

MATTHEW ARNOLD AND
GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE CRITICISM OF
MATTHEW ARNOLD UPON THE CRITICAL THEORIES
AND POETIC PRACTICE OF GERARD MANLEY
HOPKINS

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: This thesis examines Hopkins's letters and journals in order to establish which of Arnold's works he read, and what he thought of them. It then compares Hopkins's critical theories, to be found in his letters, with those ideas of Arnold which Hopkins could have gleaned from his reading. A brief study of the poetry is made in the light of conclusions drawn in the earlier part of the thesis.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Critics have noticed the influence of a number of literary figures on the work of Hopkins. Pater, Newman, Milton and Shakespeare, amongst others, are cited as major influences. The effect that Arnold may have exerted has received much less attention. This is perhaps because echoes of Arnold's critical precepts are most apparent in Hopkins's letters. The poetry of the two men contains only slight and occasional points of similarity. Once Hopkins's acceptance of some of Arnold's critical principles is established, it is possible to show that his poetry conforms to them, but initially their presence makes itself felt more vividly in his prose. His letters contain frequent discussions of literary matters, and W. H. Gardner, in the chapter, "Hopkins as Reader and Critic," of his book, Gerard Manley Hopkins¹, has shown that it is possible to deduce a number of critical principles from them. It is the contention of this thesis that many of Hopkins's critical axioms are similar to beliefs expounded by Arnold. Chapter II will attempt to pinpoint the resemblances and Chapter III will examine Hopkins's poetry in the light of them. However, it is important first to establish the possibility of a direct influence.

It is difficult to prove conclusively that the works of one man influenced those of another. There is always a possibility that coincidence led them to think similarly, especially if they lived in the same period, as Hopkins and Arnold did, and absorbed the ideas current in their time. However, the probability that Arnold's ideas did influence Hopkins is strong. When Hopkins arrived at Oxford as a student, in 1863, Arnold, already a figure of note, had been Professor of Poetry there for six years. He had been influential in the rôle. He was the first Professor of Poetry to lecture in English rather than in Latin and many of his lectures were printed in the popular periodicals of the day, such as the Cornhill and the National Review. The quality of his teaching may be deduced from the fact that a large number of his works which are still read, such as On the Study of Celtic Literature and six of the essays in the First Series of Essays in Criticism, were original Oxford lectures. There is no conclusive record of the influence of his teaching on Hopkins. The only reference to his classes is an entry in Hopkins's journal, dated May 26, 1866, which records that, "Matthew Arnold lectured on the Celtic element in English Poetry",² with no further comment. Nonetheless, while he was a student at Oxford, Hopkins was reading Arnold's articles. The first reference to the older critic occurs in a letter to Alexander Baillie, dated September 10, 1864. He

advises his friend, "You must also read, if you have not done so, Matthew Arnold on 'The Literary Influence of the Academies' in the August Cornhill."³ An entry in his journal early in 1865 reads, "Sharpe's and M. Arnold's articles in the National",⁴ and Professor Abbott's note suggests that the articles by Arnold which are mentioned here were "Joubert: or a French Coleridge" and "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time." All three articles were original Oxford lectures, reprinted in the first edition of Essays in Criticism: First Series, which was published in 1865. Perhaps his reading of them caused Hopkins to include "M. Arnold's Essays" in a list of books to be read which he entered in his journal in February-March, 1865,⁵ almost as soon as the book had become available. Since the lectures which formed the basis for the essays on "Joubert", "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time", "The Literary Influence of the Academies", and "Pagan and Christian Religious Sentiment" were all delivered between November, 1863 and November, 1864, while Hopkins was a student at Oxford, it is possible that Arnold's teaching may have been partly responsible for Hopkins's desire to read the book. A letter to R. W. Dixon written in 1878, confirms that Hopkins did indeed read Essays in Criticism while he was at Oxford, and was sufficiently impressed to buy the journal of Maurice de Guérin, the subject of one of the essays.⁶ He "admired it:

but for some reason or other never got far in it." An entry in his journal for May 2, 1866 supplies the probable reason, "Reading Maurice de Guérin's Remains, enjoying but without sufficient knowledge of French."⁷

Hopkins's reading of Arnold continued after he had left Oxford. His references to the critic are not frequent, but are scattered throughout his life, and on those occasions when he refers to Arnold, he often does so at some length, suggesting that his interest in Arnold remained constant. In August, 1873, some years after he had become a Jesuit, Hopkins writes to Edward Bond that he has brought Matthew Arnold's poems, the Empedocles volume, with him while he is spending a holiday on the Isle of Wight, and goes on to discuss a quotation from the recently published Literature and Dogma.⁸ In letters to Dixon of October 5, 1878 and February 27, 1879, he cites Arnold as his authority for calling Milton one of "our two greatest masters of style" and defends Arnold's judgement that Campbell is the other.⁹ The article from which he quotes is "A French Critic on Milton", first published in the Quarterly Review, January, 1877, and later reprinted in Mixed Essays of 1879. In a letter to Baillie of June, 1886 he mentions Arnold's "fine paper" on Home Rule for Ireland which appeared in The Nineteenth Century, May, 1886¹⁰ and, in letters of October 20, 1887 and May 6, 1888 written to Coventry Patmore, he uses Arnold as

his authority in questioning Patmore's views of Keats.¹¹ His source was Arnold's preface to the selection from Keats in Ward's English Poets, which was published in 1880. Arnold also wrote the general introduction to this volume which was later reprinted in the Second Series of Essays in Criticism under the title, "The Study of Poetry", a title which, for convenience, I shall use in future references to this essay. There is strong evidence that Hopkins read it. In January, 1886, he writes to Robert Bridges, "a kind of touchstone of the highest or most living art is seriousness".¹² This echoes Arnold's use of touchstones, to detect the accent of high seriousness, too closely to be coincidental.

Hopkins generally pronounces favourably on those of Arnold's critical writings which he discusses. We have seen that he respects the critic sufficiently to quote him as an authority on two occasions and to recommend Baillie to read one of his articles. The comment on touchstones suggests that he has actually incorporated this principle into his own body of opinions. In 1883, he rebukes Bridges for referring to Arnold as "Mr. Kidglove Cocksure", "I have more reason than you for disagreeing with him and thinking him very wrong, but nevertheless I am sure he is a rare genius and a great critic."¹³ This is an accurate summary of his general attitude to the older critic, an attitude of respect and admiration tinged with occasional disagreement.

The source of disagreement on this occasion was probably, as Abbott's note suggests, his earlier conjecture that Arnold had advised Hall Caine not to include some of his work in a volume of sonnets which Caine was editing, but it could equally well have been, as Gardner surmises,¹⁴ his disapproval of Arnold's religious position. In his letter to Bond,⁸ he describes a passage which he has seen from Literature and Dogma as "profane." However, he is careful to add that it is not blasphemous and concedes that "we are obliged to think of God by human thoughts and his account of them is substantially true." This concession is proof of his high regard for Arnold, for Hopkins rarely showed any tolerance when his religious sensibilities were bruised, however much he might otherwise admire the offender. Milton's defense of divorce, for example, earns him the title of "a very bad man."¹⁵ Another aspect of Arnold's work which Hopkins disliked was his poetry, which the younger poet read "with more interest than rapture." His only reference to it informs Bond that it has "all the ingredients of poetry without quite being it."⁸ His only reference to Arnold's views on a political question is favourable.¹⁰ Gardner suggests that the two men's similar views on a number of political issues might also be the result of direct influence, since the essays now contained in Culture and Anarchy were first published in the Cornhill, which Hopkins

frequently read.¹⁶

However, it is Hopkins's attitude to Arnold's literary criticism in which the influence is deepest. The majority of Hopkins's comments on Arnold are devoted to this aspect of his work. They usually show approval, even though it is sometimes qualified, and they also show an appreciation of the belief in seriousness of matter and manner which lay at the heart of Arnold's criticism. In his letter to Bond, Hopkins praises Arnold in the words, "He seems a very earnest man", and, in Chapter II, we shall see that the seriousness of the artist and of his work was important to Hopkins, just as it was to Arnold. It is not difficult to see why Hopkins should have been so attracted by Arnold's portrait of Maurice de Guérin, a very earnest artist. Even when in his early twenties, Hopkins must have felt a similarity between himself and the devout and sensitive young Catholic poet who was anxious to see if he had a vocation for the priesthood and was afraid that his intense, poetic love of nature would conflict with his duty to God. Perhaps by 1878, when he told Dixon that he would be glad to read Guérin's journal, if he had time,⁶ Hopkins had already become aware that the end of the French poet's life was to be a prophecy of his own last years. Like Hopkins, Guérin suffered from fits of crippling depression which limited his literary production, and died at an early age without

seeing any of his work published in his life time. A number of the other essays in Essays in Criticism discuss authors in whom Hopkins must have been able to trace similarities to himself. Eugénie de Guérin experienced a conflict between her literary and religious aspirations very like his own. Arnold makes this comment on Joubert's fragments, "I doubt whether, in an elaborate work on the philosophy of religion, he would have got his ideas about religion to shine, to use his own expression, as they shine when he utters them in perfect freedom."¹⁷ This finds a curious echo in a modern critic's words on Hopkins, "There is good reason to suspect that under the exigency of 'formal development', the many remarkable letters would have lost their bloom, might not have become particularly remarkable essays at all."¹⁸ Arnold chose his authors for these studies because he felt that their limited reputations did not do justice to their merits, literary or personal--a subject which Hopkins, as he grew older, was to understand very well. The link which Arnold makes between the artist's character and his work is one which Hopkins accepts. He shows this when he echoes the judgement, expressed by Arnold in Ward's English Poets, that Keats' life and work were marred by his self-indulgence, but that discernment and strength of character were already making themselves felt in both the poetry and the personality of the artist and would have ultimately

prevailed.¹¹ In Chapter II, we shall see that Hopkins also used this link in his criticism.

Hopkins also shows approval of some of Arnold's views on the "manner" of poetry. Since Hopkins claims to be aiming at "a more balanced and Miltonic style",¹⁹ his endorsement of Arnold's "interesting review" on Milton's "grand style"⁹ indicates that he is prepared to accept the critic's opinion on a subject that concerns his own poetic technique. He demonstrates agreement with the plea for fixed standards of taste, advanced in "The Literary Influence of the Academies", when he tells Baillie, "I am coming to think much of taste myself, good taste and moderation."³ In the same letter, he accuses Arnold of two unexplained "flagrant pieces of bad taste." Some light may be thrown on this matter as a by-product of Donald Davie's essay, "Hopkins as a Decadent Critic."²⁰ In it, Davie points to a passage in a letter to Patmore, dated October 20, 1887,²¹ which he regards as a "considered rejoinder" to Arnold's essay. In discussing prose style, Hopkins considers Newman and Burke, whom Arnold also examines, and comes to conclusions which are exactly the reverse of those reached in "The Literary Influence of the Academies". Whereas Arnold praises Newman's urbanity and regards Burke's extravagant prose as "at too great a distance from the centre of good taste",²¹ Hopkins considers that Newman, like Patmore, does not know what writing prose

is and has no "belonging rhetoric." He comments on Burke, "The beauty, the eloquence of good prose cannot come wholly from the thought. With Burke it does and varies with the thought. When, therefore, the thought is sublime so does the style appear to be." Davie adds that the conclusion to be drawn from this is that Hopkins disapproves of the fact that "when his thoughts were not sublime, neither was his style," and argues that Hopkins, unlike Arnold, is demanding a consistently elevated style in prose as well as in verse. This chain of reasoning would be difficult to contradict. However, Davie goes on to use this argument to support his theory that Hopkins is a decadent critic, interested in the aesthetics of form and the autonomy of the work of art rather than in its content or its purpose. This is to take the argument too far. Interest in form and interest in content do not have to be mutually exclusive, and, in the case of Hopkins, they are not. In his disapproval of Macaulay,²² for example, he follows Arnold who considers that the historian uses an elevated style to disguise lack of content.²³ Davie suggests that Hopkins's admiration of Milton is also an aspect of his decadence. "Put together such recurrent terms as 'inscape', 'sublime', 'distinctiveness', 'masculinity', 'character', and one is forced to the conclusion that it was just this, Milton's egotism, individualism and arrogance, which made him, for Hopkins the model poet." One might suggest that Arnold

would be a strange authority for Hopkins to quote if this were so. Davie's argument excludes other of Hopkins's recurrent terms such as 'earnestness', 'gentlemanliness', 'thought' and 'insight'. It should be expanded to include them and to leave us with the conclusion that Hopkins, like Arnold, required an elevated style to be clothing for a suitably serious content. This is the argument which this thesis will advance.

This is not to deny the influence of Pater and the Aesthetic Movement which Davie and other critics have noticed in Hopkins's concern with "design" and "pattern" in poetry. He shows a much greater concern with form than Arnold displays, and it is perhaps the lack of distinctive design in Arnold's poetry which leads Hopkins to describe it as having "all the ingredients of poetry without quite being it." However, Arnold has also been claimed as a progenitor of the Aesthetic Movement because of his concern with 'culture', 'sweetness' and 'light'. Although it might be possible to link the two men, using Pater as an intermediary, the characteristics which they most obviously share are those which Myron Ockshorn ascribes to the Victorian critical sensibility.²⁴ He states that the Victorian critics attempted to modify the Romantic sensibility by means of the classical virtues of reason, realism, moderation and control, "it was now expected of this very sincere, very deep and very passionate

prophet-poet that he behave himself like a gentleman, that he practice what he preached, that he concern himself not only with the expression of private feeling, but, somehow, with the advancement of the public good: of public education, public morality and taste."

Ockshorn's argument points to the view that both men are children of their age and that parallels between their opinions can be attributed to this. It is, however, the contention of this thesis that they express their concerns by means of critical precepts so similar that, in view of Hopkins's reading of Arnold, direct influence seems likely. To support this idea as effectively as possible, I have in general restricted the discussion of Arnold to those of his works which I have been able to prove that Hopkins read. The only exception is Arnold's famous plea for a return to classical principles in literature, which is to be found in the Preface to the 1853 edition of his poems. There is no evidence that Hopkins read this and the two critics' views on the subject are offered merely as interesting parallels.

It is of interest to note how Hopkins's pronouncements fit chronologically with his reading of Arnold. The first comment of his which we shall use deals with his high opinion of literary criticism and occurs in a letter to Baillie written on September 6, 1863,²⁵ before there is any evidence that he had read Arnold. His discussion of various

forms of verse, such as "Parnassian" and "Delphic", happens in a note in his journal of 1864 and in a letter to Baillie dated September 10, 1864.³ This same letter provides evidence that Hopkins had read "The Literary Influence of the Academies" and we shall see that this essay seems to have influenced his classification of various types of poetry. All of Hopkins's other statements about literature which we shall use were made after he had left Oxford, and therefore after he had read Essays in Criticism: First Series which provides most of the parallels. The other important source of comments by Arnold which are relevant to Hopkins's views is the essay which was eventually called "The Study of Poetry", and which first appeared in 1880. It discusses Arnold's famous concepts of "touchstones", "high seriousness", "truth of substance" and "truth of manner". Although Hopkins was interested in earnestness before this date, as we can see from his praise of Bridges' earnestness in a letter of October 22, 1879,²⁶ a number of his more important observations on the subject occur after he could have read Arnold's essay. His own comment on "touchstones", quoted earlier, is to be found in a letter to Bridges, dated June 1, 1886. His belief in "humanity of spirit" as a necessity in a work of art is expressed to Dixon on October 12, 1881.²⁷ The view that "want of earnest" withers works of art in the end is expressed to Patmore on April 4, 1885,²⁸

and he first used the critical term, "temper", which we shall discuss in this context, in a letter to Dixon of September 16, 1881.²⁴ This is not to say that Hopkins was a mere imitator of Arnold. He was coming to similar views before he read the essay. We shall discuss his use of "form of imagination" in relation to high seriousness, and this expression was used in 1879.³⁰ We shall also see that any views which he might have gleaned from Arnold were sufficiently altered by their absorption into Hopkins's thought to become distinctively his own. Nevertheless, as we look at parallels between the thinking of the two men, it will be interesting to remember that the mind of Arnold did impinge on that of Hopkins and probably left its trace.

CHAPTER TWO: ARNOLD AND HOPKINS AS CRITICS

As we have already seen, Hopkins wrote very little formal criticism. The bulk of his critical writings is to be found in his letters, especially in his correspondence with the three poets, Bridges, Dixon and Patmore, and with the cultivated Baillie. This, naturally, leads to a difference in format and intention between his literary criticism and that of Arnold. His general comments on literary matters are rarely extensive and are written for a reader whose own views are known, rather than for the general public. His criticism of the manuscripts of friends consists of detailed suggestions for the polishing of work in progress: it is not an exposition of a work for the enlightenment of the public at large. We shall see that the difference between the letter writer and the professional critic accounts for some of the differences between the works of the two men. However, the critical principles which they apply are often very similar, and, even though it would be difficult to prove direct influence in many cases, the parallels are interesting. The following chapter will examine some similarities in their theories and will conclude by examining their judgements of certain literary figures .

In the discussion of the two men's critical theories, we will consider their views on the function of literary criticism, on morality and truth in art and on what Arnold called "high seriousness". Arnold's statements about the rôle of the literary critic are taken from "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time". Hopkins does not echo him verbally here. Indeed, as we have seen in Chapter I, his first comments on the subject, in a letter to Baillie, dated September 8, 1863,²⁵ were probably written before he had read Arnold's essay. However, it is interesting to see how Hopkins himself measures up to Arnold's criteria for the literary critic, and it is worth bearing in mind that Hopkins certainly knew "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" before his days as an undergraduate were over and that, as we shall see on page 52, he may be echoing phrases from it as late as 1888, when he describes an essay by Arnold on a completely different topic, Keats. Those views of Arnold on morality and truth which we shall discuss are scattered throughout those of his works which are under consideration in this thesis. Hopkins's opinions on the matter are similarly widely dispersed, and it is arguable that each man was expressing current critical ideas in his own way. However, for Arnold, morality and truth are fused with certain aesthetic qualities in his chief requirement of good literature, "high seriousness". We shall see that Hopkins also

regards "seriousness" as a necessity for the best literature and states his position in words which echo Arnold's essay, "On the Study of Poetry", too closely to be coincidental. The fact that Hopkins consciously adopts Arnold's criterion of "high seriousness" at this point seems to indicate that other of Hopkins's views which relate to this principle, although they were not designed to conform to Arnold's axioms, were at least formulated by a mind which accepted the views expressed in "On the Study of Poetry". After discussing various of Hopkins's statements which relate to "high seriousness", we shall enter the section of the chapter which deals with style. Here, we shall consider the influence upon Hopkins of "The Literary Influence of the Academies", an essay for which he expresses great admiration. In a letter in which he recommends Baillie to read the essay,⁶⁹ he writes of the necessity for good taste, and the parallels between his views on the subject and those expressed in the essay are interesting for this reason. In the same letter, Hopkins considers various forms of verse, such as "Parnassian" and "Delphic". Parallels can be drawn between these and the varieties of prose which Arnold discusses in "On the Literary Influence of the Academies". Since Hopkins must have been reading the essay at the time when he was formulating his views on the subject, direct influence seems likely. After a comparison of the two men's use of stylistic rules, we

shall move to a discussion of their use of the classics as standards for style. Here, we shall use Arnold's Preface to the 1853 edition of his poems, the only work of Arnold's which Hopkins may not have read which will be used in this essay. The similarity between this work and some of Hopkins's opinions is offered merely as an interesting parallel. However, both men regard Milton as an English classic and, as we come to discuss this, an attempt will be made to show direct influence at work. Hopkins cites Arnold's essay, "A French Critic on Milton", as an authority for some of his own views on Milton's style, and we shall attempt to show that Hopkins's term, "sequence of phrase", is a conscious paraphrase of Arnold's "the grand style". We shall then briefly discuss the importance of the artist's character to both men, who probably shared their opinions on the subject with many other critics of the time. Then, we shall pass to a comparison of the two men's critical methods and we shall end by comparing their views on certain literary figures.

Both men regarded the function of the critic as an important one. In his essay, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (1864), Arnold views the critic as a cultural entrepreneur, whose function it is to discover and disseminate "the best that is known and thought in the world."¹ Since the decision as to what constitutes this

best rests with the individual critic, the quality of his literary tact is important, and criticism, no less than artistic endeavour, is a creative activity. When chiding Baillie for his low estimation of criticism,² Hopkins agrees with Arnold that a great critic has "powers which in their line are perhaps equal to those of the man whose work he criticises", and lists, as the necessary gifts of the critic, genius, insight, delicacy, power, poetry, ingenuity, a list which could probably be applied to the artist, without any need for alteration. He concludes that it is not surprising that such critics are rare. Hopkins acted as a cultural entrepreneur in introducing the muses of his three friends to each other, but the cosmopolitanism which Arnold demanded of the critic is nowhere endorsed or shown by him. He only partially fulfilled Arnold's requirements that the critic should have "a knowledge of Greek, Roman and Eastern antiquity" and of one other culture.³ Hopkins was an expert in classics, and, in his letters to Baillie, shows a surprising knowledge of ancient Eastern languages, but he confesses to both poor German and poor French,⁴ and this makes his view of the objective of criticism narrower than that of Arnold, who would surely have dismissed as provincial Hopkins's desire, expressed to Patmore, that criticism would make the worth of English Literature more and more felt.⁵

Arnold feels that the dissemination of knowledge is

particularly important because artists produce great works by synthesising ideas already current in their society.⁶ The critic must therefore manufacture an intellectual climate in which great works can be written. Such a climate, according to Arnold, can either permeate the whole society, as it did in Elizabethan England, or can be generated by an intelligentsia. He does not believe that it exists in Victorian England. Hopkins appears to agree that the age influences the artist, although he seems to be thinking of style rather than of intellectual content when he says, "For a work to be perfect there ought to be a sense of beauty in the highest degree both in the artist and the age, the style and keepings of which the artist employs."⁷ It is ^{probable} ~~arguable~~ that he and his friends, also feeling that their age was unfavourable to artistic endeavour, were trying to form their own intellectual climate. He seems to see them as being unlike their age because of their concern with the moral and intellectual content of their work. Hopkins offers the unappreciated Patmore the consolation that he is "too deep" for their age,⁸ and commends Bridges for "character, sincerity, earnestness, manliness, tenderness, humour, melancholy, human feeling," qualities which the popular poets of the age "have not and scarcely seem to think worth having."⁹ Dixon adds stanzas to a poem to "deepen the moral", at Hopkins's suggestion.¹⁰

The climate which Hopkins saw his friends trying to generate, therefore, had a moral concern which would have met Arnold's criterion that good poetry must be a "criticism of life"¹¹ that it must concern itself with the great issues of life and not be mere decoration. Hopkins tells Dixon that his more mature judgement requires "meaning" and "power of thought",¹² rather than merely sense impressions. Elsewhere, he criticises Tennyson because, despite his beautiful language, "His opinions too are not original, and they sink into vulgarity."¹³ For Arnold, moral literature will have an edifying effect upon the reader. It will "illuminate and rejoice us."¹⁴ Hopkins, too, requires literature to be both moral and edifying. He criticises Swinburne for showing no character in his works¹⁵ and objects to Tennyson's Maud as an "ungentlemanly row."¹⁶ Neither man, he seems to imply, is setting an example of good behaviour or proper attitudes. For both critics, this moral concern can degenerate into a mere prudery which is, no doubt, partly the effect of their age. Arnold feels that Burns has to rise above the vulgarity of his subject matter in "The Cottar's Saturday Night."¹⁷ Hopkins objects to Patmore's heroine of "The Girl of All Periods", who read George Sand, "skipping the wicked pages", that she "may be from life, but is unpleasant",¹⁸ and shows a concern, no doubt normal in his age, that literature should not

be scandalous. In his letter to Baillie he explains:

With regard to morality it is true no doubt αἴτιος that any subject may be chosen for its art value alone.... The question however is the practical effect.... Another is that what is innocent in a writer, if it must cause certain scandal to readers becomes wrong on that ground. This too is a question of degree for perhaps we are not bound to consider those who will take scandal from everything: it is required that the number only should be small. Then with the work itself the question is how far in point of detail one may safely go.¹⁹

Hopkins's idea of the use of morality in literature goes beyond edification^{to} the point where it is didactic. Perhaps it is here where he and Arnold, who was anxious that ideas should mature before being put to use, part company. Arnold would probably have accepted that works of art are "to educate, to be standards",²⁰ since he uses his classical touchstones for this purpose. However, one cannot feel that he would have had much sympathy with Hopkins's concern for the doctrinal quality of the poetry of Patmore, a fellow Catholic, or for his ideas that Patmore's works were "a good deed done for the Catholic church, and another for England, for the British Empire."²¹

Since the poet's function is partly a moral one, Arnold finds it important that his work should contain "truth." He defines Chaucer's "truth of substance" as his "large, free, simple, clear yet kindly view of human life."²² Hopkins seems to agree that good poetry cannot be written without this broad and humane variety of truth. He objects to the "blustering" of Browning and others because it is "one mood

or vein of human nature, but they would have it all, and look at all human nature through it," and concludes "any untruth to nature, to human nature, is frigid."²³ He is congratulated by Dixon on inventing a new critical term, "humanity",²⁴ but this is not far from the "largeness, freedom, insight, benignity"²⁵ that Arnold requires of a good poet. Both men use a number of other words of critical approval which have bearing on the truth of the work in question. Ockshorn points out that the belief in the virtue of sincerity was inherited by the other Victorian critics from Carlyle.²⁶ Both Arnold and Hopkins display this belief. Arnold feels that, in Burns's drinking poems, "we have not the man speaking with his own voice."²⁷ Hopkins criticises Swinburne for displaying "passion but no feeling."²⁸ Both men use the word, "insight", and an insight is surely a glimpse at a profound truth which is hidden from a casual observer. We have seen above that Arnold requires insight, along with largeness, freedom and benignity, in any good poetry. Hopkins praises Dixon's "insighted" portrait of an old bishop.²⁹ and tells us that the quality of Wordsworth's work varies with the degree of his insight.³⁰

It is his insight which supplies the artist with the raw material of his work. For Arnold, the poet could have insight into two orders of creation; he could be an interpreter of the moral world or an interpreter of nature.³¹

We have already noted Hopkins's interest in moral content. He was also interested in interpreting nature, and recognises that insight can operate in the natural world. He tells Dixon, "I do not believe there is anyone that has so much of Wordsworth's insight into nature as you have."³²

Arnold feels that the nature poet puts the reader into contact "with the essential nature"³³ of natural objects.

Hopkins explains this process more fully in the terms which he invented, "instress" and "inscape". Inscape is perhaps best explained in the words which he himself uses to interpret to Bridges what he means by the word, "sakes", in his poem on Purcell. Inscape is "the being a thing has outside itself and also that in the thing by virtue of which especially it has this being abroad."³⁴ Instress appears to be the distinctive feeling which the object inspires in the beholder. The degree of the poet's insight into the inscape and instress of objects is therefore closely linked with the degree of his inspiration. For Hopkins, as a Catholic, the inscape and instress of an object is God given and the resultant insight should lead the beholder to praise God, as he does in his journal when he sees a bluebell and writes, "I know the beauty of the Lord by it."³⁵ This reminds us of Arnold's description of St. Francis's Hymn in "Pagan and Medieval Religious Sentiment". He tells us that it was "drawing from the spiritual world a source of joy so great

that it ran over upon the material world and transfigured it".³⁶ This type of insight draws the poet close to the prophet and Hopkins and Dixon make the link explicit in their discussion of Wordsworth. Because of Wordsworth's "spiritual insight into nature", Hopkins feels that he has "Charisma" and that in him other people "saw something, got a shock."³⁷ Dixon describes Wordsworth as a "seer".³⁸ This is near to the function of the prophets, as described in "Spinoza and the Bible." They are interpreters of God through "the power and vividness of their representing and imagining faculty."³⁹ Dixon mentions Wordsworth's "healing power", which is reminiscent of Arnold's idea of poetry replacing religion as a "consolation and stay"⁴⁰ to the human race. Neither Father Hopkins nor Canon Dixon, conventional Christians as they were, was likely to countenance Arnold's impious statement that poetry would replace religion. However, Hopkins is careful to give artistic creation its place in his view of the divine order of things. He tells Bridges:

Art and its fame do not really matter, spiritually they are nothing, virtue is the only good; but it is only by bringing in the infinite that to a just judgement they can be made to look infinitesimal or small or less than vastly great; and in this ordinary view of them I apply to them, and it is the true rule for dealing with them, what Christ our Lord said of virtue, Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works (say, of art) and glorify your Father in heaven (that is, acknowledge that they have an absolute excellence in them and are steps in a scale of infinite and inexhaustible excellence).⁴¹

He himself could not let his light shine because he regarded publication of his poetry as incompatible with a yet higher vocation, the priesthood. Nonetheless, he continually admonishes his friends, who are not so tied, to do so, and, describing art in religious terms to Dixon says, "The only just judge, the only just literary critic is Christ", and fame is "some token of the judgement which a perfectly just, heedful and wise mind, namely Christ's, passes upon our doings".⁴²

Both men believed that a quality of a truthful work of art is its beauty, a view inherited from the Romantics. Arnold accepted Keats' dictum, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty", and added "joy goes with her also".⁴³ A letter to Baillie shows that Hopkins accepts that beauty and truth should both be present in a work of art, although he does not seem to see them as dependent upon each other. "The other arts seem to depend on truth (no: Truth) as well as Beauty. What then answers to, I mean what is Truth in music?"⁴⁴ Later, he found a religious explanation which proved that goodness and beauty are destined by God to go together. "It is certain that in nature outward beauty is the proof of inward beauty, outward good of inward good."⁴⁵ He tells Bridges, "In serious poetry the standard and aim is beauty and if the writer misses that his verse, whatever its incidental merits, is not strict or proper

poetry."⁴⁶ Both men accept that beauty and truth can be gleaned from subjects not innately beautiful, but accept it reluctantly. Thus, for Arnold, "it is of advantage to a poet to deal with a beautiful world". A poet like Burns, whose subject is "a sordid, repulsive world" may yet delight us, but he has to "triumph over his world,"⁴⁷ to do so. Hopkins had a taste for the morbid, and he praises Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde both for the artistry of Stevenson's style and because "the horror is nature itself." However, there are subjects which he would prefer not to admit to works of art. He suggests that Bridges leave the "loathsome Sporus"⁴⁸ out of his play. He has a horror of the vulgar and finds it in lines as innocent as:

Since that old salt, no more my host,
Weighing the damage that was done,
Seeing the "Anne" his boat, was lost,
And Anne his wife was saved alone,
Slipped from his moorings, and has gone.⁴⁹

The concern for content did not preclude an equal concern for style in either critic. Both saw that beauty, and even truth, needed to diffuse through content and style in a great poem, and that style and content are inextricably linked. Arnold tells us that "The superior character of truth and seriousness in the matter and substance of the best poetry is inseparable from the superiority of diction and movement marking its style and manner."⁵⁰ Hopkins uses the word, "temper", to mean a complete fusion of

content and style. The temper of a poem, according to Gardner, is "That emotional intensity which derives from the concentration and perfect balance of the spiritual, intellectual and sensual element in poetry."⁵¹ It is because he sees the spirit of the poem permeating its style that Hopkins is able to describe style in terms which we would expect to be reserved for content. In his discussion of Browning's blustering, he describes "a true humanity of spirit, neither mawkish on the one hand nor blustering on the other "as" the most precious of all qualities in style."⁵² This reminds us of Arnold's search for the "accent of high seriousness," high seriousness being another quality of content which contributes its distinctive tone. Many scholars have noticed that Hopkins echoes "The Study of Poetry" so closely that it can surely be no accident when he writes, "a kind of touchstone of the highest or most living art is seriousness; not gravity but the being in earnest with your subject--reality."⁵³ Ockshorn⁵⁴ would have us see this as an implicit criticism of Arnold and believes that there is a fundamental difference between the two men's definitions of seriousness. For Hopkins it is a question of approach to reality, for Arnold it is merely "gravity" of accent. However, part of Hopkins's objection to Browning's blustering is that the viewpoint of "a man bouncing up from the table...saying that he meant

to stand no blasted nonsense" spoils both content and style, and we have already seen that Arnold demands seriousness of style and content. It would seem that both men require an elevated fusion of manner and matter, so that the accent of the one is, indeed, present in the other. They each feel that this quality of serious inspiration can last for less than a whole poem. Arnold comments that Burns has it in certain stanzas, "but a whole poem of that quality Burns cannot make."⁵⁵ In his criticism of Bridges' "Eros and Psyche", Hopkins comments that certain features, such as the "seagull under water" motif, are "immortal."⁵⁶ Both men use other phrases for this quality which they have attempted to pinpoint in the word, "seriousness." Hopkins uses the phrase, "the soul of poetry", to which he takes Tennyson to be "great outsider". The reason is that, despite his "chryselephantine" style, many of his poems show a "want of form of imagination." This makes them "unreal in motive", that is, in content, and "incorrect...in detail", "just like a charade."⁵⁷ The "form of imagination" is the central seriousness, the "soul of poetry", which should permeate content and style. The use of the word, form, suggests that the final shape of the poem will be influenced, too, although this is not explicitly stated. Since the diffusion of "soul" throughout will make the poem a coherent entity, this is indeed another function of

seriousness. Both men use the term, "distinction", to describe the quality which makes poetry worthy of note. Arnold connects distinction with seriousness when he describes the distinction of soul of Eugénie de Guérin as the quality which will enable her work to survive.⁵⁸ Hopkins criticises "the pictures" in Bridges' "The Voice of Nature" as "wanting in distinction (I do not of course mean distinctness)".⁵⁹

Both men, in common no doubt with most poets of their age, were interested in defining the quality which would make art immortal and both felt that it was the quality which they attempted to pinpoint by such words as seriousness. For Arnold, the classics all have "high seriousness"; books which do no more than appeal to the tastes of the age will not last. Hopkins seems to echo this sentiment when he says, "Want of earnest I take to be the deepest fault a work of art can have. It does not strike at first, but it withers them in the end."⁶⁰ Both men were aware that un-serious genius could survive by sheer power of execution, but both found this worrying. Arnold seems to approve of Joubert's judgement on Voltaire:

Those people who read him every day, create for themselves by an invincible law, the necessity of liking him. But these people who, having given up reading him, gazing steadily down upon the influences which his spirit has shed abroad, find themselves in simple justice and duty compelled to detest him."⁶¹

Hopkins complains that Carlyle has gigantic genius but

"always to be affected, always to be fooling, never to be in earnest...is not to fight fair in the field of fame."⁶²

Arnold states that in time, the relative merits of all good writers will be realised, that "the great abounding fountains of truth" will become acknowledged major classics and that lesser authors "of the same family and character"⁶³ will be preserved for posterity by the discerning few.

Hopkins would like to think so. When Bridges expresses dislike of a piece of his music, he pettishly retorts, "If the whole world agreed to condemn it or see nothing in it, I should only tell them to take a generation and come to me again."⁶⁴ However, on other occasions, he expresses the view that a minor classic, in whatever field, may be overlooked. To console Patmore for his undeservedly slight reputation, he uses the example of his favourite philosopher, Duns Scotus, whose "subtlety overshot his interests"⁶⁵ and who was never given the recognition he deserved.

Since both men regard great poetry as a fusion of style and content, it is natural that both should pay attention to style. As successors of the Romantics, they could scarcely fail to believe that poetic genius is a law into itself. Hopkins tells Baillie, "The most inveterate fault of critics is the tendency to cramp and hedge in by rules the free movement of genius",⁶⁶ and Arnold's objection that Addison's criticism of Milton "rests almost entirely upon

convention"⁶⁷ implies that he feels Addison to be judging Milton by a set of rules which the poet has not intended to follow. Nonetheless, both realise that even a genius has his flights of inspiration only occasionally, and that, for his uninspired moments and for the writing of the non-genius, guidelines would be useful. In "The Literary Influence of the Academies", Arnold praises the ability of the Académie Française to keep a high standard in the "journeyman work of literature", and to expunge the scoria from the works of men of genius by keeping them on "the platform where alone the best and highest literary work can be said fairly to begin",⁶⁸ for a much larger proportion of their production. Hopkins expresses admiration of this essay to Baillie and says, "I am coming to think much of taste myself, good taste and moderation, I who have sinned against them so much. But there is a prestige about them which is indescribable".⁶⁹ He and his friends use each other as arbiters of taste, submitting unpublished work to each other for criticism, just as French writers used the Académie. He also demonstrates a belief that the majority of learned opinion is usually right, in matters of criticism at least, when he writes to Bridges, "Now it is mostly found that a learned judgement is less singular than an unlearned one and oftener agrees with the common and popular judgement".⁷⁰ This is similar to Arnold's notion that an academy would

control "a learned man's vagaries".⁷¹

Both critics seem to be trying to marry ideas of moderation and regulated good taste, such as eighteenth-century writers claimed to have derived from the Classics, with the Romantic idea of the license which should be accorded to original genius. An example of this is their attempt to classify various levels of literature according to the degree of inspiration present. Arnold believes that the highest level has the "accent of high seriousness" and that all others fall below this. In his letter to Baillie and in his journal,⁷² Hopkins specifies a number of levels. The highest is "the language of inspiration". The next is Parnassian. This is the language that a great poet writes when he is not inspired, his dialect of the poetic language, and, "The effect of a fine age is to enable ordinary people to write something very near it". Thus, Parnassian is Arnold's "platform where the best and highest literary work can be said fairly to begin". Arnold, too, would agree that an age in which the things of the mind are respected will allow "journeyman" artists to reach the platform. Castalian is a higher Parnassian or "the lowest kind of inspiration" and Delphic is merely "the language of verse as distinct from the language of prose". It is not surprising that the echoes of "The Literary Influence of the Academies" seem especially strong here. The letter to

Baillie, quoted above, indicates that Hopkins was reading Arnold's essay at the time that he was formulating these views. Even closer parallels can be drawn between Hopkins's classifications of verse and the types of prose which Arnold identifies and similarly labels with Greek names.⁷³ Asiatic has "overheavy richness and encumbered gait", Attic has "warm glow, blithe movement and swift pliancy of life" and Corinthian is "the language of editorials". Attic seems to be the prose equivalent of Parnassian since it is the "classic" style but not necessarily the style of inspiration--Addison, Arnold says, expresses commonplace thoughts in it. Corinthian seems to correspond to Attic as Delphic does to Parnassian. It is a utilitarian prose style rather than verse, just as Delphic is verse rather than prose, but it has not the quality of Attic any more than Delphic has the quality of Parnassian. Hopkins seems to be urging Patmore to write Attic rather than Corinthian when he informs him, "The style of prose is a positive thing and not mere absence of verse forms, and pointedly expressed thoughts are single hits and give no continuity of style".⁷⁴ As we have seen in Chapter I, Davie⁷⁵ believes that this passage is a considered rejoinder to Arnold's essay, and points to the fact that Hopkins requires a "belonging rhetoric" and expresses contrary opinions to Arnold's on the subject of Newman and Burke. He thinks that Hopkins is looking for

elevation and distinctiveness in prose rather than for a clear and easy style, and points to his admiration of "wordpainting", in such passages as the swordplay scene from Far from the Madding Crowd,⁷⁶ as proof of this. Here, the language is colourful, but it serves to convey the drama of the incident, and it might suggest that, although Hopkins likes his prose purple, he still, like Arnold, requires it to serve a function and not be mere decoration.

However, most of Hopkins's discussions of style are concerned with verse. He deals with both of the qualities which Arnold considers to comprise poetic style, diction and movement: diction including words and imagery, and movement consisting of both rhythm and form. Both men feel that guidelines can help here, but Arnold does not lay down any detailed ones. This is perhaps because he wrote for the reading public, not for writers, and is more concerned with broad generalities than with the minutiae of the author's craft. Hopkins's detailed examination of his friends' manuscripts and defence of fine points in his own lead him to formulate stringent technical rules. There are certain rules which he considers to be matters of generally accepted taste. He objects to the words, "disillusion", "preventative", and "standpoint" as "barbarisms",⁷⁷ just as Arnold, in more general terms, objects to "freaks in dealing with language."⁷⁸ He criticises Dixon's "bad

"rhymes", "underneath", "bequeath" and "death", and objects to "Lord" and "broad" as "shockingly vulgar".⁷⁷ There are other rules which he concludes to be matters of commonsense which is "never out of place anywhere, neither on Parnassus, nor on Tabor, nor on the Mount where Our Lord preached."⁷⁹ It is commonsense which dictates the famous objection to Bridges' domeless court:

I have told you of my objection to domeless. If there were some reason for it why do you not tell me? A court I suppose to be any large room or space of a building upon the ground floor and imperfectly closed. About the being on the ground floor I do not feel quite sure, about the being imperfectly closed--above or around--I do. Courts can seldom be domed in any case, so that it is needless to tell us that those on Olympus are domeless. No: better to say Kampstuliconless courts or Minton's - encaustic - tileless courts or vulcanised - India - rubberless courts. This would strike a keynote and bespeak attention. And if the critics said those things did not belong to the period you would have (as you have now with domeless) the overwhelming answer that you never said they did but the contrary.⁸⁰

Clearly, in order to persuade his friends of the validity of the rules by which he judges them, he needs to appeal to accepted standards or to something which can be argued on the grounds of commonsense. He justifies his own practice in many instances by means of a self-constructed set of rules. His sprung rhythm obeys laws of this type. It is his own invention, and his reasons for using it are "because it is the nearest to the rhythm of prose, the native and natural rhythm of speech, the least forced, the most rhetorical and emphatic of all possible rhythms, combining,

as it seems to me, the opposite and, one would have thought, incompatible excellences, markedness of rhythm--that is rhythm's self--and naturalness of expression."⁸¹ However, these reasons alone are not enough for him. He needs to find a precedent in such lines as "Why should this desert be", and in Milton's "counterpointed" verse.⁸² He also needs to be able to defend his verse form to Bridges in the words, "with all my licenses, or rather laws, I am stricter than you and I might say than anybody I know."⁸³ With his new scansion, Hopkins is straining against the poetic convention of his age, but, like Arnold, he believes in stylistic rules and can only break away by substituting a set of his own which he can justify in terms of the great authors of the past. He does not necessarily recommend that his friends follow the same practice, and, since he hoped that his friend, Dixon, could be widely read, he advises him not to drop syllables, "I know I do it myself...but in smooth narrative... and for private reading I think it needless and faulty and that it puts the reader out."⁸⁴ One wonders what influence a larger audience would have had on Hopkins's verse. In order to create his distinctive poetic style, he is prepared to violate usages which one would have expected him to hold dear, but he always finds a justification for it. Thus, he can be pedantic about the use of 'do' and 'did',⁸⁵ but, when Bridges has presumably complained

that his use of words in interchangeable syntax makes his verse unintelligible, he writes, "in a language like English, and in an age of it like the present, written words are really matter open and indifferent to the receiving of different and alternative verse forms."⁸⁶

Hopkins's obscurity exercises his skill for justification a good deal, since he seems to accept Arnold's principle that clarity is "one of the characteristics of truth",⁸⁷ and frequently chides his friends for obscurity. However, the operation of this criterion in the way in which it had to work in the past, to produce clarity at first reading, does not suit his revolutionary purposes. He tells Bridges, "Obscurity I do and will try to avoid so far as is consistent with excellences higher than clearness at first reading";⁸⁸ such excellences might include sprung rhythm and his syntactical eccentricities. He anticipates later poets, and moves away from Arnold, in discovering that obscurity might serve a purpose. He answers Bridges' objection to a poem:

Granted that it needs study and is obscure for indeed I was not over-desirous that the meaning of all should be quite clear, at least unmistakeable, you might, without the effort that to make it all out would seem to have required, have nevertheless read it so that lines and stanzas should be left in the memory and superficial impressions deepened, and have liked some without exhausting all.⁸⁹

He reconciles these views finally by accepting but extending Arnold's precept, in order to establish two kinds of clarity,

"One of two kinds of clearness one should have--either the meaning to be felt without effort as fast as one reads or else, if dark at first reading, when once made out to explode."⁹⁰ Hopkins thus manages to both be the genius untrammelled by the rules generally accepted around him and to keep a high level of technical consistency, by following his own set of precepts.

The views of both Arnold and Hopkins on the subject of style are influenced by a common educational background. Both studied Classics at Oxford, and both apply their classical learning in their approach to literature. Bender suggests that Hopkins's method of reading Latin and Greek texts closely, paying attention to possible readings and derivations of each word, laid the foundation for his close reading of English Literature.⁹¹ However that may be, Arnold would have learned the same method of dealing with the Classics, and does not seem to have been influenced in the same way. He is, as always, interested in general principles, rather than in details, in his approach to the benefits which study of the Classics could confer on English authors. In his Preface to the 1853 edition of his poems,⁹² Arnold argues for a return to some classical standards in dramatic and epic poetry, and especially for the adoption of unity of action. This links with his precept of high seriousness. The dominant action will be one which

will appeal to "the primary human affections", the language will be subordinate and draw "its force directly from the pregnancy of the matter which it conveys" and the overall result will be "unity and profundity of moral impression". Shakespeare is accepted with reservations as fulfilling these requirements. In discussing Dixon's epic, Mano, Hopkins praises it for "beauties of the noblest sort, the deepest pathos and tragedy"--in other words, for appealing to "the primary human affections". He complains that it has "no leading thought".⁹⁴ This leading thought is described elsewhere, quoting Patmore, as the "inner motive of the poem"⁹⁴ and seems to be the focal point around which unity both of action and of moral impression should have been built. Elsewhere, Hopkins gives his interpretation of unity of action, which, characteristically, is more flexible than Arnold's. He requires the action to be "center-hung",⁹⁵ and explains to Dixon:

There is unity of action, as I understand, if the plot turns on one event, incident or, to speak more technically, motive and all its parts and details bear on that and are relevant to that: if they are irrelevant or disconnected or involve by-issues, then the unity of action is impaired.... In general, I take it that other things being alike, unity of action is higher the more complex the plot: it is more difficult to effect and therefore the more valuable when effected."⁹⁶

This is the Greek ideal applied to modern literature in a way that modern literature can use. Hopkins, like Arnold, feels that the language should also possess a unity, both

within itself and with the action. The terms which he uses to describe this are "sequence of phrase" and "sequence of feeling".⁹⁷ In discussing Bridges' poem, "The Growth of Love", he describes sequence of feeling as the "dramatic quality by which what comes before seems to necessitate and beget what comes after--at least, after you have heard it, it does."⁹⁸ This is surely what Hopkins means elsewhere by "flush and fusedness" of diction and by "temper", an informing of the parts by the "inner motive", so that all of the language is psychologically linked. In a discussion of Arnold's "A French Critic on Milton", Hopkins describes Milton as "the master of sequence of phrase",⁹⁹ reminding us that Arnold describes Milton as "our one first rate master of the grand style."¹⁰⁰ Hopkins expresses agreement with Dixon's interpretation of "sequence of phrase":

There is in Milton, as I think, a sort of absolute precision of language which belongs to no other poet: a deliberate unrolling as if of some vast material, which is all there already, and to which the accident of the moment in writing can add nothing: a material which his mighty hands alone can grasp, unroll and display.¹⁰¹

and also agrees with Dixon's comment that Milton's self-sufficiency gives him this quality. Both men value Milton's elevated language highly. Arnold feels that it qualifies him to be considered a classic, along with Virgil and Homer, because the number of masters of the grand style "is so limited that a man acquires a world rank in poetry and art...by being numbered among them".¹⁰² Hopkins makes

frequent claims to be modeling his own style on Milton's. After making one such claim, he explains that his aim in writing poetry is "inscape", the distinctive "pattern" of the piece.¹⁰³ This comment seems to clash with his praise of Bridges' "classical" style, which is not the "individual style or manner" of such poets as Swinburne, Tennyson, Morris and "the scarecrow, misbegotten Browning crew".¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, we should remember, that Arnold, in his Preface, praises classical literature for subordinating individual style to subject matter. This does not mean that the artist does not have an individual style, merely that his greatest works transcend it, and Hopkins would surely have earned Arnold's approval for moulding his dialect of the Parnassian on the most noble and classical model available.

Given their preoccupation with morality and seriousness in literature, it is not surprising that both Arnold and Hopkins should have been concerned with the character of the artist. The first series of Essays in Criticism comprises a number of verbal portraits of poets and philosophers, linking their characters and their work. In his essay on Keats, Arnold is seeking "some evidence of the instinct for character, for virtue, passing into the man's life, passing into his work" because "there is that stamp of high work which is akin to character, which is character passing into intellectual production."¹⁰⁵ As we have seen,

earnestness is Hopkins's equivalent to high seriousness in art. He uses the same word of character, "without earnestness there is nothing sound or beautiful in character",¹⁰⁶ and links the character of the artist and his work explicitly in his avowal to Bridges, "If I were not your friend I should wish to be the friend of the man that wrote your poems. They shew the eye for pure beauty and they shew, my dearest, besides, the character which is much more rare and precious."¹⁰⁷ Both men seem to believe that the artist should show his character in his work in the same way that society would expect him to show it in his life, by a proper sense of decorum and by consideration toward his readers. Arnold objects to Keats's love letters because of their lack of "character and self-control"¹⁰⁸ and it is presumably the lack of that very Victorian virtue, self-restraint, that Hopkins is criticising when he refers to "Locksley Hall" and Maud as an "ungentlemanly row".¹⁰⁹ Hopkins's concept of the gentleman is applied, not only to social mores, but to the artist and his art. He criticises the ungentlemanliness of modern artists, "For gentlemen do not pander to lust or other baseness nor, as you say, give themselves airs and affectations, nor do other things to be found in modern works", and praises the quality in Dixon's work "that you feel that he is a gentleman and thinks like one".¹¹⁰ Occasionally, one can feel him judging the

artist's work from his character rather than vice versa, and this leads to distorted results. When he refers to George Eliot as "the Evans - Eliot - Lewis - Cross woman",¹¹¹ one is not surprised that praise fails to follow. Similarly, one wonders how far his surprisingly high estimate of Weber's music is influenced by his belief that the composer was "a good man...with no hateful affectation of playing the fool and behaving like a blackguard".¹¹² Arnold's discussions of the artist's work and character do not descend to this level of unsophistication.

A comparison of the critical methods of the two men elicits some interesting differences and similarities. Ockshorn¹¹³ suggests that a study of Arnold and Hopkins will show that Arnold's wider reading gave him a more general and urbane view than Hopkins, but that Hopkins is the closer critic. To demonstrate that wider reading might have been of benefit, he comments that Hopkins might have been less "spoony" about married people if he had been acquainted with the French novel, and that, had he read more, he would not have still been waiting to read Treasure Island when he was in his forties. It is true that Hopkins had little knowledge of French or German. However, he was widely read in the English Literature of his time. We know that he read Eliot, Hardy, Stevenson, Dickens, Blackmore, Thackeray, Scott and the Brontës, and that he was well

acquainted with the current poetry and major critics of the period. One would have thought that The Mayor of Casterbridge or The Return of the Native, both of which he had read, would have been a sufficient corrective to a naïve attitude toward marriage if, indeed, his avowal of "spooniness" to the newly-wed Bridges was not merely a coy and awkward word of congratulation. The missing of Treasure Island must surely have been a boyhood omission, since he had read other works by the same author. A more distressing sign of his narrowness is his extreme sensitivity to any hint of the vulgar, as in Bridges' "Anne" joke, mentioned earlier. Here again, one would have expected his knowledge of English Literature to have come to his rescue. His knowledge of English Literature of the past--which seems to have been as wide as one would expect of a well-educated general reader--included Dryden and Pope. His ignorance of foreign literature does perhaps account for his distressing literary jingoism, as when he describes Patmore's poetry as a good deed done for the British Empire. Arnold is also able to range over a great many subjects, including philosophy, religion and social criticism, and regards it as the critic's function to spread new ideas current in any of these disciplines, not just in literature. Hopkins is not a professional critic and does not have this aim. Also, in

his letters, he could scarcely deal with these subjects in the depth and at the length that Arnold employs in his essays. However, as a Jesuit, he was a professional student of philosophy and religion. His attitude to both is biased by his Catholic standpoint but it is impossible to say whether wider reading would have altered that. His political views indicate that, on social questions, he followed Arnold's advice to approach truth from all sides in a disinterested manner. In the famous 'red' letter,¹¹⁴ he can see that revolution would destroy the old civilisation which is "a dreadful lookout", but adds "What has the old civilisation done for the workers?" Similarly, he feels that Home Rule for Ireland "is a blow for England and will do no good to Ireland. But it is better than worse things".¹¹⁵ In both cases, he starts from the viewpoint from which one would expect a Tory--as his friends Bridges and Patmore were--to start. He is a British patriot and a member of the middle classes who is fond of the "old civilisation." However, he can see the opposite point of view and his conclusion rests upon a form of fusion.

As Ockshorn implies, Arnold was not a close critic. Indeed, the type of criticism which makes a detailed exposition of the words of a poem had to wait until this century. He was more interested in giving his reader a general idea of the manner and style of the work in

question, and, indeed, more likely to range over the whole work and life of the author than to concentrate on any one work. He uses quotations much less than a modern critic would use them and, when he does use them, he tends to quote a number of lines, for example:

Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met, or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

and to state that the lines have "a profound and passionate melancholy",¹¹⁶ but will leave the reader to detect the quality for himself. When Hopkins is criticising the poems of his friends, his method is very different from this. Let us quote some of his criticism in his letter to Dixon of September 16, 1881,¹¹⁷ in which he is dealing with a selection of his friend's poetry. First, "'The Willow' has the same command of pathos by direct and simple touches like 'mournful tears' and 'leaves of heavy care' which is to be remarked everywhere in your work and seems so easy and is so hard". Here, he supports his argument that Dixon's work has pathos by use of short and precise quotations, and shows the mechanics by which the pathos works, the "direct and simple touches". He continues with his criticism of "The Nile":

The metre is, I think your own invention and you have used it for eastern subjects before. It is imposing. It is strange to me that in a measure in which the rhythm requires to be so much marked you allow so much reversal of accent, as in the first line for instance and the third, or

allow oversyllabbling, as in 'oftentimes' where the verse wants 'ofttimes'. In measures like this there is always apt to come in something prosaic and banal.

Here, the criticism is of the metre, and, after giving a general sense of the poem's "imposing" flavour, such as Arnold might give, he proceeds to criticism of technical points, again pinpointing the faults which lead to banality. As a final example, "The Spirit Wooed" is discussed in these terms:

'The Spirit Wooed' is a lovely piece of nature and imagination all in one, in a vein peculiarly yours: I do not believe there is anyone that has so much of Wordsworth's insight into nature as you have. Then it seems to me the temper is exactly right, a thing most rare.... The image of the moon's footfall is very beautiful. About the golden arms or arm of sunset...I have that trouble of perspective which often haunts me.

Here, again, he tries to convey his general impression of the poem as Arnold might have done, and he uses his own critical term, "temper", as Arnold might have used "high seriousness". However, he ends by praising one image and criticising the perspective of another. Concern with individual images was not a quality of Arnold's criticism. These criticisms pay attention to details in a much more exact manner than Arnold's did. However, they dwell only on those details which Hopkins wants to particularly praise or criticise and give the general reader little idea of the poem at all, but then, they were not intended for the general reader. This type of criticism is part of the creative process and is intended to help the author polish up

his manuscript. The poem criticised is still regarded as work in progress, and that is why details are treated with such loving care, but no attempt is made at a full exposition.

These passages can be said to follow Arnold's general rules for the critic, to communicate fresh Knowledge "letting his judgement pass along with it--but insensibly, and in the second place, not the first, as a sort of companion and clue, not as an abstract law giver."¹¹⁸ The use of details makes sure that Hopkins does not become abstract, and he seems to be searching for the nature of the work in his more general comments, and suggesting methods of improvement rather than passing judgement upon the work. In order to make a more just comparison with Arnold, we should include a passage of Hopkins's comments on a well known author. In it, his function is likely to be closer to Arnold's, than in his criticism of work in progress:

You call Tennyson 'a great outsider'; you mean, I think, to the soul of poetry. I feel what you mean, though it grieves me to hear him depreciated, as of late years has often been done. Come what may, he will be one of our greatest poets. To me his poetry appears 'chryselephantine' always of precious mental material and each verse a work of art, no botchy places, not only so but no half wrought or low-toned ones, no drab, no brown-holland: but the form though fine, not the perfect artist's form, not equal to the material. When the inspiration is genuine, arising from personal feeling, as in "In Memoriam", a divine work, he is at his best, or when he is rhyming pure and simple imagination, without afterthought, as in the "Lady of Shallott", "Sir Galahad", the "Dream of Fair Women" or "Palace of Art." But the want of perfect form in the imagination comes damagingly out when he undertakes longer works of fancy, as in

his Idylls: they are unreal in motive and incorrect, uncanonical so to say, in detail and keepings.¹¹⁹

This passage adopts a manner much closer to Arnold's. It refers to the whole work of the author and passes short comments on individual poems. It leaves the reader with a conclusion, but offers no evidence. Like Arnold's criticism, it deals in general terms with style, content and seriousness, here called "form in the imagination". It is, indeed, at a disadvantage when compared to Arnold's criticism, in that Arnold has whole essays in which to develop his ideas. This is restricted to a letter. The only point where Hopkins departs from the Arnoldian manner, is in his comment on keepings, which, perhaps, deals with smaller details than Arnold would have discussed. His very detailed criticism almost all happens in his comments on the work of his friends, while more general passages are often like this. It is interesting that he planned a work on "underthought" and "overthought" in Greek plays. Underthought must surely imply a detailed study of imagery, and this bears out Bender's idea, mentioned earlier, that Hopkins learned about close criticism from his study of the Classics. Unfortunately the project was never carried out.

Perhaps Arnold's most famous contribution to critical method is his idea of touchstones. Hopkins seems to endorse it when he says that a "touchstone of the highest or most living art is seriousness,"⁵² but we do not see him using it

exactly as Arnold recommends. He uses a two line touchstone from Ovid to demonstrate the "consummate smoothness"¹²⁰ for which Bridges should strive, but high seriousness is not in question here, and he is recommending the lines as a guide for Bridges' Latin verse. He seems to be using a variant of the touchstone method when he tells Dixon, "I cannot see what should make me overrate your poems: I have plenty of poetry old and new to compare with them and to guide my taste",¹²¹ but he is not using two line touchstones here, rather his whole reading. Arnold recommends the touchstone method for the ordinary reader, and Hopkins had good reason to think that he was not in need of such a basic tool. This method, in Arnold's view, prevented the critic from falling into either of two traps, the historic estimate or the personal estimate. Arnold might well consider Hopkins's defence of the plausibility of Hyde, "my Hyde is worse",¹²² to be an example of the personal estimate. In general, however, he seems to meet Arnold's standards of objectivity.

It may be useful to conclude by comparing the opinions of the two men on certain authors of whom it is certain that Hopkins had read Arnold's judgements and on whom he also comments. He acknowledges his debt to Arnold in discussing Milton and Keats, and broadly agrees with him. The only quality of Milton's dealt with in "A French Critic on Milton" that Hopkins chooses to discuss, is style. He agrees that

Milton is one of "our great masters of style",¹²³ and seems, as has already been stated, to agree with Arnold as to what constitutes the style. He takes the discussion in a different direction by explaining how Milton's "counterpointed rhythm" sets a precedent for sprung rhythm. His comments on Keats,¹²⁴ even those revised after Patmore's objections, state Arnold's case that Keats had genius and a feeling for perfection and was overcoming the defects of youth and an insufficient education. Surprisingly, he does not mention the Odes, which Arnold considers to be Keats' culminating work. His criticism of Endymion and Lamia is more detailed than any criticism which Arnold attempts. His comment that Keats showed judgement in not "flinging himself blindly on the specious Liberal stuff that crazed Shelley" is not drawn from Arnold's essay but, as the essay on Shelley shows, Arnold would have endorsed it. Interestingly, the line, "His mind played over life as a whole", followed by the comment that Keats was made to be a critic, reminds us, not of anything in the Keats essay, but of "The Function of Criticism At the Present Time", in which Arnold recommends "a free play of the mind upon all subjects"¹²⁵ as a necessary critical activity. Similarly, the comment that Shakespeare "had the school of his age" reminds us of Arnold's idea, stated in "The Function of Criticism", that the Elizabethan age had an intellectual climate favourable to artistic

production. Hopkins's mockery of Carlyle's writings as "most inefficacious - strenuous heaven-protestations, caterwaul and Cassandra - wailings" and "too dubious moonstone-grindings and on the whole impracticable-practical unveracities"¹²⁷ is reminiscent of Arnold's stricture on Carlyle's "self-will and eccentricity",¹²⁸ in the essay on Heine. On Chaucer, Hopkins says, "I have found that Chaucer's scanning, once understood, is extremely smooth and regular, much more than is thought by Mr. Skeat and other modern Chaucenists"¹²⁹ He thus agrees with Arnold's praise of Chaucer's "divine liquidness of diction, his divine fluidity of movement",¹³⁰ but, typically, Hopkins states the question more technically as a matter of scansion. On the subject of Dryden, Hopkins tells Bridges about his failure to meet Aubrey de Vere, concluding, "I was disappointed till it was mentioned that he did not think Dryden a poet. Then I thought, and perhaps said, I have not missed much."¹³¹ This suggests that he would be displeased by Arnold's praise of Dryden and Pope as "classics of our prose."¹³² However, his defense of Dryden, "his style and his rhythms lay the strongest stress of all our literature on the naked thew and sinew of the English language",¹³³ states one of the reasons why Arnold felt that Dryden was such a master of prose, even when he wrote verse. Possibly Hopkins's own search for a strong style was what made the quality so

precious to him in a poet. The most interesting parallel is between the two men's comments on Burns. Hopkins comments:

In Burns there is generally recognized on the other hand a richness and beauty of manly character which lends worth to some of his smallest fragments, but there is great want in his utterance; it is never really beautiful, he had no eye for pure beauty, he gets no nearer than the fresh picturesque expressed in fervent and flowing language Between a fineness of nature which would have put him in the first rank of writers and poverty of language which puts him in the lowest rank of poets, he takes to my mind when all is balanced and cast up, about a middle place.¹³⁴

There are certain differences. Arnold grants Burns the ability to rise to "the accent or poetic virtue of the highest masters"¹³⁵ in occasional stanzas, whereas Hopkins's comment that his poetry is never really beautiful presumably denies him this. However, Arnold also finds a want in his utterance most of the time. He feels that a good deal of his poetry is "more or less preaching." His description of Burns's "large, free, shrewd, benignant" view of life agrees with Hopkins's opinion of Burns's manly character and the fineness of nature which "would have put him in the first rank of writers." Both men are using the criterion of the character of the poet. Because Burns lacks "high seriousness", despite his humane viewpoint, Arnold considers him to be an author of the second rank, putting him in the same place as Hopkins does.

Hopkins and Arnold arrive at conclusions which are so alike because of the similarity between their critical

axioms. It may be argued that they share their belief in artistic sincerity and seriousness with other critics of the period, but they express it by means of very similar critical principles. For both, the great artist is distinguished by a moral, humane character which informs the content of his work and elevates the style, effecting a fusion of the two. In Chapter I, I attempted to show that Hopkins may have inherited this outlook from Arnold. Assuming that this is so, he succeeds in incorporating it into his own system of thought and gives it the distinctive colouring of his mind. His concern with imagery and with "design" in poetry makes him express a greater awareness of its texture and form than Arnold shows. In this, he anticipates the critics of this century. However, Arnold's interest in "diction" and "movement" may indicate the beginnings of such a concern which he is ill-equipped to express more precisely, because he lacks Hopkins's experience of criticising poetry in manuscript and because he has not had Hopkins's contact with Pater. Hopkins describes his interest in the poem as an entity much more rigorously than Arnold does. Hopkins discusses the "inscape" of a poem which he defines as its "individually - distinctive beauty of style", "the essential and only lasting thing."¹³⁶ Arnold approaches this, but does not reach it, when he searches for the "accent of high seriousness" which

permeates content and style. Nonetheless, Hopkins's view is wide enough to include Arnold's. A belief in form as a prerequisite of good poetry does not, as Davie and others have argued, preclude a moral attitude to the content. Hopkins accepted that art, so long as it was not pernicious, might be morally neutral. He also, in a lecture note, made a very extreme statement which has been taken as a declaration of allegiance to "art for art's sake": "Poetry is speech framed for contemplation of the mind by way of hearing or speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning. Some matter and meaning is essential to it but only as an element necessary to support and employ the shape which is contemplated for its own sake."¹³⁷ Nevertheless, to elicit the true meaning of this, we must see it in context, alongside the many statements which praise seriousness and related virtues. Bridges is told that he is superior to other poets of his age because of such qualities as "character", "sincerity", "manliness", "earnestness", and "human feeling". Dixon's special virtue for Hopkins lies in the fact "that you feel he is a gentleman and thinks like one." One can harmonise the first statement with the later ones, only by suggesting that the great artist's earnest gentlemanliness so informs his work that it is present in the style also. This brings us, full circle, back to Arnold.

Although, in matters such as his new interpretation of the rules of prosody, one can feel Hopkins straining away from Arnold and from the type of poetry which was generally accepted in his day, it would be a mistake to forget how firmly rooted his beliefs were in the nineteenth century. His affinity with Arnold is one of these roots.

CHAPTER THREE: ARNOLD'S CRITICISM AND HOPKINS THE POET

Let us add, therefore, to what we have said, this: that the substance and matter of the best poetry acquire their special character from possessing, in an eminent degree, truth and seriousness. (M. Arnold, "On the Study of Poetry").

Want of earnest I take to be the deepest fault a work of art can have. It does not strike at first, but it withers them in the end. (G. M. Hopkins, Letters, III).

It is of interest to see whether Hopkins's readings of Arnold influenced his own verse as well as his criticism of the poetry of others. Not surprisingly, Arnold is not an influence who has sprung immediately to the minds of many critics of Hopkins's poems. The two men's poetry is very different. As we have seen, Hopkins's only comment on the other man's verse is uncomplimentary, and one may wonder whether Arnold would not have found some of Hopkins's more extravagant poetic idiosyncracies to be "at too great a distance from the centre of good taste." However, we have seen that such of Arnold's critical principles as "high seriousness" and "the grand style" met with Hopkins's approval but took on a different emphasis in his critical practice. It is possible to see his concern with these qualities operating in his poetry, but in a fashion which is distinctively his own.

For both men, the moral quality of literature is

supremely important. As we have seen, Arnold's demand for "high seriousness" as a prerequisite for great literature is echoed in Hopkins's comment to Bridges, "a kind of touchstone of the highest or most living art is seriousness; not gravity but the being in earnest with your subject--reality,"¹ and a good deal of their critical writing is taken up with the discussion of "character", "thought", "criticism of life" and related virtues. Such qualities have to emanate from the content of a poem, although both men were agreed that, in great poetry, these attributes are also filtered through the style. It has been argued by critics such as Davis² that Hopkins was interested in form alone, and this argument is perhaps best countered by an examination of the "seriousness" of his content. Almost all of his poems have a religious meaning which, despite his celebrated obscurity, is usually easy to understand. It is usually the last thing to be uttered and is stated comparatively clearly. Critics may never agree about the meaning of much of The Wreck of the Deutschland (p. 51)³, but it is generally accepted that it ends with a prayer for the conversion of Britain. The precise significance of the bird and of the word, "buckle", in "The Windhover" (p. 69) may long be debated, but no one denies that its last lines imply sacrifice and contain at least an "underthought" which refers to the Crucifixion. This pattern can be discerned even in

"Henry Purcell" (p. 80), a poem so imbued with Hopkins's personal theories of "inscape" and "instress" that it would be very difficult to understand, had not Hopkins conceded to Bridges' request for a "crib".⁴ The poem's message is contained in the simile of the sea bird which ends it and Hopkins explains to Bridges that he never intended it to be so difficult to grasp. This didactic pattern echoes various of Hopkins's priestly functions. Poems so constructed have the air of homilies intended to leave the reader with an edifying thought. "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection" (p. 105) follows the shape of a formal sermon. Like most sermons, it is in three parts, the first glorifying God, the second drawing the listener's attention to the plight of Man and the third proclaiming the divine solution. Often the moral of the poem is expressed as a prayer, but, except in the "terrible sonnets" which we shall discuss later, this is usually a public prayer, such as a priest might offer in church, on behalf of his flock. "In the Valley of the Elwy", for example, ends with a prayer on behalf of the people of Wales, "Complete thy creature dear O where it fails." (p. 68)

Critics who see a clash between priest and poet in Hopkins have been inclined to regard the dogmatic aspect of his poetry as imposed by his conscience on the material which originally inspired him. In the nature sonnets of

1877 especially, it is easy for a reader unsympathetic to a religious viewpoint to see a conflict between the exuberant description of natural beauty which opens the poem and the pious meditation which ends it. However, as Pick⁵ and Mariani⁶ point out, Hopkins sees nature as sacramental. In his philosophy, the inscape of an object not only conveys the object's essential being, it also reflects some of the essence of the Divine. In his journal, he states that he knows "the beauty of our Lord" by the beauty of the blue-bells,⁷ and his poems are also informed by the idea that nature, viewed correctly, brings news of God. "Hurrahing in Harvest" states this idea specifically:

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

(p. 70)

The idea is implicit in those poems which do not state it, and it serves to weld subject matter and religious viewpoint into a unified whole, each aspect gaining greater depth, or higher seriousness as Arnold might have put it, from the other. Even a poem such as "Harry Ploughman", (p. 104) one of the few in which no religious exposition is attempted, can be seen to reflect Hopkins's philosophy. The labourer is shown as especially beautiful when performing his humble, appointed duty of ploughing. He therefore becomes

an example of the sacrificial performance of duty which beautifies all of God's creatures, including the "blue bleak embers" in "The Windhover", and which finds its ultimate justification in the Crucifixion.

Hopkins, therefore, uses poetry in both of the ways which Arnold specifies, as "interpreter of nature" and as "interpreter of the moral world." Arnold believes that a poet who writes both types of poetry runs the risk of spoiling his style through excessive moralising.⁸ Hopkins avoids this pitfall because his moral vision is so firmly rooted in nature which he always sees as God's creation. The first part of The Wreck of the Deutschland discusses the poet's conversion and the purpose of suffering, but it is couched in concrete, natural imagery much of which fore-shadows the account of the storm. God appears as "lightening and lashed rod" and "the sweep and the hurl of thee", and the Passion is described in terms of "terror and frightful sweat". Part I is also connected with the description of the shipwreck thematically, since conversion is seen as one of the major purposes of suffering in both parts of the poem. In those sonnets which have nature as their major theme, Hopkins often makes his meaning more immediate by using natural phenomena in a didactic way. Two poems which are often assumed to have no specifically Christian message can be used as examples of this. Mariani⁹ points out that,

in "Spelt from Sybil's Leaves" (p. 97), the description of nightfall, which reminds the poet of the coming of the soul's night, is very like the Ignatian spiritual exercise in which the devotee tries to imagine hell as concretely as possible. Pick¹⁰ shows that the underthought of "Spring and Fall" (p. 88) relates to the Fall of Man which, together with death and the decay of natural things, is "the blight man was born for". Because the poet does not make his meaning as explicit as he does elsewhere, these poems have been taken to be less doctrinal than the others. "Spring and Fall" has been interpreted as simply mourning the fact that life ends in death. This is not necessarily so. The Ignatian meditation on hell was meant to induce a state of penitence in order to make the performer of this spiritual exercise receptive to God's Grace. Contemplation of the Fall of Man and its consequences might be assumed to have the same effect. The main function of the preacher of a sermon on hell or original sin is to make his auditors aware of their peril, since they can be presumed to know the ways of avoiding the penalty. These poems succeed in doing so.

Moral purpose is usually made explicit in those of Hopkins's poems which praise the beauty of nature. In these poems, Hopkins urges man to pay his dues to his Maker or prays to God to guide his erring creature. Some of the

sonnets use the method, common in hymns, of pointing out God's goodness to Man and demanding gratitude. "Pied Beauty" (p. 69) is reminiscent of the Hymn of Saint Francis which Arnold so admired. Like this hymn, it is a paean of praise for the beauties of creation and counsels, "Praise Him". Elsewhere, nature is used as an analogue, to portray Man's relationship to God. In "Spring" (p. 67), the springtime serves as a parallel both to Paradise before the Fall and to the innocence of youth. The last lines can be read as either a prayer to God to preserve youthful innocence or an entreaty to the young to consecrate their innocence to God:

Have, get, before it cloy
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

In "God's Grandeur", Man's treatment of nature is used to illustrate his treatment of his Maker. He blears and smears God's image in nature, just as he flouts the authority of God himself. However, just as "nature is never spent", but renews itself despite Man's depredations, so God's salvific will is patient and "the Holy Ghost over the bent/ world broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings." (p. 66) Despite its didactic functions, nature never becomes a mere cipher in Hopkins's poetry. It is presented as real and important in its own right, but the poet's religious philosophy invests it with new meaning. He can be said to

follow Arnold's description of Franciscan Christianity in "its drawing from the spiritual world a source of joy so great that it ran over upon the material world and transfigured it."¹¹

In his essay, "Marcus Aurelius", Arnold commented that a function of religion was to "light-up morality."¹² Hopkins does this most powerfully in his nature poems. Some of his other poems provide us with a "criticism of life", albeit of a very limited kind, and demonstrate what he called "humanity" in writing. "The Handsome Heart", "The Brothers", "The Bugler's First Communion" and "Felix Randal" are all based on actual experiences that Hopkins had as a parish priest and all can be said to illustrate the point which he made about "The Brothers", that "pathos has a point as precise as jest has".¹³ The first three discuss the same theme. Each describes an incident in which a youngster has shown his goodness. In "The Brothers", the priest is content to give thanks to God for Harry's concern for his younger brother. In "The Handsome Heart" and "The Bugler's First Communion", a prayer is added that the boy may fulfil his promise and not go astray. All three are portrayed dramatically. "The Brothers" recounts the priest's observation of Henry beside whom he stands at a school play; "The Handsome Heart" opens with a conversation between priest and child, and the poet's meditations

in "The Bugler's First Communion" take place as he administers communion to the soldier. The wafer is presumably given at the word, "There!" which begins stanza four. The poems also show shrewd psychological insight in, for example, the noting of Harry's nervous gesture of ducking his hands between his legs and the awareness that the young bugler will be in acute moral danger. The intensity of Hopkins's concern is shown by the fact that he followed the careers of the soldier and the boy of "The Handsome Heart", as can be seen from his letters.¹⁴ Nevertheless the impact of the poems remains slight, in part, at least, because their meaning verges on the trite--an indication that Hopkins's poems are greatly affected by the quality of the meaning conveyed.

All three are overshadowed by "Felix Randal" (p. 86), a poem which deals with the conventional theme of Christian consolation, but which conveys its message in a more complex and original fashion than do the three poems discussed above. In it, the priest recounts the farrier's decline from "big-boned and hardy-handsome" youth into sickness and death. However, the poem ends with a recollection of Felix's youth:

How far from then forethought of, all thy more
 boisterous years,
 When thou at the random grim forge, powerful amidst
 peers,
 Didst fettle for the great grey drayhorse his bright
 and battering sandal.

Here, the menace of approaching death infuses Felix's youth. The "random" forge suggests his unchristian early years and the great grey drayhorse is ominously suggestive of the shades of approaching oblivion, of purgatory or hell, perhaps. However, the horse's "bright and battering sandal" connects the animal with Pegasus and intimates that Felix's "heavenlier heart" has caused him to triumphantly recover his youthful vigour in heaven. The fact that Felix made the bright sandal in his youth indicates that his "heavenlier heart" was potentially present in his earlier years, along with his randomness. Thus, youth and death, and the earlier and later parts of the poem are fused in these three lines, which knit the poem into a tight unity and point to the poem's message. "The Candle Indoors" and its companion piece, "The Lantern Out of Doors", are also poems which give what Arnold would call a "large" view of life, in that their moral is complex and universal. Both are modelled on Christ's parables. They each take a simple incident, the sight of a lantern moving in the darkness and of a candlelit room, and draw a parallel which has universal significance. In "The Lantern Out of Doors" (p. 71), the lantern moving out of the poet's sight reminds him of those attractive strangers whom he meets briefly and loses track of. He consoles himself that Christ watches over them. In "The Candle Indoors", the priest sees a lighted window

and wonders whether his parishioners are glorifying God within, but rebukes himself with the thought that he must ensure that he is doing this himself. The poems gain depth and universality from the facts that parable and moral are linked by the biblical image of the soul as a light and that the other images echo sayings of Christ, thus widening the terms of reference of the poems. In "The Lantern Out of Doors", Christ is seen as a rescuer following the strangers through the night. This reminds us both of the Parable of the Good Shepherd and of Christ as Light of the World. In "The Candle Indoors", the poet rebukes himself for being "beam-blind", linking the candle with Christ's proverb about the mote and the beam. He also calls himself "spendsavour salt", recalling Christ's warning to his disciples, the "salt of the earth."

All of these poems focus on people, and it is worth remembering that Hopkins saw God in human inscapes as well as in natural ones. He makes this clear in the last lines of "As Kingfishers catch fire":

For Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces. (p. 90)

"Henry Purcell" shows that it is the "abrupt self" of the artist that he values in a work of art, but that he regards this as divine, since the fact that Purcell has "uttered in notes the very make and species of man" provides sufficient

reason to pray that, though a Protestant, he should not be damned. This again suggests that the artist's inscape is somehow divine, and is a religious extension of Arnold's belief that "the instinct for character" will pass into a man's work as well as his life.

As we have seen in Chapter II, Hopkins also believed that an artist should be of high moral character and a gentleman, and that this should show in his work. We shall now endeavour to see whether he fulfilled his own criterion. He certainly did so, in that his work was informed by the religious principles which governed his life. However, both he and Arnold required more than this. They required that work should be restrained and well-mannered, that it should not show the "underbred and ignoble" self-indulgence which Arnold finds in Keats's love letters¹⁵ or the "ungentlemanly row" which Hopkins deplures in "Locksley Hall" and Maud.¹⁶ Much of Hopkins's work, as we have seen, is directed at an audience and mirrors one of his priestly functions, homily, sermon, hymn or public prayer. This necessitates a controlled manner. If the lack of restraint to which he and Arnold object in the works of others is to be found anywhere in Hopkins's own verse, we would expect to detect it in the "terrible sonnets", intensely personal poems springing from a private agony. Occasional traces can be noticed, but this is not the prevalent mood. Critics have remarked

that the sonnets seem to follow a logical pattern. "To seem the stranger" explains the reasons for the writer's spiritual anguish, "No worst there is none" and "I wake and feel the fell of dark" plumb the depths of desolation, and "Patience", "Carrion Comfort" and "My own heart let me have more pity on" show the sufferer emerging from his gloom and learning to cope with his state and to plan for the future. The fact that "Carrion Comfort" comes first of the sequence in the Gardner edition of the poems need not invalidate this reading. The order of composition is not known, and since the poem discusses "That night, that year/ Of now done darkness" (p. 100) it would seem to fit more naturally toward the end. Read like this, the sonnet sequence seems to have a didactic purpose. The speaker charts the depths of spiritual desolation, explains that God's purpose for thus trying him is "that my chaff might fly", refuses to feed on "carrion comfort", despair, and counsels himself to be patient and content to wait until God shall choose to send him joy. His letters provide ample evidence that Hopkins really did undergo fits of intense depression toward the end of his life, but in this series of poems he has succeeded in turning his desolation into a learning experience for himself and an object lesson for his reader. That a reader is considered is shown in such explanatory lines as:

O the mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
 Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
 May who ne'er hung there. (p. 100)

The lesson learnt is one of self-control and moderation. No easy way out is offered by the more hopeful sonnets at the end of the sequence. Patience is a "hard thing" which will bring "wars" and "wounds" and being kind to one's "sad self" involves schooling oneself to wait until God sends joy.

This reminds us that, in Ignatian philosophy, desolation is a state in which God withholds his presence in order to test his follower's faith. In general, the poems written from the depths of agony are also restrained. Gardner points out that the poet usually maintains a balanced attitude toward his state.¹⁷ He can see that it is not as bad as it could be. In "I wake and feel the fell of dark", he compares his condition to that of the lost, but recognises that their plight is worse, and although the prevalent mood of "To seem the stranger" is sad, the poet can still recognise a mitigating factor, "Not but in all removes I can/ Kind love both give and get." (p. 101) The least restrained poem is "No worse there is none." Its macabre images, the anvil on which the poet screams, the shrieking fury, and the precipice are vivid but have no precise relation to aspects of the speaker's mental state. The celebrated "underthought" from King Lear may link the image of the man at the cliff edge with the line, "Here! Creep/ Wretch, under a comfort

serves in a whirlwind" but it does not help us to identify the terms of reference of the poem. Lear was an unwise father, turned out into the storm because of filial ingratitude. This hardly fits the poet's relations with God. Elisabeth Schneider also correctly objects that the poem is not located in time.¹⁸ We do not know whether the poet speaks while undergoing the agony, during a lull or when it is over. The poem seems to spring from an agony so personal that the poet is unable to communicate it. Had this poem come from another poet's pen, one could imagine Hopkins objecting to it as a display of ill-manners toward the reader. However, the intensity of his feelings should be regarded as a mitigating factor, and he should be defended from a charge often levelled against this poem, that it ends in utter hopelessness. Its final sentiment, "all/ Life death does end and each day dies with sleep" (p. 100), offers cold comfort to a reader who does not share the poet's religious views, but it should be remembered that Hopkins's view of death was a positive one. The words addressed to his soul, "Here! Creep/ Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind", suggest that he is able to detach himself and take an objective view of his suffering spirit, here half affectionately called wretch. The echo of King Lear in these words remind us that his suffering made Lear patient. This sonnet sequence, and this poem

in particular, possibly show the Catholic view of life of which Arnold disapproved, "the doctrine of the emptiness and nothingness of human life, of the superiority of renouncement to activity, of quietism to energy."¹⁹ Nonetheless, the attitude expressed is stoical rather than self-pitying and ^{the} reader is offered an opportunity to profit from the poet's experiences. These poems show character in a way which Arnold would surely have approved.

For both men, the "high seriousness" or "temper" of a poem had to inform its style as well as its content. We have seen, in Chapter II, that Hopkins paraphrased Arnold's expression, "the grand style" by the words, "sequence of phrase" and that both men approved of this type of self-consistent, elevated style in Milton. Hopkins's most common stylistic peculiarities are unusual word order, the transposition of the functions of parts of speech, sprung rhythm, invented words and elaborate schemes of alliteration and assonance. Although any of these may be more or less apparent in any given poem, they are all used throughout his mature work and can be said to add up to a consistent style. They also contribute to stylistic elevation for a number of reasons. As Hopkins frequently pointed out, much of his poetry is intended to be read aloud. The novel prosody and strange word order often makes this necessary, if the meaning and rhythm is to become clear. This

rhetorical aspect gives his poetry a certain grandeur, and the rich texture provided by invented words and complex sound patterns adds to the effect. Hopkins considered that he was modelling his style on Milton's, and Bender suggests that both men attempt to give English some of the flexibility of an inflected classical language by their abnormal word orders.²⁰ Both men also, of course, heighten their language with invented words and with words given unusual syntactical functions. Milton used his elevated style to suit his exalted purpose of justifying the ways of God to Man. Hopkins had similar divine subject matter to present in heightened language. Thus, in his nature poems, the intensity of his appreciation of nature, his belief in its sacramental purpose and his elevated style help each other in lines like:

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride,
 plume, here
 Buckle! And the fire that breaks from thee then a
 billion
 Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier.
(p. 69)

where the beauty and nobility of the kestrel's earthward swoop and of Christ's crucifixion are caught in language which is richly onomatopoeic and studded with words which have undertones of the age of Chivalry; valour, plume, dangerous in its old meaning, and, in a secondary meaning at least, buckle.

This fusion of style and content is what both Arnold

and Hopkins required of poetry displaying "high seriousness" or the correct "temper." Hopkins saw God in the inscapes of nature and men, and, since he believed that poems had inscapes too, he might be expected to detect God in the outer form and inner essence of his poetry. The unifying force of his religious vision ensures that his ideas about God do indeed permeate both the content and style of his verse. Arnold anticipated that poetry would replace religion as a "consolation and stay" to mankind. Hopkins uses his poetry to serve his religion by offering messages about God to mankind through beautiful objects, beautiful actions and through suffering.

How far Hopkins may have been conscious of Arnold as an influence on his poetry is hard to determine. We have seen, in Chapter II, that he approves of Arnold's comments on the "grand style" of Milton, the poet on whose work he claims to be moulding his own. "High seriousness" is a criterion which he also accepts in words which leave no doubt that he had read Arnold's essay on the subject. Since he often looks for it, under such guises as "earnestness", "thought" and "character" in the poetry of others, it is not unreasonable to expect to find it in his own verse. These qualities are both present in his poems, although in a form which Arnold might have had some difficulty in recognising. The unifying tone of "high seriousness" is given

the colouring of Hopkins's pervasive religious vision. It would be difficult to deny that Hopkins evolved a "grand style". Its originality startled those few people who read it during the poet's life time and Arnold might well, like Bridges, have found it difficult to give whole-hearted approval to anything so eccentric. However, as Hopkins himself said, "Every true poet...must be original and originality a condition of poetic genius.... That nothing should be old or borrowed however cannot be."²¹ Among the borrowed strands of his thought are, perhaps, those critical precepts which he took from Arnold. Even in his criticism, they are shaped in the mould of his own patterns of thought, and are changed in the process. When we come to look for them in his poetry, they are there, but are transmuted by his genius into what might be called the "individually distinctive" inscape of his verse.

CONCLUSION

A study such as this necessarily gives a one sided picture of its subject. There are many sides of Hopkins which do not relate to Arnold and which have therefore been passed over briefly or not mentioned at all. However, possibly because of his late date of publication, the links between Hopkins and his contemporaries have received little critical attention until recently. Because of his startling originality, it is tempting to see him as a man born before his time, but no one is really born before his time and Hopkins's modernity makes it even more interesting to look for the roots of his critical and poetic theory. Some of these roots may be traced to Arnold, whom he read and admired throughout his life. We have seen that Hopkins, in referring to seriousness as a "touchstone" of the greatest poetry is almost certainly echoing "On the Study of Poetry"; that his definitions of types of verse, such as Parnassian and Delphic, have many links with "The Literary Influence of the Academies" which he was reading at the time; and that Hopkins's words "sequence of phrase" seem to be a conscious paraphrase of Arnold's "the grand style". The argument that both men may have absorbed ideas which were general at the time has some validity, but it must be

remembered that Arnold, an influential figure in his day, was the originator or populariser of many of the opinions which later became current. Indeed, since Hopkins read the periodicals to which Arnold frequently contributed, one would expect his reading of the elder critic to have been wider than the available evidence shows, and Arnold's influence upon him may well have been greater than I have been able to prove. Hopkins was no mere imitator and the critical criteria which he took over from Arnold underwent considerable change as he used them. It seems certain, however, that he consciously adopted some of Arnold's precepts for use in his own criticism and it is therefore not surprising that these can be found operating in his verse. Nonetheless, the guise in which they are to be discovered has Hopkins's distinctive hallmark. The elements which link him to Arnold and to other of his predecessors have been welded into the "forged feature" of his original genius.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER ONE

1. W. H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins (London, 1949), II, 179-222.
2. G. M. Hopkins, Journals and Papers (London, 1959), 137.
3. -----, Letters (London, 1956), III, 221.
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8. -----, Letters, III, 58.
9. -----, Letters, II, 13, 23.
10. -----, Letters, III, 274.
11. -----, Letters, III, 381-382, 386-387.
12. -----, Letters, I, 225.
13. -----, Letters, I, 272.
14. W. H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins, II, 24.
15. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, I, 39.
16. W. H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins, II, 24.
17. M. Arnold, Lectures and Essays in Criticism (Ann Arbor, 1962), 197.
18. M. Ockshorn, "Hopkins the Critic", Yale Review, LIV, 346-347.
19. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, I, 66.

20. D. Davie, "Hopkins as a Decadent Critic" in his Purity of Diction in English Verse (New York, 1967), 177-180.
21. M. Arnold, Lectures and Essays in Criticism, 247.
22. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, II, 17, 38.
23. M. Arnold, Mixed Essays (New York, 1880), 238-239.
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25. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, III, 293-304.
26. -----, Letters, I, 96.
27. -----, Letters, II, 74.
28. -----, Letters, III, 360.
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2. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, III, 203-204.
3. M. Arnold, Lectures and Essays in Criticism, 284.
4. G. M. Hopkins, Letters I, 30, and Journals and Papers, 133.
5. -----, Letters, III, 368.
6. M. Arnold, Lectures and Essays in Criticism, 261.
7. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, I, 142.
8. -----, Letters, III, 349.
9. -----, Letters, I, 96.
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13. -----, Letters, II, 24.
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15. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, I, 79.
16. -----, Letters, II, 25.
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19. -----, Letters, III, 228.
20. -----, Letters, I, 231.
21. -----, Letters, III, 366.
22. M. Arnold, Essays in Criticism: Second Series, 16.
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24. -----, Letters, II, 121.
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26. M. Ockshorn, "Hopkins the Critic".
27. M. Arnold, Essays in Criticism: Second Series, 27.
28. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, I, 79.
29. -----, Letters, II, 55.
30. -----, Letters, II, 148.
31. M. Arnold, Lectures and Essays in Criticism, 30.
32. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, II, 55.
33. M. Arnold, Lectures and Essays in Criticism, 13.
34. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, I, 83.
35. -----, Journals and Papers, 199.
36. M. Arnold, Lectures and Essays in Criticism, 230.

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42. -----, Letters, II, 8.
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44. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, III, 224.
45. -----, Letters, III, 306.
46. -----, Letters, I, 133.
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56. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, I, 207.
57. -----, Letters, II, 24-25.
58. M. Arnold, Lectures and Essays in Criticism, 106.
59. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, I, 81.
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61. M. Arnold, Lectures and Essays in Criticism, 265.

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63. M. Arnold, Lectures and Essays in Criticism, 209.
64. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, I, 214.
65. -----, Letters, III, 349.
66. -----, Letters, III, 204.
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80. -----, Letters, I, 167.
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84. -----, Letters, II, 155.
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92. M. Arnold, Poetry and Criticism (Boston, 1961), 203-214.
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94. -----, Letters, II, 117.
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96. -----, Letters, II, 113.
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100. M. Arnold, Mixed Essays, 267.
101. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, II, 10.
102. M. Arnold, Mixed Essays, 267-268.
103. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, I, 66.
104. -----, Letters, I, 111.
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127. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, I, 27.
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129. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, II, 66-67.
130. M. Arnold, Essays in Criticism: Second Series, 17.
131. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, I, 280.
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133. G. M. Hopkins, Letters, I, 267-268.
134. -----, Letters, I, 95-96.
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