, as life-blood out of a wound, but
> the wind
> Of their downfall staunched it; death wilted,
> Lagged and died out in smoke--he could not stay their pace.

While the style may invoke the drama of the personally cour-

ageous act, as it had for Hopkins, it is, as A.T. Tolley rightly suggests, blatant pastiche, "which might, for its style, be called 'The Flight of the Deutschland'."[13]

Yet these early attempts proved beneficial at least as technical experiments, and they illustrate that these young poets were seriously trying to understand the connections between form and thought. Like Hopkins, they wanted to try the limits of technical virtuosity. In later years they often omitted from their collected works the poems that showed an over-obvious influence of Hopkins.[14] What is left is, for each, a distinct poetic voice, but at the same time one which often still bears traces of the lessons learned from Hopkins.

Hopkins was not the only influence upon the poets of the thirties; he is noted variously as a "major influence"[15] along with Walt Whitman, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, W.B. Yeats and Wilfred Owen. Several of these poets share traits with Hopkins, so it can be argued that critics have exaggerated Hopkins' influence. Both Pound and Eliot, for example, were familiar as Hopkins was with Greek choric and Old English alliterative verse, and based their rhythms on the "auditory imagination."[16] Yet it was the peculiar intensity and manifest sincerity of Hopkins' adaptations that caught the younger poets' attention. It was the combination of technique and mood that moved them, the meshing of a wide variety of technical devices that formed the unique "Hopkinsian" style.

In The Faber Book of Modern Verse (1936) its editor, Michael Roberts, writes that the anthology "was meant to define the modern

movement in a way that was not just chronological but a question of sensibility and technique."[17] For this reason, he chose to begin the collection with a selection of Hopkins' poetry. He writes that "I have included only poems which seem to me to add to the resources of poetry, to be likely to influence the future development of poetry and language".[18] Whether or not Hopkins should be placed among the Moderns rather than the Victorians is secondary to the fact that his inclusion in volumes such as this underline his importance in the poetic tradition. All four of the Auden group are included in the Faber anthology, Roberts believing that they too have a contribution to make to the development of poetry.

Many of the other poets in this volume also illustrate Hopkins' influence in their work. Examples are as diverse as Robert Lowell's use of alliteration in "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket", where "waves wallow in their wash, go out and out..." with the rhythmic movement of Hopkins' "The Sea and the Skylark", to the syntax and images of William Empson:

> You are nomad yet; the lighthouse beam you own
> Flashes, like Lucifer, through the firmament,
> Earth's axis varies; your dark central core
> Wavers, a candle's shadow, at the end.

Empson borrows the "eternal beam" of Hopkins' "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection", and echoes the "blast/ Tarpeian-fast, but a blown beacon of light" in "The Wreck of the Deutschland." (stanza 29) Dylan Thomas' mastery of words is also indebted to Hopkins, as illustrated in "Poem for his Birthday":

In the mustardseed sun,
By full tilt, river and switch-back sea
Where the cormorants scud,
In his house on stilts high among beaks
And palavers of birds
This sandgrain day in the bent bays grave
He celebrates and spurns
His driftwood thirty-fifth wind-turned age;
Heron's spire and spear.

"This sandgrain day in the bent bays grave" recalls Hopkins' "warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey" from "The Wreck of the Deutschland"(stanza 7), and epithets such as "sandgrain day" are similar to Hopkins' coinages such as "heavengravel" and "wolfsnow" in "The Loss of the Eurydice". Alliteration, assonance, half-rhyme, and epithets are devices that Thomas may have learned from Hopkins[19], but which he turned to his own uses rather than sounding like a Hopkins imitation.

Each poet was, as Roberts points out, chosen for his own gifts, and for his own contribution to poetry. Even though many of them owed much to each other and to Hopkins, as the Auden group did, they illustrate that poetry has the possibility to develop in numerous ways. This potential is what Cecil Day Lewis felt was the "hope for poetry", a vital and growing force that both carried on the work of others while adding to it in diverse ways. The poetry of Hopkins proved to the young poets of the 'twenties and 'thirties that poetry was, indeed, alive. Hopkins' influence on them and on later poets illustrates that he was a major force in the development of modern poetry. As Geoffrey Grigson admiringly notes, Hopkins was one of a few "major"

poets with whom "the traditional oak of poetry began its upward growth again."[20] His influence on poets such as the Auden group is, in fact, very much "of a kind to demand serious attention" not only to aid in understanding the direction in which this "oak" has grown, but also to illuminate the direction in which poetry is continuing to grow.

CHAPTER I: W.H. AUDEN

W.H. Auden was the acknowledged leader of the Oxford "group", and was responsible for enthusiastically introducing the newly discovered poetry of Hopkins to his friends Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice. Auden underwent, in Christopher Isherwood's view, a "brief craze"[1] for Hopkins, in which he openly imitated Hopkins' style. Auden gradually acquired his own poetic voice, but traces of Hopkins remain detectable even in his latest verse. Hopkins was, however, only one of several influences upon Auden, and critics have rightly pointed out that it is extremely easy to over-estimate this influence.[2] In fact, their tendency has been to under-estimate it, restricting their comments to a few verbal echoes and early parodies. It may be argued, indeed, that Hopkins' influence on Auden is more than just technical, and has affected Auden as a literary critic as well as a poet. Auden's dubbing Hopkins a "Knight of the Infinite"[3] illustrates his admiration for a man who both stylistically and personally is worthy of praise and emulation.

Auden's first volume of poems, hand-printed by Stephen Spender at Oxford in 1928, includes experimental verse in which he attempted to convey his ideas in a tight, Hopkinsian manner, striving for the newness of language that Hopkins developed with

his use of alliteration, distortions of syntax and vivid, condensed images. Some of the passages in this first book bear an over-obvious resemblance to Hopkins, such as the birth image in his first untitled sonnet, in the style of Hopkins' "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection":

> Bones wrenched, weak whimper, lids wrinkled, first
> dazzle known,
> World-wonder hardened as bigness, years, brought
> knowledge, you:
> The soul is tetanous; gun-barrel burnishing
> In summer grass, mink lies to tarnish, untouched,
> undoing...[4]

Few of his poems are as condensed as this, and such poems may have been written as technical exercises. Yet Auden in a more diluted form maintains the elliptical and inverted syntax which we think of as characteristic Hopkins:

> No trenchant parting this
> Of future from the past
> No idol fracture is
> Nor bogy scared at last...[5]
>
> Face that the sun
> Is lively on
> May stir but here
> Is no new year.[6]

Hopkins' technique of using imperatives in such poems as "The Wreck of the Deutschland", "The Starlight Night" and "Spring" is also evident throughout Auden's poems:

> Look there! The sunk road winding
> To the fortified farm.
> Listen! The cock's alarm
> In the strange valley.[7]

Auden's imitation of Hopkins' style is not simply the dependence of a mediocre young poet who has not found his own voice, but also is a deliberate attempt on Auden's part to gain a technical understanding of the English language. His awareness of Hopkins' motives even led him into some playful yet skilled parodies. Picking up Hopkins' rejuvenation of such archaic or obscure words as "brindled", "sillion" and "stippled", Auden, in his late poem " A Bad Night: A Lexical Exercize" exhumes a nonsensical variety of dialect words such as "hirple", "stolchy", "glunch", "sloomy", "snudge", "snoachy" and "fribble". Even more pointed is Auden's poem, "To Gabriel Carritt", the second ode in his volume The Orators (1932), in which he parodies "The Wreck of the Deutschland", "The Windhover" and "Henry Purcell", in a mock-heroic song praising the athletes of a Rugby team:

> Walk on air do we? And How!
>
> ...Success my dears--Ah!
> Rounding the curve of the drive
> Standing up, waving, cheering from car,
> The time of their life...
>
> Symondson--praise him at once!--
>
> Easy for us to tell,
> Defeats on them like lavas
> Have fallen, fell, kept falling, fell
> On them, poor lovies...[8]

Most of the Hopkinsian techniques that Auden experiments with in these poems are retained in only the subtlest forms in the rest of his poetry. The poems that Auden is most noted for, such as "This Lunar Beauty", are somewhat reminiscent of Hopkins, but

are still very much Auden's own:

> This lunar beauty
> Has no history,
> Is complete and early;
> If beauty later
> Bear any feature,
> It had a lover
> And is another.
>
> This like a dream
> Keeps other time,
> And daytime is
> The loss of this;
> For time is inches
> And the heart's changes,
> where Ghost has haunted
> Lost and wanted.

In a review of Auden's early poetry, Louis MacNeice acknowledges that Auden's style is in part indebted to Hopkins:

> ...though both are conditions and not causes, contemporary literary influence is a more changing condition than grammar. Which is why it may slightly elucidate these poems (while having nothing to do with their value) if one suggests Mr. Auden is well-read in the 'typical' 'advanced' reading of today, that having been helped to see things newly by modern psychology he is helped to present them in a new and strenuous presentation by, among others, Eliot, Robert Graves, the later Yeats, G.M. Hopkins and Wilfred Owen.[9]

As with Hopkins, Auden's poetry was not initially always well received. A few months after MacNeice's review, Dudley Fitts wrote that Auden's verse was of "composition too sedulously disordered, too refinedly chaotic. Mr. Auden stems directly from Gerard Manley Hopkins; and his failures, like his successes, are those of the earlier poet."[10] Auden's Paid on Both Sides (1929) does, indeed, easily show the influence of Hopkins, for examples

of the syntax, alliteration and repetition of "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" in

> Not from this life, not from this life is any
> To keep; sleep, day and play would not help these
> Dangerous to my ghost; new ghost learns from many
> Learn from old timers what death is, where.

In the same volume, the tone and imagery of "I wake and feel the fell of dark" is combined with the image of God's finger touching Hopkins in "The Wreck of the Deutschland" in Auden's "O watcher in the dark, you wake/ Our dream of waking, we feel/ Your finger on the flesh that has been skinned." Of Paid on Both Sides, F.R. Leavis writes that "the verbal vigour went with an obscurity of the wrong kind--that which betrays incoherence and lack of meaning...though he made a rapid advance in sophistication."[11] Vigour and sophistication remain marks of Auden's style over the years; the accusation of meaninglessness is, as with Hopkins, eventually overcome.

Auden's contemporaries admired the freshness of his verse, and the qualities that he combined--metrical variety,ellipses of articles, clipped phrases, and detached, scientific, often ironic observation which gave rise to the term "Audenesque". Like Hopkins, Auden developed out of the influence of others his own poetic voice.

Both Hopkins and Auden were aware that the condensed nature of their poetry made it seem obscure. Moreover, they felt that the obscurity was necessary, for good poetry should require an intellectual alertness of the reader in order for him to make the necessary connections. Hopkins admitted that "The Wreck of the Deutschland"

"needs study and is obscure, for indeed I was not over-desirous that the meaning of all should be quite clear...".[12] In a letter to his brother he says that "true poetry must be studied."[13] Auden himself claimed to distrust literary critics who did not like "complicated verse forms of great technical difficulty, such as Englyns, Drott-kvaelts, sestinas, even if their content is trivial."[14] He satirizes such critics and presents his own position in "The Truest Poetry is the Most Feigning":

> Be subtle, various, ornamental, clever,
> And do not listen to those critics ever
> Whose crude provincial gullets crave in books
> Plain cooking made still plainer by plain cooks,
> As though the Muse preferred her half-wit sons;
> Good poets have a weakness for bad puns.

Auden felt that the poet had a duty to master technical skills. His own poetry is presented in a variety of forms such as sonnets, ballads, epistles, plays and alliterative verse. He was familiar with Old English and Welsh metrical forms, as was Hopkins. In fact, many of the technical devices that both poets employ, such as alliteration, set rhythmical patterns, and the syntactic dislocation of words, may be traced to the Old English poetic tradition. Hopkins' attempt to revive the dramatic delivery of Anglo-Saxon and Welsh techniques may have been a major influence on Auden's use of them. The Welsh repetition of consonants with vowel variations, such as in "They feel no falseness", "Their flight looks fleeter" and "Its love from living"[15] are reminiscent of Hopkins' "flesh", "flush", "flash"[16] and "heard unheeded".[17] Auden's poems also reveal

affinities with Anglo-Saxon in catching the spirit and cadence of "The Wanderer":

> Doom is dark and deeper than any sea-dingle.
> Upon what man it fall
> In spring, day-wishing flowers appearing,
> Avalanche sliding, white snow from rock face...

Much of Auden's poetry tends to fall into the half-line patterns of the Anglo-Saxon that Hopkins employed in "To What Serves Mortal Beauty","Spelt from Sybil's Leaves" and "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire...", where the lines are marked by virgules:

> Cloud-puffball, torn tufts tossed pillows / flaunt
> forth then chevy on an air-
> built thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers, in gay-gangs /
> they throng; they glitter in marches.
> Down roughcast, down dazzling whitewash, / whenever
> an elm arches
> Shivelights and shadowtackle in long / lashes lace,
> lance and pair.

Auden also makes use of the long, densely packed line common in Hopkins, combined with roughness in a poem which resembles "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire..." in its form:

> You with shooting-sticks and cases for field-glasses,
> your limousines parked in a circle: who visit
> the public games, observing in burberries the feats
> of the body:
> You who stand before the west fronts of cathedrals:
> appraising the curious carving:
> The virgin creeping like a cat to the desert, the trumpeting
> angels, the usurers boiling:
> And you also who look for truth: alone in tower:
> Follow our hero and his escort on his latest journey:
> From the square surrounded by Georgian houses,
> taking the lurching tram eastward
> South of the ship-cranes, of the Slythe canal: Stopping
> at Fruby and Drulger Street,
> Past boys ball-using: Shrill in alleys.[18]

Auden's poem "The Exiles" employs Hopkins-like alliteration, ellipses of articles and imperfect rhyme:

> What siren zooming is sounding our coming
> Up frozen fjord forging from freedom
> What shepherd's call
> When stranded on hill
> With broken axle
> On track to exile?

As well, this poem draws upon Hopkins' technique of Sprung Rhythm, a metrical pattern in which there is a set number of stresses, but any number of unstressed syllables to allow both form and freedom at the same time. In this case, the first two lines of every stanza have four stesses each:

> With labelled luggage we alight at last,
> Joining joking at the junction on the moor...
> Expert from uplands, always in oilskins,
> Reclining from library, laying down law...

The use of rhythmical patterns combined with alliteration produces the same effect as that in Hopkins' "The Wreck of the Deutschland", "Or is it that she cried for the crown then,/ The keener to come at the comfort for feeling the combating keen?" (stanza 25)

Auden employs these effects like Hopkins primarily to bring poetry closer to what Leavis calls "living speech"[19], for "Whatever else it may be, I want every poem I write to be a hymn in praise of the English language...".[20] Auden says that "of the many definitions of poetry, the simplest is still the best: 'memorable speech'."[21] He saw in the poems of Hopkins a similar attempt at "living speech", and the use of rhythmical patterns to attain this.

Hopkins, indeed, says that:

> 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 in general is brighter than common speech.[22]

For Auden and Hopkins, the way a poem sounds is as important as what it says. Auden says that "auditory metaphors such as rhyme, assonance and alliteration help further to clarify and strengthen the pattern and internal relations of the experience described."[23] Similarly, Hopkins felt that "my verse is to be less read than heard,"[24] and Auden believed that "no poetry...which when mastered is not better heard than read is good poetry."[25] "The swaying sound of the sea" in Auden's poem "On This Island" illustrates Auden's fascination with sound by presenting an aural image as suggestive to the ear as Hopkins' tide in "The Sea and the Skylark". Its rhythm, assonance and alliteration imitate the rise and fall of the waves:

> Here at the small field's ending pause
> When the chalk wall falls to the foam and its tall ledges
> Oppose the pluck
> And knock of the tide,
> And the shingle scrambles after the suck-
> -ing surf,
> And the gull lodges
> A moment on its sheer side.

Auden's early interest in Hopkins was stylistical; as his own style crystallized Auden began to appreciate that the technical

achievements of Hopkins were a manifestation of a profound sensibility--the form of his poetry reflected the movements of inner debate and religious exaltation. In "The Wreck of the Deutschland", for example, the personal drama of Hopkins' conversion, associated with the tensions of the physical storm, are in turn stressed in the elaborate patterns of alliteration, rhyme, and rhythm. As Leavis points out, "Hopkins' genius was as much a matter of rare character, intelligence and sincerity as of technical skill: indeed, in his great poetry the distinction disappears: the technical triumph is a triumph of spirit."[26] In "A Knight of the Infinite", Auden praises Hopkins for his personal as well as poetic accomplishments, and says that, "biographies of the great masters are unnecessary...their lives seem too atypical to illuminate either their age or the human heart. The artists whom we want to know personally, and Hopkins is one, are those whose relation to their art is romantically difficult."[27]

Hopkins was torn between his artistic sensibility and his religious belief, but he partially resolved the conflict by finding a moral purpose in art. In a letter to Coventry Patmore, Hopkins writes that "fine works of art, and especially if, like yours, that are not only ideal in form but deal with high matter as well, are really a great power in the world, an element of strength even to an empire."[28] Art iself is "morally neutral" but can be turned to moral uses. For Auden too, "poetry is not concerned with telling people what to do, but with extending our knowledge of good and evil, perhaps making the necessity for

action more urgent and its nature more clear, but only leading us to the point where it is possible for us to make a rational and moral choice."[29] The Hopkinsian parody "To Gabriel Carritt", for example, was written, Auden says, as a "moral criticism" of the danger of hero worship.[30]

Much of Auden's poetry reveals a religious sensibility, although he did not formally return to the practise of Christianity until 1940. Auden's poem "Petition" with its prayer for a "change of heart", has been taken to predict Auden's conversion. Because of its address to a super-human power, the father-figure addressed as "Sir", it is the one poem that virtually every critic cites as showing the influence of Hopkins. It echoes Hopkins'

> Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
> With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
> Why do sinner's ways prosper? and why must
> Disappointment all I endeavor end?
> Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
> How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
> Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
> Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend... .

Auden's appeal is to a similar God:

> Sir, no man's enemy, forgiving all
> But will his negative inversion, be prodigal
> Send to us power and light, a sovereign touch
> Curing the intolerable neural itch,
> The exhaustion of weaning, the liar's quinsy,
> And the distortion of ingrown virginity.
> Prohibit sharply the rehearsed response
> And gradually correct the coward's stance;
> Cover in time with beams those in retreat
> That, spotted, they turn though the reverse were great,
> Publish each healer that in city lives
> Or country houses at the end of drives;
> Harrow the house of the dead; look shining at
> New styles of architecture, a change of heart.

Auden's poetry illustrates a religious faith in his admiration for a world founded on the same belief as Hopkins, both poets sensing the spirit of God in nature. In a poem written the same month as "Petition" (October, 1929), Auden glorifies the sunrise which is a symbol of God's spirit in the material world, as he appeared on the first day in the book of Genesis: "For the dawn of common day is a reminder of birth,/ Is as the first day was when truth divided/ Light from the original and incoherent darkness...". Auden must have been aware of the same powers of light in Hopkins' "The Handsome Heart: at a Gracious Answer", where

> What the heart is! which, like carriers let fly--
> Doff darkness, homing nature knows the rest--
> To its own fine function, wild and self-instressed,
> Falls light as ten years long taught how to and why.
>
> Of heaven what boon to buy you, boy, or gain
> Not granted?--Only...O on that path you pace
> Run all your race, O brace sterner that strain!

Echoing this is Auden's lesson from the sunrise:

> Which of you waking early and watching daybreak
> Will not hasten in heart, handsome, aware of wonder
> At light unleashed, advancing, a leader of movement,
> Breaking like surf on turf, on road and roof,
> Or chasing shadow on downs like whippet racing... .

In The Criterion (1934) Auden mentions parenthetically that he became interested in Hopkins through reading "Spring and Fall".[31] Stylistically this poem embodies in a lucid form--as opposed, say, to the density of "Spelt from Sybil's Leaves"--the typical Hopkinsian rhythms, syntax and innovative word use that Auden adopted. More importantly, perhaps, it is one of the few poems that is not explicitly Christian. By implication,

however, there is the theme of the fall of man; yet the focus and sympathy are on the individual in this world:

> Margaret, are you grieving
> Over Goldengrove unleaving?
> Leaves, like the things of man, you
> With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?
> Ah! as the heart grows older
> It will come to such sights colder
> By and by, nor spare a sigh
> Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;
> And yet you will weep and know why.
> Now no matter, child, the name:
> Sorrow's springs are the same.
> Nor mouth had, no nor mind expressed
> What heart heard of, ghost guessed:
> It is the blight man was born for,
> It is Margaret you mourn for.[32]

"Spring and Fall" may be seen as the poem that sets the overall tone for the body of Auden's verse. His philosophy of life based on an underlying religious view keeps his clinical, psychoanalytic and political poetry from becoming stark and detached from human feeling. There is genuine pity and regret for man even in his somewhat sarcastic criticism; the irony of "Spring and Fall" is not lost in a line at the end of Auden's political play "On the Frontier", where he says that "Yet we must kill and suffer and know why."

Just as Hopkins looked to nature for signs of the Divine and saw man's trials reflected in the natural world, Auden also developed, in poems such as "Paysage Moralisé" and "In Praise of Limestone" a moral landscape which he says "has a worldly duty which in spite of itself/ It does not neglect, but calls into question/ All the Great Powers assume."[33] As, for Hopkins, man

can never destroy a world infinitely "charged with the grandeur of God", so for Auden:

> The blessed will not care what angle they are regarded
> from,
> Having nothing to hide. Dear, I know nothing of
> Either, but when I try to imagine a faultless love
> Or the life to come, what I hear is the murmur
> Of underground streams, what I see is a limestone
> landscape.[34]

Hopkins' landscape reveals his idea of "inscape", the unique, individual quality of a thing that is, in fact, a part of a much larger pattern. The various, "pied" aspects of nature are part of a unified design which is a reflection of the Divine. Thus, Hopkins can see even the disaster of a shipwreck as something ultimately affirmative. It is this awareness of a larger design which Auden reveals in his own poetry, and it is this quality that leads him to call Hopkins a "knight of the infinite."

Auden compared the friendship of Hopkins and Bridges to that of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, saying that "there are two eternal classes of men, the knight and the squire...the man who is capable of excess, and the man who is not. Each needs the other...the former can never remember the finite and the latter can never perceive the infinite."[35] Hopkins' vision of the infinite is revealed in his theories of "inscape", in his belief that "all things are word of, worded of" God, and even in his sense of the relationship between art and religion. His sense of design, his ability to see good in everything, is evident from his early poem "The Wreck of the Deutschland", in which storm flakes become lilies, through to his last poems, the

bleak "Sonnets of Desolation", when he can vow not to feast on despair.[36] One of his most widely used images is that of fire: candles, flames and stars appear in such poems as "The Half-way House", "The Wreck of the Deutschland", "The Lantern Out of Doors", "The Candle Indoors" and "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection". Even in the "Sonnets of Desolation" the darkness of the night which is a symbol of destruction and hoplessness gives way to the light--the eternal light of Christ and of man's spirit in relation to Him.

Hopkins was acutely aware of himself as an eccentric and as an outsider. He wrote to Bridges, "...no doubt my poetry errs on the side of oddness...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 virtue of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped."[37] Yet it is precisely this "oddness" which makes Hopkins admirable to poets like Auden, for the eccentricity of his poetic technique is also a personal affirmation of individuality. Ultimately, it is not the specific uses of syntax or alliteration that influenced Auden, but Hopkins' contribution to a wider function that poetry may serve in relation to humanity.

Auden speaks for himself as well as for Hopkins when he says that "poetry is a struggle to reconcile the unwilling subject and object" and that "poetry may illuminate but it will not dictate."[38] Both the struggle and the illumination are what Auden admires in Hopkins' poetry. His summation of Hopkins is an apt one:

> He didn't matter: he had a silly face; he was a martyr to piles; he bored his congregations and was a joke to his students; he fiddled around with Egyptian and with Welsh and with Gregorian music; he wrote a few poems which his best friends couldn't understand and which would never be published; after forty-four years he died. Yes, like Don Quixote. His poems gloss over none of the suffering and defeat, yet when we read them, as when we read Cervantes, the final note is not the groan of a spiritual Tobacco Road, but the cry of gratitude which Hopkins once heard a cricketer give for a good stroke, "Arrah, sweet myself!"[39]

Auden himself strove for this same cry in his poetry. An "Audenesque" style was developed because Auden, like Hopkins or Don Quixote, took a singular route to establish his own voice; but this was not achieved without some assistance from others. To Auden, Hopkins stands both poetically and personally as someone with a larger vision, with an acute sensibility, someone who affirms both individuality and hope for the human spirit. One can only conjecture about the exact extent to which Hopkins influenced Auden--but Auden's admiration for the "knight of the infinite" is clear. It may, perhaps, be Hopkins' example that enables Auden to write, even on the brink of World War Two:

> Defenceless under the night
> Our world in stupor lies;
> Yet, dotted everywhere,
> Ironic points of light
> Flash out wherever the Just
> Exchange their messages:
> May I, composed like them
> Of Eros and of dust,
> Beleaguered by the same
> Negation and despair,
> Show an affirming flame.[40]

CHAPTER II: CECIL DAY LEWIS

As Stephen Spender writes in his autobiography World Within World (1951), it was Auden's enthusiasm for Hopkins that led the young poets at Oxford to explore the work of the Jesuit poet. "He [Auden] then told me who was good. These included Wilfred Owen, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Edward Thomas, A.E. Housman and, of course, T.S. Eliot."[1] Auden and his contemporaries recognized in Hopkins a sense of newness that set him apart from Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian Verse. Like Auden himself, his friends admired as much as Hopkins' technical innovations the spiritual affirmation that overrides even the bleakest despair. Conscious of their position as a generation caught between the aftermath of World War I, the rise of Fascism and the shadow of World War II, and directly following a period of literature characterized by T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land, these poets relized the need for the "affirming flame"[2] evident in Hopkins' poetry.

The spirit of the times caused all of the "Auden group" in their undergraduate years to become involved in the Communist cause to various degrees, although in later years their political commitment faded. Auden, for example, is today largely regarded as a religious poet rather than a political one. Cecil Day Lewis, on the other hand, was the most political of the group, and is most often characterized by the terms "post-war" poet and "Left poet"; he has even been called "'the' Communist poet and propag-

andist."[3] The influence of a Victorian Jesuit priest upon a modern, Communist poet is not as incongruous as it may first appear. Day Lewis recognized that Hopkins' innovations in rhythm and diction, the energy and concentration, matched the rising hysteria of his times, and that the conflict in Hopkins' personal dramas could be transfered easily to a more public realm.

In A Hope for Poetry (1934), Day Lewis writes that the sense of conflict manifest in Hopkins' poems is what gives them their unique vitality. Indeed, "in most poets there is an intermittent conflict between the poetic self and the rest of the man; it is by reconciling the two, not by eliminating the one, that they can reach their full stature."[4] The strict disciplines of the Society of Jesus which Hopkins voluntarily imposes upon his passions could not but add to the sense of stress in his poetry. The discipline which limited him also provided both subject and structure for his poetry. For Day Lewis, the tone of Hopkins' thought--the sense of frustration and suffering, yet the ability to derive strength from the suffering--seems closely related to twentieth-century concerns. In a review of The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins[5], Day Lewis notes that an external discipline is necessary to modern poetry. "In this sense, Hopkins was working under conditions by no means dissimilar to those of the Communist poet to-day. There was nothing in the nature of those conditions to prevent the poetic activity being at once autonomous and subservient to a tradition and purpose wider than its own."[6]

In some ways, it seems that the greater the conflict the

better the poetry. Day Lewis felt that Hopkins' "No Worst, There is None" is "the greatest poem he ever wrote...His intense faith and his violent spiritual agonies are experiences which few of us today--happily or unhappily--are able to share; they caused some of his most magnificent poems."[7] That Hopkins' inner, moral struggles were related to a larger, social dissent seemed evident to poets such as Day Lewis, and this was reinforced by such authorities as Charles Williams, who in the introduction to the second edition (1930) of Hopkins' poems points out "the simultaneous consciousness of a controlled universe, and yet of division, conflict and crisis within that universe..."[8] There is a similar conflict in Day Lewis' world between the wars, "an age divided between tomorrow's wink, yesterday's warning."[9] The sense of universal despair in the thirties was often transposed onto the individual, in physical imagery often reminiscent of Hopkins, where the speaker feels God's finger touching him, or when he asks, in "Carrion Comfort", "Why wouldst thou rude on me/ Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lionlimb against me? scan/ With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones?" For Day Lewis, the inner torment is also felt physically, when

> In these our winter days
> Death's iron tongue is glib
> Numbing with fear all flesh upon
> A fiery globe.[10]

In a later poem, Day Lewis employs similar physical imagery to convey the sense of both personal and universal struggle:

> In me two worlds at war
> Trample the patient flesh,
> This lighted ring of sense where clinch
> Heir and ancestor.[11]

In the same volume, a poem entitled "The Conflict" counteracts the pervading sense of despair with the affirmative voice of a speaker emulating the role of the tall nun in Hopkins' "The Wreck of the Deutschland". Although "as one between two massing powers I live",

> I sang as one
> Who on a tilting deck sings
> To keep men's courage up, though the wave hangs
> That shall cut off their sun.[12]

The sense of hope rising above despair pervades both Day Lewis' personal and political poems. As Babette Deutsch says in This Modern Poetry (1936), "Is not the very fact of Hopkins's religious certainty crossed though it was, as the 'terrible sonnets' show, by anguishing doubts, but informing his work with a centrifugal power, one secret of his influence over those young defenders of the Communist faith?"[13]

Day Lewis' The Magnetic Mountain (1933) is a highly political poem; its central image, the mountain with its beacon of light, is the symbol of Communist hope. Although it is surrounded by darkness and war, it draws the conscientious toward revolution and a better world. The images of candles and flames which Hopkins associates with faith are prevalent also in Day Lewis' poem:

> There, as a candle's beam
> Stands firm and will not waver
> Spire-straight in a close chamber,

As though in a shadowy cave a
Stalagmite of flame,
The integral spirit climbs
The dark in light forever. (The Magnetic Mountain, #14)

This is the same "vital candle" of Hopkins' "The Candle Indoors", the light in darkness of "The Lantern out of Doors", and especially that of "That nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection", where "across my foundering deck shone/ A beacon, an eternal beam" that makes man "Immortal Diamond". Alliterative phrases such as "heat haze", "hang-fire heart" and "a beacon burning/ Shall sign the peace we hoped for...Beckon, O beacon, and O sun, be soon!" with its vowel modulations, reveal a close relationship to Hopkins.

As in Hopkins' "To R.B.", poetry itself, "the strong spur live and lancing like the blowpipe flame", becomes an inspiriting force:

Tempt me no more; for I
Have known the lightning's hour,
The poet's inward pride,
The certainty of power.

Bayonets are closing round.
I shrink; yet I must wring
A living from despair,
And out of steel a song. (The Magnetic Mountain, #24)

In The Magnetic Mountain, Day Lewis borrows from Hopkins' "The Windhover", "The Caged Skylark" and "Carrion Comfort". The opening image is one that even the most skeptical of critics would agree is indebted to Hopkins:

Now to be with you, elate, unshared,
My kestrel joy, O hoverer in wind,

Over the quarry furiously at rest
Chaired on shoulders of shouting wind.

Where's that unique one, wind and wing married,
Aloft in contact of earth and ether;
Feathery my comet, Oh too often
From heaven harried by carrion cares. (#1)

As Hopkins' caged bird, "aloft on turf or perch or poor low stage" still can "both sing sometimes the sweetest, sweetest spells", Day Lewis can also vow, echoing "Carrion Comfort",

You shall no further feast
Your pride upon my flesh.
Cry for the moon: here's but
An instantaneous flash. (#18)

Even though "winter still rides rough-shod upon us,/ Summer comes not for wishing nor warmth at will" (#29), the poet still has a "spirit steeled in fire" (#4) that gives him the strength to reach the mountain. Day Lewis' kestrel circling the mountain is like Hopkins' Windhover, a sign of a messiah. Day Lewis combines both Christian and Communist hopes in his choice of imagery. Trials, such as the flood which both destroys and cleanses, like the austerities of Hopkins' personal discipline, are sustaining and strengthening to the spirit. The messianic motif is continued in Part III of The Magnetic Mountain where Day Lewis uses as an epigraph lines from Hopkins' poem "Peace", "He comes with work to do, he does not come to coo." Alluding, perhaps, to Christ's announcement that he came to bring not peace but a sword, the epigraph reinforces the need for action rather than passivity in bringing about a new era.

This desire for action was a major concern for Day Lewis and his friends, and poetry became for them a means of action. Between the two World Wars, Oxford undergraduates published an annual anthology of their poetry. Oxford Poetry 1927 was jointly edited by Auden and Day Lewis. Their preface to this volume, in which they attempt to express the problems not only of the artist in the modern world, but also those that are the common inheritance of their generation, was soon dubbed by critics the "Oxford Manifesto".[15] In the Preface, Auden and Day Lewis summarize the issues that remain throughout the following decade. They see themselves in a time of confusion and questioning, in which "the chaos of values which is the substance of our environment is not consistent with a standardization of thought, though, on the political analogy, it may have to be superceded by one."[16] They feel that older doctrines, moral and poetic, have not survived the changing times, and thus, "no universalized system--political, religious or metaphysical--has been bequeathed to us... ."[17] They are refering not only to their political, but also to their immediate literary predecessors such as Eliot, Yeats and Pound, the "masters" of Modernism, who they felt left them a legacy of spiritual drought. As a "generation", "what we had, then, in common was in part Auden's influence, in part also not so much our relationship to one another, as to what had gone immediately before us."[18] One of their methods of solving this "chaos of values" was to look beyond their immediate past, to sift through what was left for them and to create their own world.

In A Hope for Poetry (1934), Day Lewis claims as their "immediate ancestors" Eliot, Wilfred Owen and Gerard Manley Hopkins.[19] These poets are created "ancestors" with whom they felt more affinity than with their merely chronological predecessors, because of a "feeling each of us has some personal link with the past, some natural or quasi-supernatural being from whom we draw power and refreshment, someone with whom a sudden recognition of kinship takes place, is of first importance to us."[20] From Eliot they received a vision of society which they hoped to mend; from Owen they derived the view that "the poetry is in the pity"[21]; from Hopkins they gained a new rhetoric--an energetic liberation from traditional conventions of diction. In the undergraduate verse of Oxford Poetry 1927, the tribute which the young poets pay to these "ancestors" is much in evidence in the manner of their assimilation of their "ancestors'" images and techniques. Poems by Auden, Day Lewis and MacNeice in this volume contain echoes of Hopkins, as do many of the poems by their fellow students. The widespread enthusiasm for Hopkins is plain in Auden's "Consider if you will, how lovers lie", Day Lewis' fragments from Transitional Poem, and MacNeice's "Narcissus":

> ...Waves
> White beat and billowy black, rush black and white
> With gleaming teeth and couple where they cleft
> To rend that beauty if they cannot end it. (p.18)

Rex Warner adopts Hopkins' compound epithets in "Moon-blind and star-sick heart"[22] and his alliteration and energetic imagery in "Nativity":

> Metallic veins of silver running and gold
> Swollen swell to bursting: old
> Scarps flush with pain: they groan
> No man's hills: in the granite house
> Of all times the perpetual bone
> Cries for deliverance, cries... .(p.43)

Warner borrows from "The Wreck of the Deutschland", where "a lush-kept plush-capped sloe/ Will, mouthed to flesh-burst,/ Gush! -flush the man, the being with it, sour or sweet..."(stanza 8) and combines it with the image from "The Caged Skylark", where "As a dare-gale skylark scanted in a dull cage/ Man's mounting spirit in his bone-house, mean house, dwells".

Fellow student R.M. Scott reveals his debt to Hopkinsian syntax and ellipses in lines such as " what sights you, heart, saw, ways you went:/ And more must, in yet longer lights delay"[23] and compound epithets in expressions such as "dare-gale skylark" and "care-coiled" heart[24]:

> Happy who can, with indolent complaint,
> Lull to quiescence his sick-fearing heart
> Rhyme out of memory the ungracious saint
> Or obdurate boy that made his fever start.[25]

Although these imitations may be over-obvious, they do show the young poets' enthusiasm for the technique and for Hopkins' poetry itself. Imitating Hopkins, Day Lewis feels, is the proper way to both show his admiration for him, and to place himself and his fellow poets in the line of true poetry, for "we claim for these 'real ancestors' only this: that great men, heroes, men who have seemed to live at a higher pressure than the rest, can brim over into posterity. Their immortality is not through lip-service and stone monuments, not in any act of memory; is not external to us, but works in our minds,

our blood and our bones."[26] It is also worked out in their poetry. They believed, as T.S. Eliot asserted, that, "if we approach a poet without his prejudices we shall find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously."[27]

In his admiration for Hopkins, Day Lewis goes so far as to call him a "true revolutionary poet", "for his imagination was always breaking up and melting down the inherited forms of language, fusing them into new possibilities, hammering them into new shapes."[28] Hopkins' experiments with words "entitle him to the position of inaugurator of this revolution in language...responsible for new arrangements and cadences of words"[29] which are characteristic of Modern poetry. Perhaps, because of the political climate, this sense of revolution and awareness of place in history seems commonplace among the literary critics of the period, who all mention that every new movement in poetry has been a reaction against the ideas and techniques of the preceeding generation.

Yet, at the same time, this "revolution" involves a rediscovery of what has been temporarily forgotten or neglected. Modern poets were highly conscious of tradition not only as something to rebel against, but as something to grow out of. Howard Sergeant's Tradition in the Making of Modern Poetry (1951) is representative of criticism in the 1930's, following Eliot and Leavis in the belief that "The poet's originality consists in his creative power to extend, develop or change the tradition in some individual

way as the result of his technical craftsmanship and/or his personal experience and understanding of life."[30] For Hopkins, both technical ability and personal sensibility are responsible for his own development. Hopkins used the cadences of Piers Plowman, Milton and Shakespeare, and took them a step further to create his own rhythm. Although he claimed that "the effect of studying masterpieces is to make me admire and do otherwise"[31], he concedes that "art depends entirely on living tradition."[32] In this respect Hopkins anticipates the much-quoted T.S. Eliot, who says that "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists."[33]

In A Hope for Poetry, Day Lewis employs the word "ancestor" precisely because "it expresses for us, in a word, the only possible patriotism, the one necessary link with the past, and the meaning of tradition."[34] Claiming Hopkins as an ancestor Day Lewis honours him by basing his own poetic experiments on Hopkins' example. Although some of his early work is often merely pastiche Hopkins, in his enthusiasm for Hopkins' innovations, Day Lewis, like W.H.Auden, soon develops along his own lines, yet always aware of his position in the poetic movement and that " all experiment is made on a basis of tradition; all tradition is the crystallization of experiment."[35]

Although developing out of tradition, Day Lewis believes that poetry must also derive from the contemporary situation and that "the poet is committed to his time."[36] For this reason, he felt, Eliot produced The Waste Land, and Day Lewis produced Leftist poetry.

Day Lewis follows Hopkins' belief that "a perfect style must be of its age."[37] Hopkins condemned Swinburne and Tennyson for their archaic diction, and Hopkins himself did all that he could to avoid outworn poetic vocabulary, "For it seems to me that the poetic language of an age shd. 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."[38] Hopkins' insistence on the contemporaneity of language led him to "invent" new words by combining existing ones to find the most accurate descriptions. His language is as complex as "daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon"[39], or as simple as the statement, "Nothing is so beautiful as spring".[40] Yet, because the language should be "the current language heightened," Hopkins rarely employs such simplicity in more than one line at a time. His criticism of his fellow Victorian poets was that their poetry settled into stale, motionless rhythmical patterns to which the reader became so accustomed he no longer noticed them.[41] Hopkins reawakened the ear to language by employing Sprung Rhythm, which he felt combines the natural rhythm of speech--the current language--with the movement of music, making it both natural and marked at the same time.

Like Hopkins, Day Lewis and his contemporaries wanted to reawaken the ear to their message; hence, "we find in post-war poetry a tendency to combine these two results, to use common speech rhythms together with a mixture of simplified, superficially unpoetical language and highly poetical incantatory language."[42]

The view of modern poetry as primarily "an exploration of the possibilites of language,"[43] a search for methods of restoring freshness to words, has often been seen as contributing to the obscurity of the poetry of the 1930's. Yet this obscurity, as well as a certain degree of austerity in diction, is deliberate. It involved an attempt to return to what Hopkins admired in Dryden, the "masculine" style that lays "the strongest stress of all our literature on the naked thew and sinew of the English language...".[44] Similarly Day Lewis strove for an athletic, muscular poetry, which, like the Anglo-Saxon, was assertive and controlled rather than sentimental and indulgent. His rhythms are driven for the most part, rather than fluent. The images--fires, floods, conflicts, forging--are also energetic. Because poetry should be "of its age", Day Lewis felt that the "masculine" rhythms and imagery of Hopkins best suited the "rhythm" of the modern world:

> But an eccentric hour may come, when systems
> Not stars divide the dark; and then life's pistons
> Pounding into their secret cylinder
> Begin to tickle the most anchorite ear
> With hints of mechanisms that include
> The man, and once that rhythm arrests the blood
> Who would be satisfied his mind is no
> Continent but an archepelago? (Transitional Poem, #14)

In The Magnetic Mountain, the coming flood which will bring a new world will be manned by "the true, the tested...Sure-foot, Surveyor, Spark and Strong". (#29) Alliteration, inverted syntax and condensation help to create the deliberately active and energetic language:

What floods will rise then through rivers replenished,
Embankments broken, and bluffs undone...
Make haste, put through the emergency order
For an overtime, day, for double shifts working:
Weather is breaking, tomorrow we must board her,
Cast off into chaos and shape a course.
Many months have gone to her making,
Wood well-seasoned for watertight doors,
The old world's best in her ribs and ballast,
White-heat, high pressure, the heart of a new
In boiler, in gadget, in gauge, in screw.
Peerless on water, Oh proud our palace,
A home for heroes, the latest of her line;
A beater to windward, obedient to rudder,
A steamer into storm, a hurricane-rider,
Foam-stepper, star-steering, freighter and fighter... (#29)

From Feathers to Iron (1931) employs the same rhythms and "masculine" language of The Magnetic Mountain. About the birth of his first child, it is one of the few early works of Day Lewis that is not overtly political. Here, too, Hopkinsian techniques are used to suggest energy and anticipation. Alliteration and internal cross-rhyme rein back the rhythm in the early poems, to increase the sense of the poet's impatience:

Come, autumn, use the spur!
Let us not still defer
To drive slow furrows in the impatient soil:
Persuade us now these last
Silk summer shreds to cast
And fasten on the harsh habit of toil. (#3)

Day Lewis uses internal rhyme and ellipses in a "Windhover"-like image that he later picks up in The Magnetic Mountain:

Consider then, my lover, this is the end
Of the lark's ascending, the hawk's unearthly hover:
Spring season is over soon and first heatwave;
Grave-browed with cloud ponders the huge horizon. (#19)

The syntax becomes inverted and more condensed, and Day Lewis employs

Hopkinsian parenthetic interjections as his anticipation increases:

> Speak then of constancy. Thin eyelids weakly thus
> Batted to beauty, lips that reject her, is not this;
> Nor lust of eye (Christ said it) denied the final kiss. (#24)

Matching the rhythm and energy of the poems to the thought, the lines become increasingly long and more concentrated, and the words "masculine", as the birth of the child approaches, "For think-throbbing our hearts linked so by endless band/ So geared together, need not otherwise be bound", and "all is recorded--/ Early green, drought, ripeness, rainfall." (#26) The energy compounds itself until the final moment, "screwed to storm-pitch, where thunder shall roll and roll." (#27)

Even in the Preface to Oxford Poetry 1927 the language applied to the artist is dynamic and suggests friction--"conflict", "struggle" and "effort" are common--because of the mood of the period. In poetry they aimed for what Hopkins called the highest type of language, the "language of inspiration", of which Hopkins said, "I mean by it a mood of great, abnormal in fact, mental acuteness, either energetic or receptive, according as the thoughts which arise in it seem generated by a stress and action of the brain, or to strike into it unasked."[45]

Although this definition implies an almost explosive outpouring of "inspiration", it is, in fact, only the final result, for the composition of Hopkins' poems was slow and laborious. As with the combination of freedom and order supplied by Sprung Rhythm, Hopkins' interest in variety and pattern, the 'inscape' of things,

overflowed into the forms of his poems themselves; never depending entirely upon the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling", he worked and reworked his poems. He often used the sonnet form because it enabled him to design a carefully wrought structural pattern. He even laid down self-imposed poetic rules in his letters to Bridges, Baillie and Dixon.

Day Lewis' own concern with form led him to adopt many Hopkinsian techniques: rhythm and alliteration are used to maintain a design that catches the ear. As Hopkins says in "Henry Purcell", "It is the forgèd feature finds me." In The Magnetic Mountain, Day Lewis employs internal rhyme to produce an ear-catching pattern which runs counter to the rhythm. Examples of cross-rhyme such as "Drowned in his fierceness,/ By his midsummer browned",(#14), Day Lewis says, "can impart a subdued, sustained, melodic tone to verse, and enable the writer to use rhyme words which have grown stale as end rhymes."[46]

Emphasizing the importance of craft and new forms in modern poetry, Day Lewis says that "the poet is an artificer by profession, an architect experimenting with a variety of materials, concerned with level and stresses, old foundations, new designs."[47] He sees Hopkins' own innovations as "experimenting with words as a child of genius might invent a new style of architecture while playing with bricks."[48] In Transitional Poem, Part II (first published in Oxford Poetry 1927) Day Lewis uses similar imagery to write of his own position as an artist in a chaotic world:

Now I have come to reason
And cast my school-boy clout,
Disorder I see is without...
I felt, in my scorning
Of common poet's talk
As arrogant as the hawk
When he mounts above the morning.

Rejecting the outmoded verse of "common poet's talk", he realizes that he must break down the components of poetry, and build new structures out of the rubble of the past:

I sit in a wood and stare
Up at untroubled branches
Locked together and staunch as
Though girders of air;
And think, the first wind rising
Will crack that intricate crown
And let the daylight down.
But there is naught surprising
Can explode the single mind;
Let figs from thistles fall
Or stars from their pedestal,
Here's architecture will stand.

For Day Lewis, the language, images and form must, like new architecture, all be "of its age." As with Hopkins, the newness of the diction is in part conditioned by a different choice of subject matter. Hopkins was concerned with specific detailed descriptions of what were often everyday objects and events in the world around him. His imagery drew from the natural world, whether glorious or blighted, and from the human world of the parishes in which he worked. For Day Lewis, also, the subject of his poetry is the world around him--the modern world with its difficult economics and politics. The images that he uses embrace those aspects of technology which have become a part of the industrialized landscape:

> Out of the dark a new world flowers.
> There in the womb, in the rich veins
> Are tools, dynamos, bridges, towers,
> Your tractors and your travelling-cranes. (The Magnetic Mountain, #28)

It was necessary to employ such imagery because it was an inextricable part of the world the poets of the 1930's lived in. Critics have since dubbed the Auden Group "the Pylon Poets" because of their ability to write lyrically about machinery, airplanes, trains and hydro pylons. In The Poet's Task (1951) Day Lewis says that a poet "does not deliberately choose his subjects or his images. Both his sensuous memories and those symbols with which he must wrestle intellectually are imposed upon him; they are authentic--true for him, that is, because from the whole mass of his thought and experience, they stand out, persistently or with a sudden irresistible compulsion asking to be reborn."[49]

In a Hopkinsian style which uses ellipses, alliteration, assonance, compound adjectives and lines broken in the middle of words, Day Lewis explains that each generation finds beauty in new forms:

> Beauty breaks ground, O, in strange places,
> Seen after cloudburst down the bone-dry watercourses
> In Texas a great gusher, a grain--
> Elevator in the Ukrain plain;
> To a generation turns new faces. (From Feathers to Iron, #26)

No doubt aware of Hopkins' "As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;/ As tumbled over rim in roundy wells/ stones ring...", Day Lewis extracts both the cadence and the thought, paralleling the closing image of "As kingfishers catch fire..." where

> Christ plays in ten thousand places
> Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
> To the Father through the features of mens faces.

Just as Hopkins could write of sea disasters and the unemployed, and of weeds rather than flowers, Day Lewis argues that "it is generally admitted now that there are no sense-data necessarily ineligible for poetic metaphor; it is no longer accepted by the poet that a factory has not the qualifications for poetic treatment of a flower."[50] In Transitional Poem, #30, Beauty may be found even in a muddy canal, because "beauty is/ a motion of the mind."

An intellectual understanding of the physical environment is important to Day Lewis. For him, machinery is not necessarily the ugly, destructive and unnatural thing it could be considered to be. Instead, machinery holds a possible beauty and purpose all its own. It represents power and energy, and more specifically energy which can be controlled. In the post-Waste Land world in which they lived, the thirties' poets felt that energy was just what their drifting decade needed. Aided by the sense of energy in Hopkins' "masculine" poetic style, they attempted to make their readers more awake to the realities of their time, and to what they felt was a "need for action".[51]

For Hopkins, although "all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil,"[52] "God's Grandeur" prevails in both the natural and social worlds, so for Day Lewis, "Wrenching a stony song from scant acre,/ The Word still justifies its maker."[53] The spiritual force of England which Hopkins saw in spite of his "sordid turbid

time"[54] and which Day Lewis saw in the Communist cause, is linked to the natural world as well as to industrial decay, urban bleakness and poverty. It is simply necessary that one become aware of the realities of existence. As Auden and Charles Plumb wrote in the Preface to Oxford Poetry 1926, "If it is a natural preference to inhabit a room with casements opening upon Fairyland, one at least of them should open upon the Waste Land."[55] This firm basis in the real world is what set Hopkins apart from his contemporaries Tennyson and the Pre-Raphaelites, with their fake Mediaevalism--Hopkins, in contrast, has what F.R. Leavis calls "a grasp of the real."[56] In "Spring and Fall" and "Binsey Poplars", for example, Hopkins sees transience as a necessary condition of grasping reality. As Geoffrey Grigson says, "The concern for such a grasp is there in the concrete qualities that give his poetry vitality--which, we have seen, involves an energy of intelligence."[57]

The intellect plays a vital role in modern poetry. In the Preface to Oxford Poetry 1927, Auden and Day Lewis state the "tripartite problem" that remains for their generation. The first part they see as a struggle between the intellect and the emotions:

> The psychological conflict between self as subject and self as object, which is patent in the self-consciousness and emotional stultification resultant from the attempt to synchronize within the individual mind the synthesis and the analysis of experience. Such appears to be the prime development of this century, our experiment in the 'emergent evolution of mind.' Emotion is no longer necessarily to be analysed by 'recollection in tranquillity'; it is to be prehended emotionally and intellectually at once. And this is of most importance to the poet; for it is his mind that must bear the brunt of the conflict and may be the first to realize the new harmony which would imply the success of this synchronization. (p.vi)

Hopkins could create the sensuous images of "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire..." or those of the highly-wrought passions of the Sonnets of Desolation, and temper them with the moral view and social conscience of poems such as "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and "Tom's Garland". Although T.S. Eliot did not admire Hopkins' poetry, Hopkins' poems succeeded in achieving the attribute that Eliot admired, for they "brought back to verse a new balance between thought and emotion, between classic and romantic...they put thought back into emotion and emotion into thought."[58] It was this "intellectual emotionalism" that Day Lewis and his generation attempted to capture in their own poetry.

The remainder of the "tripartite problem" of the artist deals with the nature of language, words which cannot be divorced from the intellect or the emotions. The "psychological conflict" continues with

> (b) The ethical conflict; a struggle to reconcile the notion of Pure Art, 'an art completely isolated from everything but its own laws of operation and the object to be created as such, with those exigencies which its conditions of existence as a product of a human mind and culture must involve, where the one cannot be ignored nor the other enslaved.
>
> (c) The logical conflict, between the denotatory and the connotatory sense of words, which is the root divergence of classic and romantic; between, that is to say, an asceticism tending to kill language by stripping words of all association and a hedonism tending to kill language by dissipating their sense under a multiplicity of associations. (pp.vi-vii)

Neither Hopkins nor Day Lewis could write "Pure" poetry which involves playing games with the sound of words, with no regard to the search for truth. Day Lewis writes that sound patterns are what distinguish

poetry from prose; "A poem must be stripped, rarified, till nothing is left but the volatile essence of poetry itself. The poet must create as it were a new species of life, comparable with no other form of life, unanswerable to no laws but its own. He must aim to do with words what the musician has succeeded in doing with sounds."[59] Hopkins too based some of his experiments with language on auditory effects, "so perhaps the reflections and intonations of the speaking voice may give effects more beautiful than any attainable by the fixed pitches of music."[60] He hoped that his use of alliteration and assonance, syntax, ellipses and internal rhyme would "succeed in re-establishing poetry as a delight for the ear."[61] However, poetry must be more than that. Hopkins blamed Swinburne for "a perpetual functioning of genius without truth, feeling, or any adequate matter to function on."[62] Without any concern for truth in poetry, "words only are only words."[63] Day Lewis, also, acknowledges a view of language in which words function as aspects of vision; sounds and words, like the features of external nature which Hopkins read, are signs of a larger truth, for "one can neither write nor exist completely severed from all beliefs, and the beliefs which a writer holds or against which he is reacting are bound to affect his writing."[64]

Yet, at the other extreme, strict propaganda does not make poetry either. The poet must strike a balance between the music of poetry and the message of his verse, for "Doctrinal verse, didactic verse are very well, but they are not poetry, unless the moral truths have been translated into poetic truth."[65] What Day Lewis

calls the "highest poetry" is "the poetry which most illuminates human experience, in which moral and sensuous truth go deepest."[66] This balance he feels is achieved in Hopkins' poetry.

For the same reason that Henry Purcell's music so affected Hopkins, the technical effects of poetry must be the manifestation of an inner need. Purcell's "proud fire" "is the rehearsal/ of own, of abrupt self there so thrusts on, so throngs the ear." In a head-note to the poem, Hopkins praises Purcell because, "whereas other musicians have given utterance to the moods of man's mind, he has, beyond that, uttered in notes the very make and species of man as created both in him and in all men generally."[67] The music of poetry cannot be "pure" but must be a fusion of sound and sense. In The Magnetic Mountain, #32, Day Lewis combines alliteration, condensation and ellipsis to create a rhythm which, combined with musical terminology, attempts to capture "the roll, the rise, the carol, the creation" of the English landscape. As well, never forgetting the need for truth, what may seem romantic pastoralism is firmly planted in the contemporary world:

> The slow movement of clouds in benediction,
> Clear arias of light thrilling over her uplands,
> Over the chords of summer sustained peacefully;
> Ceaseless the leaves' counterpoint in a west wind lively,
> Blossom and river rippling loveliest allegro,
> And the storms of wood strings brass at year's finale:
> Listen: Can you not hear the entrance of a new theme?

For Day Lewis, this "new theme" was both the "Communist hope" and "a hope for poetry". In both cases, it involved regeneration, a healing of the spiritual Waste Land left after World War I:

Through that artesian well
Myself will out,
Finding its own level.
This way the Waste land turns
To arable, and towns
Are rid of drought. (From Feathers to Iron, #16)

The necessity of conflict, the Hopkinsian paradox of "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire...", where destructive elements ultimately prove positive, appealed to the spirit of the thirties. In the Preface to Oxford Poetry 1927, Day Lewis and Auden say that "our youth should be a period of spiritual discipline" (p.vii) because discipline is strengthening and sustaining. For them, like Hopkins,

But two there are, shadow us everywhere
And will not let us be till we are dead,
Hardening the bones, keeping the spirit spare,
Original in water, earth and air,
Our bitter cordial, our daily bread. (The Magnetic Mountain, #2)

Again, even the violent clashing of opposing forces does not result in desolation:

Only at highest power
Can love and fear become
Their equilibrium,
And in that eminent hour
A virtue is made plain
Of passionate cleavage
Like the hill's cutting edge
When the sun sets to rain.
This is the single mind,
This the star-solved equation
Of life with life's negation.
A deathless cell designed
To demonstrate death's act,
Which, the more surely it moves
To earth's influence, but proves
Itself the more intact. (Transitional Poem, #26)

The technical devices which Day Lewis borrowed from Hopkins supply the sense of energy and urgency, the "highest power" needed to match his messages to the needs of the times. Adopting Hopkins' blend of classicism and romanticism, emotion and thought, graphically realised desolation and spiritual affirmation, his sense of tradition as well as contemporaneity, Day Lewis pays tribute to the poet whom he feels is one of his "real ancestors" in the poetic tradition.

CHAPTER III: STEPHEN SPENDER

Stephen Spender, like Cecil Day Lewis, was for a time regarded as a "Left poet" writing about the politics and economics of his times. His interest in subjects from the world around him led him "to realize that unpoetic-seeming things were material for poetry."[1] Appreciating all things "counter, original, spare, strange", he could, like Hopkins, write of the more sordid aspects of urban life--industry, unemployment, poverty--side by side with idyllic aspects of nature. In The Struggle of the Modern (1963), Spender admires Hopkins' portrayal of the modern environment, quoting "God's Grandeur" and noting that "God fills the world which seems alien to Him, is felt most in those forces of the industrial scene which appear most empty of Him."[2] In Spender's well-known poem "The Pylons", he too reconciles the conflicting nature of social change, where traditional poetic items of the English countryside are contrasted with "the quick perspective of the future":

> The secret of these hills was stone, and cottages
> Of that stone made,
> And crumbling roads
> That turned on sudden villages.
>
> Now over these small hills, they have built the concrete
> That trails black wire;
> Pylons, those pillars
> Bare like nude giant girls that have no secret.[3]

Man's effect on nature in several of Hopkins' poems, such

as "Binsey Poplars" and "The Caged Skylark", is echoed by Spender:

> Passing, men are sorry for the birds in cages
> And for unrestricted nature, hedged and lined.
> But what do they say to your pleasant bird
> Physical dalliance, since years confined?
>
> Behind three centuries, behind the trimmed park,
> Woods you felled, your clothes, houses you built,
> Only love remembers where that bird dipped his head,
> Only suns, light years distant, flash along his neck.

Alliteration and half-rhyme, as in the lines "His curvetting joy wakes the solitary stag/ From his coveted sleep", are, like the inverted syntax of "woods you felled", highly suggestive in sound of Hopkins. Phrases such as "Dance will you, and sing?"[4] echo the direct, dramatic adresses of Hopkins' "The Wreck of the Deutschland":

> Ah, touched in your bower of bone,
> Are you! turned for an exquisite smart,
> Have you! make words break from me here all alone,
> Do you!--mother of being in me, heart. (stanza 18)

Here Hopkins' address is to his own heart, although the poem itself is about an actual, external event, and Hopkins uses the event to contemplate his own feelings. This is one quality that especially appealed to Spender. Although he underwent a period in the thirties when he was highly political, like Day Lewis he moved away from political poetry--partly because of disillusionment with the Communist party, but partly also because of his own personality. Spender's interest in the world was always bound by a conflict between the objective world and a more subjective one. Always concerned with "the struggle of the modern," the subject for

Spender was really less the politics than the conflict involved.

Even in Spender's political poems, the personal element is revealed in the lyrical quality of his verse. Spender's poems, as lyrics, are personal expressions of feelings or states of mind. His dominant themes are love and pity, the divided self, and romantic proclamations of faith. As well as being personal, the lyric poems share the musical qualities of Hopkins' verse, and his concern with this extends to his rhythms, word choice, and phrasing. As Hopkins believed that "the natural performance and delivery belonging properly to lyric poetry, which is speech, has not been enough cultivated, and should be,"[5] Spender also believes, with his fellow moderns, that the natural speaking voice provides the best "music" for poetry:

> ...I think that probably the tendency of modern poets is to try to write in a form which is a kind of echo of their own inner voice, or what Ezra Pound called cadence. That is to say, that if you could make tapes of yourself talking in ordinary conversation, or of other people in ordinary conversation and you could analyze what you were saying and could discover a rhythmic unit which is unique to you, then you could base a style or form on this, couldn't you? And I think that is what modern poetry does at its best. It's a sort of imitation of the poet's speaking voice, very concentrated and heightened.[6]

Yet Spender's poems can be characterized as lyrical, personal and musical without being "pure" poetry totally divorced from external meaning. Early in his career he discovered an essential difference between himself and Auden, when the later poet told him that "the subject of a poem is a peg to hang the poetry on."[7] Spender says that, "I could not accept the idea that the poetic experience in reality, which led into a poem, was then, as it were, left behind,

While the poem developed according to verbal needs of its own which had no relation to experience."[8] He also says that "literature should recreate reality in the forms in which it is really living to us, and then gently reassure us with the historic and familiar name."[9] He agrees with Hopkins that "the worst fault a thing can have" is "unreality".[10]

Spender does not reject a writing dependent on musical, highly elaborated sound, and complex patterns of association, however. While a poem cannot completely develop verbally on its own, Spender does acknowledge as Hopkins did that sound is very important. "Sometimes, when I'm in a state of half-waking and half-sleeping, I am conscious of a stream of words which seem to pass through my mind, without their having a meaning, but they have a sound, a sound of passion, or a sound recalling poetry that I know. Again sometimes when I am writing, the music of the words I am trying to shape takes me far beyond the words, I am aware of a rhythm, a dance, a fury, which is as yet empty of words."[11] As it is for Hopkins, sound is crucial to Spender's poetry; one of the sounds Spender is fond of eliciting is the repetitive phrase common in Hopkins' poems, such as "this tormented mind/ With this tormented mind tormenting yet,"[12] and especially in "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo". As with Hopkins, Spender's use of repetition is for more than mere musical effect; although his meaning is often obscured, the involution of the words reveal the complexity of Spender's existence. "It changes love/ for love of being loved or loving", and even the title of his autobiography, World Within World (1951) reveals this compound life.

"Dark and Light", where "The outward figure of delight/ Creates your image that's no image/ Dark in my dark language", is a characteristic Spender poem, illustrating a sense of a divided existence. In this poem the day represents the world, the night the subjective self. The repetition and ambiguity combine to make clear a complicated state of mind in the author:

> To break out of the chaos of my darkness
> Into a lucid day, is all my will.
> My words like eyes through night, strain to seek
> Some centre for their light: and acts that throw me
> To distant places through impatient violence
> Yet join together to curve a path of stone
> Out of my darkness into a lucid day.

The antithetical impulses in Spender's mind are reflected in the tightly wrought structure of the stanzas. The repeated phrases form a chiasmus: the first line repeated at the beginning of the last line, and the second line at the end of the last line. This pattern is mirrored in the second stanza. Both the form of the phrases and the thought itself--the conflict between Spender's subjective and objective worlds--become reconciled in the last three lines, where

> The world, my life, binds the dark and light
> Together, reconciles and separates
> In lucid day the chaos of my darkness.

For Spender, the form of the poem is as important as the ideas, for it lies in "the struggle of certain living material to achieve itself within a pattern."[13] Writing involves a search for something shaped and solid, "like the faceted crystal/ or the created

poem."[14] It is the permanent ordering of words that he admires in Hopkins, "for it reveals the struggle towards the form, which because it has direction and movement, and is indeed an expression of will, projects the idea of form towards which the poem is moving, reaching even beyond the form itself. Thus the tormented statements of Gerard Manley Hopkins, in which living material endeavors to force itself into the mould of the sonnet, suggest the sonnet far more powerfully than the correct sonnets of his friend Robert Bridges."[15] Shaping the poem as an artifact, Spender employs devices such as repetition mainly to do duty to the form of the poem as an autonomous entity.

Assonance and alliteration are also frequent, not only to maintain a design, but for the importance of their sound. The musical equivalence of the words, as in Hopkins' "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo", have associations that carry the mind beyond the sound, to visual images and abstract ideas--colour, light and energy that in turn have mental reverberations. Hopkins' Golden Echo is typical of much of his sentence structure:

> Come then, your ways and airs and looks, locks, maidengear,
> gallantry and gaiety and grace,
> Winning ways, airs innocent, maiden manners, sweet looks,
> loose locks, long locks, lovelocks, gaygear, going gallant,
> girlgrace--
> Resign them, sign them, seal them, send them, motion them
> with breath
> And with sighs soaring, soaring sighs, deliver
> Them...

The images in "Spelt from Sybil's Leaves" are compacted into a sim-

ilar structure, where

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

The alliterating words move through a pattern of vowel gradations, in which the suggestion of the words also slides through a series of closely connected, yet varied meanings, the various sense impressions forming a whole. What some critics have thought of as Hopkins' "magnetically grouped"[16] imagery, has, in Spender's poetry been referred to as his "fluid-image" technique.[17] The flow from image to image in such lines as "eye, gazelle, delicate wanderer"[18], where the connection between the eye as a physical object itself, and the eye as a swift, gracefully moving living thing, is implicit rather than explicit, but the image as a whole calls up meanings far beyond the attractiveness of the sound of the words. The images seem almost to generate themselves, as in a free association, stream-of-consciousness technique. They are personal images that come from deep within the poet, and they resolve themselves in a final form unique to him. There is a return to the individual at the base of all of Spender's poetry.

Spender's poem "Oh young men oh young comrades" has a Hopkinsian concentration, the result of repetition and a rich configuration of images. The rhythm, marked by a sparcity of punctuation, gives the poem a rushing sense:

> Oh young men oh young comrades
> It is too late now to stay in those houses

> your fathers built where they built you to breed
> money on money it is too late
> to make or even to count what has been made
> Count rather those fabulous possessions
> which begin with your body and your fiery soul:
> the hairs on your head the muscles extending
> in ranges with lakes across your limbs
> Count your eyes as jewels and your valued sex
> then count the sun and the innumerable coined light
> sparkling on waves and spangling under trees... .

Again, even the politically enthusiastic address to "comrades" is belied by an appeal to the individual spirit, in an echo of "what heart heard of, ghost guessed" in Hopkins' "Spring and Fall":

> Oh comrades, step beautifully from the solid wall
> advance to rebuild and sleep with friend on hill
> advance to rebel and remember what you have
> no ghost ever had, immured in his hall.

Spender was concerned with poetry and action, like Day Lewis, but he realized sooner than his associate that Auden's advice was true, "Poetry makes nothing happen/ it survives in the valley of its saying."[19]

> Who live under the shadow of a war,
> What can I do that matters?
> My pen stops, and my laughter, dancing, stop,
> Or ride to a gap.
> How often, on the powerful crest of pride,
> I am shot with thought
> That halts the untamed horses of the blood,
> The grip on good;
> That moving, whimpering, and mating, bear
> Tunes to deaf ears:
> Stuffed with the realer passions of the earth
> Beneath this hearth.

Eventually rejecting dogmatic Communism, Spender divorced

himself from the Party, and concentrated on the more subjective, personal poetry that seemed most natural to him. He followed Auden and Day Lewis' feeling in Oxford Poetry 1927 that art is "the formation of private order out of public chaos."(p.v) Just as the chaos of Hopkins' "dark night of the soul" in the Sonnets of Desolation ultimately becomes the inspiration for his poetry, his gift in "To R.B.", so Spender's personal breakthrough even "without that once clear aim", is found in

> ...the path of flight
> To follow for a lifetime through white air...
> This century chokes me under roots of night
> The city climbs in horror to my brain,
> The writings are my only wings away.[20]

In Spender's forward to The New Realism (1953), he describes his turning away from the political world in favour of more subjective poetry. He believes

> that there is a certain pressure of external events on poets today, making them tend to write about what is outside their own limited experience. The violence of the times we are living in, the necessity of sweeping and general and immediate action, tend to dwarf the experience of the individual and to make his immediate environment and occupations perhaps something that he is even ashamed of. For this reason, in my most recent poems, I have deliberately turned back to a kind of writing which is more personal... .[21]

Even in his earlier political poems, it is clear that for Spender, "a poetry which rejected private experience would have been untrue to me."[22]

Poems such as " What I expected" and "I think continually of those who were truly great" illustrate the value of heroic, personal effort in the "chaos of values" of the thirties. Like Day Lewis,

Spender admired Hopkins for the individualism that he saw as characteristically modern,

> the need to express a situation outside and beyond the present time in imagery which is of the time. This necessity is better illustrated in the works of writers who write out of the pressure of their experience and not because they are conscious of themselves as enclosed in a literary situation--than by those who more obviously express tendencies or belong to movements.[23]

Spender's poems reveal repeated efforts to relate the self to the outside world, for it is the poet's job to transform external phenomena so that they symbolize inner experience. "Ideally," he says, "the artist should transform the environment into his own world."[24] As it is for Hopkins, external actuality is revealed as symbolic of inner consciousness. Hopkins' first-person singular verse reveals this in "The Wreck of the Deutschland", "The Windhover", and the highly personal Sonnets of Desolation. Spender's The Still Centre (1939) and Edge of Being (1949) contain no politics, and are highly personal. They impress because they do have a wider appeal, but still on the individual level rather than the social one. In Life and the Poet (1942), Spender stresses that what is poetic is a criticism of life that is an imaginative effort to relate the universal to the particular, the transitory to the eternal.[25]

Spender's lyrical meditations on the self are, like Hopkins', Whitmanesque. Hopkins' appreciation of selfhood, his passion for individuality that was the base of his admiration for Duns Scotus, was the cause of contradictory feelings in the Jesuit. He confessed

that, "I always knew in my heart Walt Whitman's mind to be more like my own than any other man's living. As he is a very great scoundrel that is not a pleasant confession. And this makes me the more desirous to read him and the more determined that I will not."[26] Spender also admires the stress on the particular and actual, the individualism of Duns Scotus, Whitman and Hopkins. Although Hopkins rejects Whitman, he bears much resemblance to him in the very quality that he admired in him. As Day Lewis points out, "it is still the nature of things which he [Hopkins] was exploring; and his own imagination by which his findings had to be given form. Sooner or later we come back to a single man feeling, remembering, thinking and writing."[27]

The poetry is subjective because "the task of the poet is to spell out the message of the human spirit struggling to exist from the heavy language of inventions, institutions, vulgarism, tyranny--all the machinery of the modern world--into which life has somehow been translated."[28] The individual undergoes as much struggle as the larger, political world; the personal focus may, in fact, give an even stronger appeal to the Hopkinsian techniques borrowed to illustrate that struggle.

Spender's concern with the self in the world is similar to Hopkins' contemplation of "I that die these deaths, that feed this flame" in "The shepherd's brow, fronting forked lightning, owns". His attempt to relate the transitory to the eternal is seen in

> I who say I call that eye I
> Which is the mirror in which things see
> Nothing except themselves. I die.
> The world, the things seen, still will be.

Upon this eye the vast reflections lie
But that which passes, passes away, is I.

For Spender, the poetic is "the realization in art of what rejoices in its being..."[29]: "through the clear waters of their being we look down on the tainted and polluted mud of their actions, and we see how maimed, how blundering, how blind is the world of action compared with the world of being."[30]

Spender's elliptical construction in "Never being, but always at the edge of being" gives a concentration that brings the self closer to the natural world. Like Hopkins' feelings in many of his poems where he attempts to make contact with the spirit of God in the material world, in his journals Hopkins says that, "searching nature I taste self but at one tankard, that of my own being."[31] Spender also strives for this same contact between the inward self and the world:

Never being, but always at the edge of Being,
My head--Death mask--is brought into the sun.
With shadow pointing finger across cheek,
I move lips for tasting, I move hands for touching,
But never come nearer than touching
Though Spirit lean outward for seeing.
Observing rose, gold, eyes, and admired landscape,
My senses record the act of wishing,
Wishing to be
Rose, gold, landscape or another.
I claim fulfilment in the fact of loving.

Spender's well-known poem, "I think continually of those who were truly great" asserts the same spirit of the individual, and is an affirmation of man in a world "charged with the grandeur

of God":

> What is precious, is never to forget
> The essential delight of the blood drawn from ageless springs...
> Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother
> With noise and fog, the flowering of the Spirit.
>
> Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields,
> See how these names are fêted by the waving grass
> And by the streamers of white cloud.
> And whispers of wind in the listening sky.
> The names of those who in their lives fought for life,
> Who wore at their hearts the fire's centre.
> Born of the sun, they travelled a short while toward the sun
> And left the vivid air signed with their honour.

As with "Never being, but always at the edge of being," the senses--"lips for tasting, hands for touching"--perform the function that they did in the Ignatian exercises that Hopkins practised. With the active imagination the outward senses are a way to the spirit within ourselves, and a way "to narrow/ The gap between the world shut in the eyes/ and the receding world of light beyond."[32] "The Immortal Spirit is that single ghost", a spirit within, "shut in himself, each blind, beaked subject kills/ His neighbor and himself, and shuts out pity/ For that flame-winged Creator who fulfills."[33]

Man's position is paradoxical because he is both mortal flesh and "immortal spirit", as it is for Hopkins:

> Flesh fade, and mortal trash
> Fall to the residuary worm; world's wildfire, leave
> but ash:
> In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
> I am all at once what Christ is, since he was
> what I am, and
> This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood,
> immortal diamond,
> Is immortal diamond.[34]

Using Hopkinsian syntax and ellipses of subject and articles, Spender's mankind also

> Were born; must die; were loved; must love;
> Born naked; were clothed, still naked, walk
> Under your dress. Under your skin, more
> Naked, naked under acts and talk.
> Miles and hours upon you feed,
> They eat your eyes out with their avid distance
> They eat your heart out with their empty need;
> They eat your soul out with vanished significance.
> Once fate is sure beneath those ignorances
> Of flesh and bone packet in which you're split,
> Patchwork deed and word hanging on breath:
> Mandolin skeleton, it
> Strums on your gut such songs and peasant dances,
> Solitudo, amor, O life, O death.

The same themes are present in "Not Palaces, an era's crown", which both technically and thematically borrows from Hopkins. On one level, it illustrates the balancing of opposites that is found in Hopkins' poems, where the inspiration is both positive and negative. Opposite impulses do not cancel each other out, but remain in a kind of forced fusion. As Spender says in The Struggle of the Modern:

> where there is modern organic poetry it is the result of a fusion which seems forced, and this is felt in a certain jarringquality in the technique and form...Gerard Manley Hopkins is organic; his poetry seems always the result of the fusion of the external experience acting directly upon his sensibility and producing language and form. But the identification with external circumstances is either the result of deliberately willed involution with nature--what Hopkins called 'inscape'--or of great anguish.[35]

In "Not Palaces", the external circumstances working on the outward senses are embodied in conflict and paradox, because "poetry was a use of language which revealed external actuality as symbolic

inner consciousness."[36] This poem reveals the conflict that determines the features of many of Spender's poems. In this case, Spender instructs the senses to submit themselves to the purposes of the will rather than the passions, and "the conflict is between the will, on the one hand, which is to work in the outside world, and the sense, on the other, that work in their own leisure to spell out the lyrical poetry."[37]

Spender, having read "The Habit of Perfection", does not, as Hopkins does, reject the delight of the senses. Hopkins' prayer is to

> Elected Silence, sing to me
> And beat upon my whorlèd ear,
> Pipe me to pastures still and be
> The music that I care to hear.
>
> Shape nothing, lips; be lovely-dumb;
> It is the shut, the curfew sent
> From there where all surrenders come
> Which only makes you eloquent.
>
> Be shellèd, eyes, with double dark
> And find the uncreated light:
> This ruck and reel which you remark
> Coils, keeps, and teases simple sight.

In "Not Palaces", spiritual vision does not have to supercede physical sight. Spender chooses instead to instruct the senses to

> Drink from here energy and only energy,
> As from the electric charge of a battery,
> To will this Time's change.
> Eye, gazelle, delicate wanderer,
> Drinker of horizon's fluid line;
> Ear that suspends on a chord
> The spirit drinking timelessness;
> Touch, love, all senses;

> Leave your gardens, your singing feasts,
> Your dreams of suns circling before our sun,
> Of heaven after our world.
> Instead, watch images of flashing glass
> That strike the outward sense, the polished will,
> Flag of our purpose which the wind engraves.

In this poem Spender also directly opposes Hopkins' feelings that the absence of poetic inspiration left him "Time's eunuch" and his lament that

> ...birds build--but not I build; no, but strain,
> Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
> Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.[38]

Spender instead vows that he will not be a passive eunuch:

> Not palaces, an era's crown
> Where the mind dwells, intrigues, rests;
> Architectural gold-leaved flower
> From people ordered like a single mind,
> I build. This only what I tell...

Hopkins' plea for asceticism in "The Habit of Perfection",

> And, Poverty, be thou the bride
> And now the marriage feast begun,
> And lily coloured clothes provide
> Your spouse not laboured at nor spun

is a paraphrase of Matthew, 6:26-29, "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them...And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin." Spender's "Not palaces" also hints of this when he says that

> No spirit seek here rest. But this: No one
> Shall hunger. Man shall spend equally.
> Our goal which we compel: Man shall be man.

He combines this with the theme from "Thou art indeed just, Lord", where Hopkins asks, "Why do the wicked prosper?" (Jeremiah, 12:1). Yet for Spender, it is not simply a just God but a just mankind that provides for its own, who has the ability to "will the Time's change":

> That program of the antique Satan
> Bristling with guns on the indented page,
> With battleship towering from hilly waves:
> For what? Drive of a ruining purpose
> Destroying all but its age-long exploiters.
> Our programme like this, but opposite,
> Death to the killers, bringing light to life.

This early belief that through action in the world they could "will this Time's change" did not remain for Spender, and the conflict soon returns. As Day Lewis wrote in a later poem,

> We who in younger days
> Hoping too much, tried on
> The habit of perfection
> Have learnt how it betrays our shrinking flesh... .[39]

"Exiles from Their Land, History Their Domicile" is a poem about patriotic writers "at a third remove".[40] Its repetition, compound words, run-on lines, and sparse punctuation provide a dense, energetic, Hopkinsian form:

> History has tongues
> Has angels has guns
> has saved has praised
> Her lives-in-exile death-returned
> for whom her printed page
> Is heaven on which their wills write worlds.

Phrases such as "stuffed-with-dust-dry darkness" are suggestive of Hopkins' "now done darkness"[41] as are the assonance, alliteration and parenthetic phrases:

Death has nothing else to do
But state and stay and make
Them one with what they willed--
(Their lives
Were exile from their being)... .

As Spender's other poems do, the focus becomes subjective as the poet contemplates his own role in history:

Oh, in lineaments of immense simplicity
Where is there similarity
With my own wavering uncertainty?
What divides
Their death, my purpose, from my life my weakness?
Their clear dream, from my clear distraction?
Within the eye where is the vision
Within the hands, configuration?

The senses once again come into play to join the "Spirit"--both human and divine--with the material world.

Where, in the momentary flesh,
Is the becomingness of statues
That walk in groves with those who went before?
How am I justified?

Speak with your tongues
O angels, fire your guns
O save and praise
Recall me from this exile
Let me join
Those who kneel there and kiss the sacred shore

And let my words appear
A heaven-printed world!

In "The Wreck of the Deutschland" Hopkins stresses his belief that the world is the "Word" of God made life and truth. His justification for man's trials is found in the ability to

Read the unshapeable shock night
And [know] the who and the why:

> Wording it how but by him that present and past,
> Heaven and earth are word of, worded by. (stanza 29)

Spender's plea to let his words "appear a heaven-printed world" are a similar attempt to relate the physical and the spiritual worlds, and to understand the world and his place in it. Like Hopkins, he had a need to "invent a language as direct as religious utterance"[42] and his lyrical poems were aided in this by the voice of Hopkins, a true authority in this vein.

CHAPTER IV: LOUIS MACNEICE

As with those of Stephen Spender, the poems of Louis MacNeice are characterized by an introspective, personal element. In the preface to Modern Poetry: A Personal Essay (1938), he makes " a plea for impure poetry, that is, for poetry conditioned by the poet's life and the world around him."[1] Poetry should not be too private, however. Just as Hopkins had criticised Tennyson, MacNeice claimed that his predecessors, the Georgians, lacked a necessary, wider world view. MacNeice praises the strongly subjective voice in the political poems of Auden, Spender and Day Lewis, pointing out that "the personal element is a bridge between the topical and the heroic."[2] In Modern Poetry he specifically singles out Hopkins' "The Windhover" as an example of this quality--Hopkins' kestrel has both a personal meaning for the viewer whose "heart in hiding stirred for a bird", and a wider significance in the Christian context. This ability to interweave the specific and personal with the general is often cited as a characteristic of MacNeice's own style.

Cecil Day Lewis, in A Hope for Poetry, calls MacNeice one of the "hopes" because he sees MacNeice's poetry as a corrective to both propagandist and too-private art. Poems such as "Autumn Journal", for example, reveal that MacNeice is by no means unaware of the general conditions around him; they are, in fact, time-

necessitated intrusions on private feelings. Yet MacNeice's poem "To a Communist" reveals his true feelings about the political fervour invading the verse of his fellow poets:

> Your thoughts make shape like snow; in one night only
> The gawky earth grows breasts,
> Snow's unity engrosses
> Particular pettiness of stones and grasses.
> But before you proclaim the millenium, my dear,
> Consult the barometer--
> This poise is perfect but maintained
> For one day only.[3]

MacNeice asks instead for honest, wider and more lasting views of life. Often from the individual's perspective, his own poems are speculative and reflective.

The images in "To a Communist" take on a Hopkinsian tone in "Snow", where the paradoxical image in which "storm flakes were scroll-leaved flowers, lily showers" in a season that is "winter and warm"[4]:

> The room was suddenly rich and the great bay window was
> Spawning snow and pink roses against it
> Soundlessly collateral and incompatible:
> World is suddener than we fancy it.

Just as Hopkins glories in the world of

> All things counter, original, spare, strange;
> Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
> With swift, slow; sweet,sour; adazzle, dim;
> He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
> Praise him.[5]

MacNeice also rejoices in a world made of contrasts and of Pied Beauty:

> World is crazier and more of it than we think,
> Incorrigibly plural. I peel and portion
> A tangerine and spit the pips and feel
> The drunkenness of things being various.
>
> And the fire flames with a bubbling sound for world
> Is more spiteful and gay than one supposes--
> On the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms
> of one's hands--
> There is more than glass between the snow and the
> huge roses.

It is especially in MacNeice's nature poems that he resembles Hopkins. As it is for Auden, it is not just nature but nature's human relevance that moves MacNeice. As the windhover affected Hopkins, so MacNeice found outward natural symbols for his state of mind, and he writes about his own complex responses to a particular situation.

Of the thirties "group", MacNeice was the most isolated and least political. He was never involved in socio-political movements, and he remained outside of the contemporary political literary journals. In contrast to much of the writing of the time, MacNeice's themes were everyday life, the natural world, and the passage of time. Noting as Auden, Spender and Day Lewis had, that "I consider no subject matter taken from life to be alien to poetry,"[6] his poems focus on the common man, Irish slums, trains, traffic and the seasons. He valued and celebrated the ordinary pleasures of existence, and he prefered to make poetry out of the rhythm of that life:

> While the lawn-mower sings moving up and down
> Spirting its little fountain of vivid green,
> I, like Poussin, make a still-bound fête of us
> Suspending every noise, of insect or machine.[7]

In contrast to his politically-oriented contemporaries, MacNeice writes that "I will not give you any idol or idea, creed or king,/ I give you the incidental things which pass/ Outward through space exactly as each was."[8]

In Modern Poetry, MacNeice notes that many of his poems employ images that he calls "physical" or "merely descriptive"[9] that attempt to capture the individual, particular, given reality of objects--what Hopkins called the 'Inscape' of things--without necessarily suggesting any concepts beyond themselves. Many images may, indeed, be appreciated for their purely visual quality, such as:

> Yellow sun comes white off the wet street but bright
> Chromium yellows in the gay sun's light,
> Filleted sun streaks the purple mist,
> Everything is kissed and reticulated with sun
> Scooped up and cupped in the open fronts of shops
> And bouncing on the traffic which never stops.[10]

MacNeice displays the same originality and richness in descriptions of nature found in Hopkins' description of spring, where "thrush's eggs look little low heavens"[11] or the "silk-sack clouds...Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies."[12] Although MacNeice often employs objects from the man-made, mechanical world, the descriptions seem equally natural:

> On shining lines the trams like vast sarcophagi move
> Into the sky, plum after sunset, merging to duck's egg,
> barred with mauve
> Zeppelin clouds, and Pentecost-like the cars headlights bud
> Out from sideroads and the traffic signals, crème-de-menthe
> or bulls blood,
> Tell one to stop, the engine gently breathing, or to go on... .[13]

The visual quality of such passages shows MacNeice, like Hopkins,

to be very much a poet of the senses with a delight in the "tangible, undeniable, existent reality of the physical world."[14]

For this reason, like Hopkins, MacNeice chose some diction for its sound qualities. In Modern Poetry, MacNeice discusses the "physical" elements of poetry such as rhythm, rhyme, assonance and onomatopoeia, noting that, because poetry should be musical, he writes for the ear. "When I write poetry myself, I always consider the sound of each line conjointly with its adequacy as meaning."[15] In Hopkins' "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo", the circling quality of the variation within repetition seduces the ear to the extent that the sound of the poem is as salient a feature as its meaning. MacNeice's poems also leave a lasting impression on the ear. "Glass Falling", for example, has a musical flow that, with a nursery-rhyme lilt, bears some resemblance to a roundel:

> The glass is going down. The sun
> Is going down. The forecasts say
> It will be warm with frequent showers.
> We ramble down the showery hours
> And amble up and down the day
> Mary will wear her black goloshes
> And splash the puddles on the town;
> And soon on fleets of macintoshes
> The rain is coming down, the frown
> Is coming down of heaven showing
> A wet night coming, the glass is going
> Down, the sun is going down.

The repetition of long vowel sounds in "Cradle Song for Miriam" provides a lulling rhythm in "Soft the wool, dark the wool/ Is gathered slowly up, wholly up/ Into a ball, all of it." In "The Creditor"--Hopkinsian in the presentation of the speaker's relationship to God--devices such as repetition, rhyme and alliteration

are so potent that both the speaker and the reader are enticed into a dream-like state of pure suggestive sound:

> The quietude of a soft wind
> Will not rescind
> My debts to God, but gentle-skinned
> His finger probes. I lull myself
> In quiet in diet in riot in dreams,
> In dopes in drams in drums in dreams...

MacNeice's appreciation of Hopkins' technique is attested to by his use of rhythms and conspicuous sound patterns, which in turn are reflected in his choice of imagery. Trains, for example, prove fascinating not only because they are foreign, man-made objects in the natural world, but also because of their auditory stimulation. The rhythms that they add to the environment can be reproduced in a poem, as

> The trains pass and the trains pass, chains of lighted
> windows
> A register in an unknown language...
> Sharp and straight on the ear like stigmata...[16]

Like the natural rhythm of the nursery rhyme, the sound of trains seems almost to have an effect on the subconscious:

> The familiar rhythm but the unknown implications
> Delight like a dead language
> Which never shocks us by banal revelations.[17]

In "Trains in the Distance", the rhythm of the trains takes MacNeice back to his "dozing childhood", when the sound was as comforting as a nursery rhyme or lullaby, "Gentle murmurs nosing through a summer quietude,/ Drawing in and out, in and out, their smoky ribbons."

One of the most salient features of MacNeice's poetry is his use of rhyme, which, like rhythm, he sees as memorable, musical, and "a healthy technical problem."[18] Almost any poem may be drawn upon to illustrate examples of internal rhyme, half-rhyme, assonance and alliteration. Few of his poems employ these devices in as concentrated a way as Hopkins does, for example, in the characteristic "Spelt form Sybil's Leaves", where we have "her fond yellow hornlight wound to the west, her wild hollow hoarlight hung to the height/ Waste/ her earliest stars, earlstars...". Yet sometimes MacNeice's poems seem to have a similar, deliberately difficult sound. Lines such as "Gone the fawning yawning purr/ Charged for a foam-flash"[19] and "Sharp sun-strope, surface-gloss"[20] are isolated in more lucid poems, as is the sudden appearance of an interesting if not enigmatic cluster of words such as "the rooks bicker heckle bargain always".[21] Some of his earlier poems have sustained patterns of assonance and alliteration, as in "Sailor's Funeral" (1926):

> Now he weds the sea-weed, where never any sun shone,
> And bells knell his wedding, with a red dead carillon,
> Tolling for his soul, prisoned in the water wan,
> Shed his red beauty, his bright life dead and gone.

Each of the unusually long lines of "River in Spate" rhymes internally:

> The river falls and over the walls the coffins of cold
> funerals
> Slide deep and sleep there in the close tomb of the pool,
> And fell waters lave the grave and pebbles pave its mortuary,
> And the river horses vault and plunge with their assault and
> battery... .

As well as providing sound effects, rhyme supplies poetry with an additional structural element. MacNeice shared with his contemporaries a concern for form in poetry. Perhaps because of a background in the classics, this concern is most prominent in MacNeice's work. MacNeice appreciates the crafted architectural qualities that Day Lewis admired in Hopkins' verse, qualities that Hopkins himself learnt from his classical training. For example, MacNeice studied Homer, Virgil and Horace, saying that he particularly admired the later, "realizing that English with its articles and lack of inflexions could hardly ever equal Horace either in concentration or in subtlety of word order."[22] MacNeice follows Hopkins in his omission of articles and inversions of syntax. MacNeice says that he began to write poetry at the age of seven, and that even at that age "what I was chiefly interested in was the pattern of the words."[23] In later years the subtly crafted patterns of Hopkins could not but attract MacNeice. After a self-proclaimed period of "romantic excess",[24] MacNeice again returned to technical concerns. "Now that the 'Sturm und Drang' of my adolescence is over I tend to think again that the normal business of poety is the conveying of information through certain kinds of word patterns and that it is a mistake to assess poetry primarily in terms of emotion."[25]

Word patterns are highly visible in many of MacNeice's poems, such as "Leaving Barra":

> The dazzle on the sea, my darling,
> Leads from the western channel,

A carpet of brilliance taking
My leave for ever of the island.

I never shall visit that island
Again with its easy tempo--
The seal sunbathing, the circuit
Of gulls on the wing for garbage.

I go to a different garbage
And scuffle for scraps of notice,
Pretend to ignore the stigma
That stains my life and my leisure.

"Leaving Barra", similar to "Glass Falling", is circular in design, yet more complex. The last word of each stanza corresponds to the last word of the first verse in the following stanza; the last word of the poem returns to the first stanza, where it corresponds to the last word of the first verse.

MacNeice follows Hopkins in the belief that the stability and solidity of classical structure must be balanced by variety to invoke a sense of vitality. "I think myself that poetry which has very little rhythm tends to be boring, but hold that, once there is a pattern, the pattern is often more effective the more it is varied...As Gerard Manley Hopkins said, 'in everything the more remote the ratio of the parts to one another or to the whole the greater the unity if felt at all'."[26] Again, like the particular aspects of nature, each poem should have its own unique "inscape" in which the form and the thought reflect each other. Since MacNeice's poems deal with the flux, stress and dynamism of everyday existence, the techniques such as ellipses and inverted syntax should reflect this stress. The rhythms of "Birmingham", for instance,

reflect the rhythms of that city:

> Smoke from the train-gulf hid by hoardings blunders
> upward, the brakes of cars
> Pipe as the policeman pivoting round raises his flat hand,
> bass
> With his figure of a monolith Pharoah the queue of
> fidgety machines... .

The highly dense structure of "Genesis" is representative of busy creation, where

> A million whirling spinning-wheels of flowing gossamer,
> A million hammers jangling on the anvils of the sky,
> The crisp chip of chisels and the murmuring of saws
> And the flowing ripple of water from a million taps... .

The cadence of the free-flowing "Elephant Trunk" sways as its subject does:

> Descending out of the grey
> Clouds elephant trunk
> Twitches away
> Hat;
> THAT
> Was not what I expected
> A
> Misdirected
> Joke it seemed to me... .

MacNeice says that in modern poetry, "the subject must work itself out in pattern but not be emasculated by pattern."[27] Rather, as in Hopkins' idea of "inscape", plurality and variation are virtues in poetry. It is this idea that led to Hopkins' employment of Sprung Rhythm, because it combines both pattern and variations on pattern.

Interestingly, MacNeice, in failing to understand for a time the true nature of Sprung Rhythm, criticizes Hopkins for letting the stress pattern obscure the true meaning of the words. In both Modern Poetry and a volume of New Verse[28], MacNeice is decidedly cool about Hopkins' motives for employing Sprung Rhythm. He notes that "Hopkins wanted to introduce the license of conversation into verse. His eye was on the Old English models and he thought that by limiting the number of stresses but apportioning them where he liked in the line, he would achieve (a) the naturalistic richness of conversation, but not dissipated, as it is in conversation, by the lack of a formal bases, and (b) variety of rhythm for variety's sake."[29] He continues that, "such license, besides being practiced in popular ballads and nursery rhymes, had already been claimed as the poet's right by Coleridge in his preface to 'Christabel'...Hopkins and Coleridge were both entitled to demand this license, but were both mistaken in thinking they could sanction it merely by the counting of stressed syllables, as is shown in Hopkins' own practice where the counting is often a fraud...".[30] Such harsh criticism may be the result of MacNeice's being over eager to catch pattern "emasculating" the subject. MacNeice quotes from "The Lantern out of Doors", specifically noting Hopkins' own stress marks in the last stanza:

> Christ minds: Christ's interest, what to avow or amend
> There, eyes them, heart wants, care haunts, foot follows kind,
> Their ransom, their rescue, and first, fast, last friend.

MacNeice's commentary is harsh as well as misguided. He says that "these are strong and effective lines, but Hopkins' notation makes them vicious. Merely through sticking to his fetish of five stresses per line, he (a) goes miles away from his admired rhythms of ordinary speech, and (b) (which matters more) slurs over, as unstressed, words--'heart', 'care','rescue','first','last'--which, both for their sound-value and their meaning, ought not to be slurred over."[31] A natural reading of these lines with Hopkins' stress marks would immediately show that such words are, in fact, not "slurred over" at all; Hopkins' stress marks add emphasis to words that may on their own fall into that trap, without detracting from the so-called "unstressed" words. These words do, in fact, have a natural stress upon them, but they are not as full as the marked stresses.

If anything, such a critical analysis illustrates MacNeice's concern for both technique and honesty. Rhythmic variations may be illustrated almost at random from MacNeice's own poems. For instance, the Hopkins-like movement of hissing and dying flames in "Evening Indoors", where "the flames blend and pass, incend and end and pass", has been cited as illustrating Sprung Rhythm. W.H. Gardner suggests that, because this poem was published in the volume of New Verse following that containing MacNeice's criticism, it is therefore an example of how MacNeice felt Sprung Rhythm should properly be employed.[32]

MacNeice was all for natural speech rhythms; what he seemed

to distrust was theoretical justifications for these rhythms, which were to be molded to suit the paradigms of English prosody. "When I later read Gerard Manley Hopkins' account of his own metrical experiments I felt that in breaking down an old technical dogma he was tending to turn his new, and quite legitimate, conveniences into a new dogma of his own."[33] Whether or not this criticism is just, it points to an important factor in MacNeice's personality, one that he reflects in his poetry, and one that, paradoxically, he gleaned from Hopkins himself. It is, above all, the sense of individuality that would not let MacNeice slot himself into any particular "school" either politically or poetically. His criticism of Hopkins' "dogma" and "fetishes" may, in fact, be nothing more than a warning to his fellow poets, against the dangers of adopting Hopkins' techniques while ignorant of their true basis.

In the New Verse article, MacNeice begins his criticism with praise. "Hopkins was a poet of many assets, in particular a sharp eye, a precise mind, and an intense religious feeling. It is a pity, therefore, that he should be thought of as primarily a Jesuit, or primarily a metrical experimenter." But he continues that, "It is also, perhaps, a pity that he should now be so popular with young poets in search of an Influence."[34] It is not until Modern Poetry that MacNeice explains why this influence could be detrimental. "Hopkins' influence on younger poets today has often been unfortunate. A close imitation of his manner is dangerous because both his rhythms and his syntax were peculiarly appropriate

to his own unusual circumstances and his own tortured but vital personality."[35] He suggests that Hopkins' personality was so intense that it often overshadowed his writing. To try to suggest the same intensity through an imitation of the work would be not only a fraud, but impossible. MacNeice's criticism of Hopkins' Sprung Rhythm, then, is a warning of the problems involved when the subtlety of Hopkins' skill is in the hands of the uninitiated, and MacNeice cautions against imposing rhythmical patterns on poetry rather than letting the patterns arise naturally out of the thought.

It is interesting that MacNeice of the "group" does not illustrate any blatant examples of pastiche Hopkins, having truly assimilated Hopkins' techniques into his own style. In spite of his caution against Hopkins, MacNeice freely acknowledges his admiration for both the technical virtuosity and tone of Hopkins' poetry. Like Hopkins, he says of his own work that "what I positively aim at is something other than mere smoothness."[36] He is also, like the rest of the "group", very Hopkinsian in his deliberate "obscurity". "In examining my own poems I find that, when they are obscure, it is either because my meaning is complicated or because, while having a clear meaning, I consent to compromise its lucid expression for the sake of a gain in speed, concentration, colour, or the music of the verse."[37]

Like Hopkins, what he aimed at above all was honesty. The poet "must not merely retail other people's dogma...It is quite possible therefore that at the same period his duty as a poet may

conflict with his duty as a man. In that case he can stop writing, but he must not degrade his poetry even in the service of a good cause".[38] The conflict that arose because of Hopkins' awareness of himself as a poet and a Jesuit conjointly gave his poetry an intensity that is both morally and aesthetically honest. Similarly, of MacNeice's poetry, it has been observed by William McKinnon, that "poetic creation of the order of MacNeice's best poems could almost certainly not have been achieved even by a craftsman of his skill and an observer of his intelligence without the driving and binding force of belief firmly held. It gave him what as a young poet he had said admiringly it gave Hopkins: not only 'hands and and eye', but also 'a heart, a mainspring'."[39] Even MacNeice's criticism of and warning against Hopkins illustrates his admiration of the Jesuit poet, who supplied modern poets with a new way of seeing, and a new way to express what they saw.

CONCLUSION

The influence of Gerard Manley Hopkins upon the poets of the 1930's was substantial in terms of both technique and sensibility. He was adopted as a posthumous "modern" not simply because of the date of publication of his poems, but because he anticipated the direction in which poetry was to move. Like Eliot, he appreciated tradition, and he revived Old English and Welsh metrical craft. His poetry combined both a Keatsian sensuousness and an intellectual, classical quality. Hopkins also praised and illustrated a strong sense of individualism that led one to develop out of tradition a unique and vital voice. His innovative techniques not only illustrated this individuality, but also strongly reinforced Hopkins' belief that poetry should be "of its age." If Hopkins' own contemporaries could not understand his progressiveness, he would at least, in time, find an appreciative audience in the twentieth century.

The young poets of the thirties were acutely aware of their position in the violent and unsettled world between the wars, yet for them the struggle also provided inspiration. They found that Hopkins' contorted syntax, his masculine, elliptical and jarring style best suited this struggle, whether personal, as Hopkins' was, or universal. Like Hopkins, they attempted to produce a poetry

which was deliberately difficult. It was ambiguous without being vague, so that it opened up infinite possibilities for the English language. To symbolise the regeneration that they felt was needed in society, they, like Hopkins, attempted to produce poetry that was active and living.

W.H. Auden, Cecil Day Lewis, Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice did more than merely superimpose Hopkinsian techniques onto twentieth-century themes. They understood that the intensity of Hopkins' poems arose because the technical innovations such as Sprung Rhythm, ellipses, compound words and coinages grew naturally out of particular subject matter. They show the influence of Hopkins, but, except for a few early examples of pastiche, they did not allow him to dominate their work. They believed as Hopkins did that "the poet's originality consists in his creative power to extend, develop or change the tradition in some individual way."[1] All four of the Auden group created poetry that was different from Hopkins and from each other. For Auden, Hopkins' concentrated style suited his witty, ironic, analytical mind. Tempered with this was a deeply religious sensibility that reflected the same spiritual affirmation as we find in Hopkins' poetry. Cecil Day Lewis applied the difficult, jarring technique of Hopkins to the social, political conflict in the world around him. Stephen Spender was intrigued with both the musical qualities of Hopkins' verse and its extremely honest and personal proclamations of intense feeling, and he produced lyrical poems that provided subjective perspectives on the outside world. Louis MacNeice, more solitary than the others,

was intrigued with the rhythms of Hopkins' verse, and his personal poems were highly crafted works that appealed to the auditory imagination. Although the four poets from Oxford shared much in common, they each developed their own unique poetic voice.

Hopkins was, of course, only one of several influences which the thirties' poets assimilated into their poetry. They needed no warning that, in Ezra Pound's words, "a craft that occupies itself solely with imitating Gerard Hopkins or in any other metrical experiment is a craft misdirected."[2] Louis MacNeice's criticisms of Hopkins' unique and complicated technique is representative of their awareness of this concern. Auden expresses the same caution when he said that "I sometimes think that Hopkins ought to be kept on a special shelf like a dirty book, and only allowed to readers who won't be ruined by him."[3]

A good deal of the early poetic criticism from this period suggests that Hopkins' influence was not always as successful as it was for the Auden group. As G.S. Fraser remarks, "a fair amount of work by young poets of the '30's strikes us today as 'Hopkins-and-water'."[4] In Aspects of Modern Poetry (1934), Edith Sitwell expresses the opinion that "Hopkins has met with the fate of nearly all innovators. It is a fact that Hopkins should never be regarded as a model, since he worked his own discoveries to the uttermost point; there is no room for advancement, for development, along his lines."[5] Hopkins himself was aware that his style reached its peak of condensation and difficulty with poems such as "Spelt from Sybil's Leaves" and "Tom's Garland", and he said himself

that "it is plain I must go no farther on this road...".[6] What critics such as Sitwell miss are the infinite possibilities of other roads, available to other poets, that could lead out of these past endeavors.

The Auden group was very much aware of these possibilities. There was, based in the raw materials of poetic tradition, what Cecil Day Lewis felt was a "hope for poetry," a return to growing and active verse. The need for vitality in poetry is evident still, and, not surprisingly, Hopkins is continuing to influence poets today. In the context of the thirties' poets' view of poetic tradition, F.R. Leavis may have been hasty when he said that "About Hopkins as a direct influence there seems little to say. The use of him by Left poets in the thirties was not of a kind to demand serious critical attention." What Leavis does acknowledge is that, "where he is, beyond question, to be felt is in the heightened sense, characterizing taste and criticism in our time, for what may be called the Shakespearean (as opposed to the Miltonic) potentialities of English."[7] Hopkins' most important contribution to the poets of the thirties lay in his push towards a living, fresh and vital language for poetry.

> Live man and dead
> Being each unique
> (Their pain and glory),
> Yet some will have left
> By force or freak
> To us the bereft
> Some richer story;
> Their say being said,
> They still can speak
> Worlds more unique,
> More live, less dead.[8]

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