

Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelite Painters:
the Community of Ideas

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of
the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy

by Norman Everett White

September 1973

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Preface

This thesis forms the second stage of preparation for a more complete study of Hopkins's poetry. The first stage consisted of a Master of Philosophy thesis for the University of London (1968), which was an edition of a group of the poems--those that Hopkins wrote in English from 1884 to 1889. For that I worked from the basic poetic material, the manuscripts, educating a text for each poem from a collation of the originals of all the known extant manuscripts of all the draft and final versions. Each poem had a text, notes on that text, explicatory comments, and a paraphrase of the literal meaning. It seemed to me that the correct way of entering upon a thorough study of an author was by thus becoming closely familiar with the words which he certainly wrote, as he wrote them. The limitations of that thesis lay in the facts that I was dealing with one particular group of poems, and that such a concentrated close study necessitates a certain myopia. This thesis is meant to provide a counter-balance by looking at Hopkins's poetry in a much wider context--that of his age and various parts of its culture, and by focussing on a different group of poems--the particular examples in his 'baroque' style which I chose because they seem to have closest contact with that age and culture.

Whereas with most Victorian poets the question 'In what ways does X fit into his period?' can be profitably asked and largely satisfactorily answered, with Hopkins there have always been doubts since his poetry first became known in 1918 not only about what areas of his age's culture influenced him but also of whether any influence in any age worth more than an incidental mention even exists. As Mrs. Duncan-Jones said:

There was never a more difficult case for the literary historian who likes to see literature as a chart of tendencies and groupings in which every poet finds his place.⁽¹⁾

Despite a whole book, published in 1968, devoted to the subject of Hopkins as a Victorian,⁽²⁾ very little useful study has been done until Dr. Ball's The Science of Aspects (1971) and Dr. Sulloway's Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper (1972). And from these books the only vital and indisputable influence which emerges is Ruskin's (my debt--to Dr. Ball in particular--is clearly shown in Chapter Five of this thesis). But Ruskin is surely the Victorian who it is least just to say existed in a cultural vacuum. Might there not be further areas of Victorian thought and culture, perhaps connected with Ruskin, in which Hopkins does not seem a stranger?

1. E.E. Phare, The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1933), p.1.
2. Wendell Stacy Johnson, Gerard Manley Hopkins/ The Poet as Victorian (1968); a superficial and careless book: landscape paintings, for instance, of D.G. Rossetti are mentioned (he did not paint any, as far as is known), and Ford Madox Brown is discussed with reference to 'The Blind Girl', which was painted by Millais (pp.126 and 37).

I became particularly aware of the need to have solid and appropriate contextual guidelines in order to discuss Hopkins's poems when I came to annotate the phrase 'I can no more' in line 3 of '(Carrion Comfort)'. The phrase stands out in the poem because it is a sudden cry, in direct speech, and the written words are italicised. They signify a final collapse of effort on the part of the poet's persona. But unfortunately the phrase is fairly common in previous literature, so that three different commentators on Hopkins's phrase had chosen three separate occurrences, from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, which they thought appropriate. Professor Gardner had found it in Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra (IV.xiii.59), Professor G. Tillotson in Pope's Eloisa to Abelard (l.105), and Mr. Brian Vickers in Newman's Dream of Gerontius (Gerontius's third speech).⁽³⁾ Each of three literary specialists thought a very different context to be relevant.⁽⁴⁾ So much of Hopkins scholarship seems to have been devoted to finding such coincidences; instances like this, which only help towards making Hopkins's poetry more amorphous and confusing, show, I think, the need for a larger, more stable basis on which to place appreciation of the poetry.

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3. W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins 1 (1948), p.131; Professor Tillotson suggested the Pope reference to me privately; Brian Vickers, letter in the Times Literary Supplement, 3 March 1966, and see the issue of 15 September 1966 for Gardner's reply.
 4. Having examined the three contexts I eventually preferred a more prosaic origin for the Hopkins phrase. The first manuscript version of the poem has 'I can do none'. I think 'I can no more' is probably a conscious improvement on this original, retaining the four monosyllables but adding a final, despairing, 'dying fall'.

The obvious basis, I thought, would be that of Victorian culture, which is why I have written this thesis. But I was very aware that a study of Hopkins's relationship to his background must recognise the point beyond which that study cannot go. The area in which Hopkins is most valuably distinctive is in that of feeling. Whereas Hopkins's thoughts and moral teachings and even means of expression are more likely than not to come from a common stock, his most valuable contribution to literature is going to start at the point at which he leaves the Victorian community of ideas, and his feelings, the most distinctive part of any man, and particularly of an artist, take over.

It may be seen then that this thesis is in the nature of a preliminary study, in preparation for dealing with the more exciting part of Hopkins's poetry. What is most interesting in Hopkins, as Geoffrey Grigson pointed out long ago, is not what he has in common with his age in general, or with the Pre-Raphaelite painters in particular, but lies in the area where he is most distinct from them, that of feeling. So at the end of this thesis there is the sense, as at the end of the final battle in an epic poem, that having gone through that struggle the real work can now go on unencumbered. But nevertheless the sorting-out process, the battle, must take place first. And this thesis is my attempt to sort out certain preliminary aspects of Hopkins so that the valuable grain of his poetry may 'lie, sheer and clear'.

In order to clearly demarcate the two limited areas, in Hopkins's poetry and in Victorian culture, which seem to share the same ground, I have chosen for comparison one representative group from each area--a group of sonnets in Hopkins's baroque style, and certain paintings of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. I have chosen these paintings for several reasons. Firstly, by choosing works in a different art-form I hoped to be able to cover a wider area of Victorian culture than if I had kept solely within the bounds of literature. Secondly, the Pre-Raphaelite paintings of the period I chose seem to be more entirely and more directly than any other group of examples of Victorian art the products of their cultural environment, rather than of unique impulses within the minds of individual artists (my justification for this claim is particularly made in the account in Chapter Four of how the P.R.B. paintings seem to be almost an inevitable product of certain features and events of Victorian medievalism). Thirdly, not just because they originated from a group of men who had consciously bound themselves together with their ideals, but because of more intrinsic qualities which they hold in common, the paintings are recognisably of one coherent school. And the fourth reason I chose these Pre-Raphaelite paintings was that a comparison between these paintings and the Hopkins poems is presented with an obviously significant starting-point for discussion in the common formal pattern noticeable in the two groups, which I discuss in Chapter One.

The term 'Pre-Raphaelite' is commonly used in present-day criticism to refer not just to the P.R.B. and their works but also to 'Associates', 'Later Pre-Raphaelites', 'Minor Pre-Raphaelites', and 'Affiliates' (to use Professor Fredeman's terms).⁽⁵⁾ Fredeman's 'Bibliocritical Study' includes sections on figures as different as Burne-Jones, Morris, Ruskin, Coventry Patmore, and Swinburne, as well as on the P.R.B. It can be seen that if the term is used as a blanket to cover such disparate people it must become too loose and flexible to be critically distinctive and useful. I will try in this thesis to keep it more meaningful by reverting, as far as possible, to its original use in England, in the period 1848 to (about) 1854. After that period, when Rossetti, Hunt and Millais each went their separate ways, the term becomes more amorphous and is used far more indiscriminately, and the original school of the P.R.B. with its common qualities, ceases to exist, although certain of those qualities are continued and developed in different ways by various people, so that the label is constantly and loosely re-applied throughout the century by people who have largely forgotten its origin. By 'Pre-Raphaelite painters' in the thesis title, therefore, I refer to painters in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and only to those paintings of theirs which were produced while they were a coherent school, or which display the characteristics of that school.

5. William E. Fredeman, Pre-Raphaelitism/ A Bibliocritical Study (1965), p.xv.

I originally intended to provide within the thesis reproductions of those paintings which I discuss at length. I reluctantly discarded the idea because of certain difficulties which became apparent when I started to collect together the reproductions. Most art galleries willingly provide reproductions, but some paintings are in private hands, and there are none available. Then galleries can sometimes be temporarily out of stock of supplies for an indefinite period. And the types, sizes, and quality of prints vary: some galleries can only supply black-and-white photographic prints, while coloured postcard-size reproductions (my original choice) are severely limited in accuracy of colour and detail by the processes available. Postcard reproductions of the same painting from two different printings can result in quite different emphases from each other and from the original. But having discarded the idea of including reproductions which would have made verbal descriptions of paintings more immediately meaningful, I have concentrated where possible on the most well-known examples of Pre-Raphaelite painting, reproductions of which are readily available in several books.

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I gratefully acknowledge the help of: the staffs of The Harold Cohen Library, University of Liverpool; the City of Liverpool Public Libraries; Birkbeck College Library, University of London; the University of London Library; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the libraries of The British Museum; the Library of Trinity College, Dublin; the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, particularly Miss Mary

Bennett; the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight; the Emma Holt Bequest, Sudley, Liverpool; the Tate Gallery; the Royal Academy of Arts, London; the Whitechapel Art Gallery; the Victoria and Albert Museum; the Iveagh Bequest, Kenwood; Sir John Soane's Museum, Lincoln's Inn Fields, particularly Sir John Summerson; the manuscript department of Sotheby's, London; and the organisers of the following recent exhibitions by which this thesis was very much influenced: 'The Origins of Landscape Painting in England', Summer Exhibition, Iveagh Bequest Kenwood, 1967; 'The French Taste in English Painting during the first half of the 18th century', Summer Exhibition, Iveagh Bequest Kenwood, 1968 [both were largely organised by Miss Elizabeth Einberg, who was also responsible for the catalogues]; Aubrey Beardsley Exhibition, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1966; 'From today painting is dead': The Beginnings of Photography, Victorian and Albert Museum, 1972 [largely the work of Dr. D.B. Thomas]; 'The Taste of Yesterday', Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 1970; 'The Pre-Raphaelites', Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1972; and particularly the four influential major exhibitions of individual Pre-Raphaelite painters: 'Ford Madox Brown', Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 1964; 'Millais', Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, and the Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1967; 'William Holman Hunt', Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, and Victoria and Albert Museum, 1969 [Miss Mary Bennett was responsible for the research and critical work, including selection of pictures and compilation of catalogues, for these three exhibitions, and I gratefully add my name to the long list of students of Pre-Raphaelite paintings who

could not have done their work without her invaluable and painstaking researches]; and 'Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Painter and Poet', The Royal Academy of Arts, London, and the City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, 1973.

The late Lord Edward Bridges, for many kindnesses; Dr. William Sargent, physician in charge of psychological medicine at St. Thomas's Hospital, London, for correspondence on Hopkins's mental state; the late Professor Geoffrey Tillotson, whom I am very proud to have had as supervisor of my Master's thesis on Hopkins, and Birkbeck College's unique and invaluable English Honours course, for which I cannot adequately express my gratitude; Professor Barbara Hardy, who first encouraged me with Hopkins studies; Father Roland Burke Savage, S.J., for discussions and for the gift of a copy of Studies containing Hopkins material; Sister M. Roberta Melchner, S.S.N.D., for correspondence and a copy of the photograph of G.M.H. which she discovered; Shirley Foster; Professor Norman MacKenzie; Tom Dunne, for his invaluable friendship, correspondence, and absorbing, sometimes night-long, discussions about Hopkins; and Stella Sullivan, without whose sensitive help the thesis would not have been completed.

I am indebted to the Leverhulme Foundation and Awards Committee for the Leverhulme Postgraduate Fellowship which I held in the Department of English, the University of Liverpool, from 1967 to 1969, which enabled me to carry out the bulk of the work for this thesis; and

to the members of the Department of English at Liverpool for that pleasant period.

I am very grateful to have known the late Professor Kenneth Allott, who gave me much valuable advice on my researches while I was at Liverpool, and I regret that, entirely due to my own fault in pursuing different Hopkins enthusiasms not directly relevant to this thesis, its lines did not become clear until I had passed out of the period of his supervision. His monumental edition of Arnold's poems will be a lasting influence on me.

...ooOoo...

Chapter One: Two-Part Structures

In this first chapter I will be concerned with the unity within particular works of art by Hopkins, on the one hand, and by certain Pre-Raphaelite painters, on the other. I will analyse certain poems and paintings to ascertain how they are structured and how far this structure is unified, and then attempt to connect my findings on both the poems and the paintings within a general framework.

My selection of the particular works I will analyse will not be made at random, and I do not claim that my conclusions will apply to all the poetry of Hopkins and all Pre-Raphaelite painting. But the selection in both cases will be representative of one large and significant group within each corpus--significant both for an understanding of the two corpus and also for the new light it sheds on a characteristic shared by different art-forms in the nineteenth century. The justness of the selection will, I hope, be apparent before the end of the thesis is reached.

* * * * *

In order to distinguish the particular group of Hopkins poems with which I will be dealing, I will use the convenient terms by which Elisabeth Schneider divides the mature poems into three

kinds, 'baroque', 'plain', and 'popular'.⁽¹⁾ These words are descriptive of what Professor Schneider sees as the three styles in which Hopkins wrote after he had entered the priesthood and achieved poetic maturity. It is generally agreed that the poems Hopkins wrote before 1876, the year of The Wreck of the Deutschland, are mainly of historical and biographical importance, being largely immature and derivative. I will not primarily be concerned here either with these pre-1876 poems or with the 'popular' group. The 'popular' group consists of those poems in which, as Professor Schneider says, Hopkins 'tried to strike a popular devotional note', which are mainly 'occasional pieces composed with his pious but unliterary daily companions in mind', and which are all, more or less, 'embarrassing failures'⁽²⁾--Hopkins himself said, of two of them, 'I feel myself to come short'.⁽³⁾

The poems written in the plain style are usually easily distinguishable from the baroque. Their subject-matter is more likely to be the poet's mind than external nature, their words to keep easily within a regular verse-form, their diction and syntax to be conventional and immediately comprehensible, their date and

1. Elisabeth W. Schneider, The Dragon in the Gate: Studies in the Poetry of G.M. Hopkins (1968), particularly pp.139-45.

2. Elisabeth W. Schneider, op.cit., pp.139-40.

3. Of 'The May Magnificat' and 'The Silver Jubilee'; C.C. Abbott (ed.), The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges (1955), pp.77-8, referred to hereafter as Letters i.

place of composition to be after 1880 and in an urban environment. The poems I will examine in this chapter are all indisputably of the baroque group, and are among the most well-known in that style. They are 'The Windhover', 'Spring', and 'The Starlight Night'.⁽⁴⁾

Professor Schneider sees 'The Starlight Night' as the prototype of a particular form in Hopkins:

What 'I' saw just now--today or tonight--its immediacy, its beauty, moves the emotions; and as this spontaneous feeling begins to cool into thought, from the cooling is crystallized out one or another statement, still infused with feeling, ⁽⁵⁾ spiritual significance reflecting an abiding faith.

I agree that this poem is a prototype of a particular form in Hopkins's poetry, but, in many ways, do not find that this general description fits the particular case of 'The Starlight Night'. Professor Schneider's description implies a continuously evolving process--'and as this spontaneous feeling begins to cool into thought', 'from the cooling is crystallized', 'statement [of spiritual significance] still infused with feeling'. This continually evolving process, if it existed, would give 'The Starlight Night' a unified structure which I do not find.

I will examine this poem and show how I disagree with Professor Schneider. The first seven lines consist of a succession of mainly verbless pictures, governed either directly or indirectly by the

4. W.H. Gardner and N.H. MacKenzie (eds.), The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins (4th edn., corrected reprint, 1970), pp.69, 67, and 66; referred to hereafter as Poems^{4r}.

5. Elisabeth W. Schneider, op.cit., p.145.

exhortation 'look'. There is no movement in the pictures except for the 'flake-doves sent floating forth' in line 7. Although the possibility of movement is introduced into line 2 by the 'fire-folk' this is stifled before it can develop by the frozen state of the folk suggested by 'sitting in the air'. The images are static then, but imaginative power is given to them by the strangeness of the metaphors--'diamond delves', 'elves'-eyes'; and a certain emotional power is given to each image by the repetition or memory of 'look' and the numerous exclamation-marks. The main factors connecting up the pictures are that they are all seen by the persona of the poet, and that the scene has an emotional and imaginative power given it by the persona's vision. The vision, however, lacks important elements of certainty and coherence. It is doubtful whether some images are of the things seen by the poet or a metaphorical representation of them. In the fourth line, for instance, it is not clear whether 'down in dim woods' is a metaphor for what the poet sees in the sky or if his gaze is suddenly turned downwards to actual woods lying beneath the stars. This uncertainty is continued in the next line with 'the grey lawns cold'. It seems more probable to me that they are actual woods and lawns, but certainty is not possible because images further on seem to be progressively more likely to be metaphors--'whitebeam' (the detail necessary to identify the species of tree would be difficult to distinguish by starlight); 'flare' (the colour is wrong for a starlit scene); and the farmyard

scene of line 7 would be quite out of place unless it were metaphor. The two pictures in line 6 fit uneasily into the poem even if the reader decides that the real/metaphor ambiguity does not exist. If they are to be taken literally, then the onlooker's eye has made a sudden jump from large units (woods, lawns) to individually distinct objects (whitebeam, abeles), and if they are taken as metaphors it is not clear what they are images of. There is an additional complication in that 'Flake-doves' is probably (again, one cannot be certain) a metaphor within a metaphor--'Flake-doves' represent feathers which (probably) represent leaves. And so although its unity is insisted upon by the poet in his title and by his making a unified succession of emotional demands of the reader, the vision of the first seven lines consists of a group of static pictures of portions of the landscape which are not otherwise connected; and these are sometimes clearly defined, sometimes metaphorical, and sometimes ambiguously between the two.

The eighth line of the poem, 'Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize', purports to bring together the previous seven lines ('all', that is, 'of these things that I have previously mentioned'). It is bringing together all the actual sights and all the metaphors for sights, elements which we have found were not very satisfactory either as unambiguous individual images or as parts of a unified scene. But there is no miracle worked by this eighth line. Not only does it produce further, distancing, metaphors

where we had hoped for convergence and clarification, but also these metaphors have not been prepared for or worked up to in the first seven lines. The only possible connection between 'purchase' and 'prize', on the one hand, and, on the other, all the preceding images is 'diamond' in line 4, and the clumsy 'gold, where quickgold' in line 5--clumsy because the expected, and visually appropriate, word 'quicksilver' has been jettisoned in favour of a neologism, 'quickgold', which connects with the barter imagery of line 8, but is sensuously out of place in a scene of essentially cold sparkling whitishness.

The summarising 'all' of line 8 is unearned, then, and similarly so is 'then' in line 9--'Buy then! bid then!--What?--Prayer, patience, alms, vows'--which unjustifiably assumes the force of 'therefore' in a logical sequence. 'What?' in this line shows a further break in the ostensible line of argument--a sudden stop in one line of thinking, a sharp standing back to take stock, and then a resumption of the flow of argument, but on another unforeseen, unprepared line. The dashes each side of 'What?' show that it is a sudden crude device inserted to connect the two groups of ideas--'Buy then! bid then!', and 'Prayer, patience, alms, vows'--but a device which although logically necessary to the flow of meaning, clumsily defeats this purpose by uneasily breaking up the rhythm and sound of line 9. The auctioneering language of 'Buy' and 'bid' seems an unsuccessful attempt to introduce a Shakespearean commercial image, or a Herbertian metaphysical comparison from ordinary life with which to shock the

audience; an image which does not succeed because it is sudden and isolated, rather than one of a completely unified and worked-out series (compare a sonnet such as Herbert's 'Redemption',⁽⁶⁾ where the metaphor of the tenant and the rich lord is sustained throughout the poem and the line of argument is unbroken). Sometimes Hopkins's attempts to suddenly dramatise have a pedantic lack of feeling to them; and there seems to be here the same kind of strain as there is in parts of the dialogue of 'St. Winefred's Well', with its watery Shakespearean echoes and forced wordplay.⁽⁷⁾ The list of four items of religious currency, 'Prayer, patience, alms, vows', is flat and unconvincing after the excited tone of the previous lines, and separate from the rest of the poem; and 'patience', a personal quality, does not cohere with the other three, which are technical qualities of religious devotion.⁽⁸⁾

In line 10 of 'The Starlight Night' Hopkins repeats the excited 'Look, look' of line 1, so creating another sudden change in tone after 'Prayer, patience, alms, vows'. The explicit similes of lines 10 and 11--'a May-mess, like on orchard boughs!' and 'March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow shallows'--add weight to the argument that

6. Helen Gardner (ed.), The Metaphysical Poets (1957), p.118.

7. For example:

W[iniefred].

There

Some messenger there might have met you from my uncle.

T[eryth]. Your uncle met the messenger--met me; and this the message:

Lord Beuno comes tonight.

W.

Tonight, sir.

(Poems^{4r}, p.187)

8. According to Peter Milward, SJ, A Commentary on the Sonnets of G.M. Hopkins (1970), p.8.

'whitebeam' and 'abeles' in line 6 should be taken as metaphors rather than as actual trees. Then in line 12 there is another change of tone and imagery. After the regression in lines 10 and 11 to the earlier technique of separate static pictures descriptive of (probably) the starry sky and with the exclamatory onlooker as link, there is a completely new image--of a barn containing corn-sheaves. The argument behind this section connects it with the starry-night description that has gone before; these phenomena are like the visual characteristics of the outside of a barn. The barn represents heaven. The precious contents of the barn which cannot be seen are Christ, Mary, and the saints. But Hopkins expresses the idea clumsily ('these are indeed the barn', which should mean 'comprise the external features of the barn' but which is inadequate) and inconsistently (the sky sights are 'the barn' in line 12 but 'this piece-bright paling' in the following line). The effect of this sudden new metaphor is not to summarise or round off the rest of the poem but to add another unassimilated particle to the existing jumble. There is no foretaste of the barn image in the first eleven lines; it does not seem either inevitable after, or even vaguely foreshadowed by, the rest of the poem. There is no real connection between the sermonising of lines 8 and 9 and the barn imagery, although 'piece-bright' (connecting with 'buy' and 'bid') is an attempt to persuade the reader that there is one, and there is no attempt to connect by sight the visually disparate barn and starry sky.

The conclusions I draw from this analysis of 'The Starlight Night' are mainly about its structure. The poem falls into four parts, lines 1 to 7, lines 8 and 9, lines 10 and 11, and lines 12 to 14. Lines 1 to 7 and 10 and 11 form one group, which is composed of a succession of self-sufficient static pictures, many of which are strangely and powerfully imaginative. It is unclear whether some of these are to be taken as literal representations or metaphorical. The only large unity in these lines comes from the common framework of all the images, the starlight night; there is no continuous argumentative thread, but the high-pitched emotion of the poet gives some minor tonal unity. There are two conscious but unsuccessful attempts of the poet to summarise the descriptive images, in lines 8 to 9 and 12 to 14. These two do not connect with each other, they are almost alternative interpretations. They are based on a pretence of a kind of unity in the descriptive images which these do not explicitly or satisfactorily have, and most important, they neither genuinely follow on from the descriptions nor do they summarise them. Their moral and sermonising, flat and assumed, tone is quite different from the excited, picturesque, immediate appeal of the descriptive parts. There are two separate processes at work and one has to be stopped by a noticeable break before the other one starts.

Hopkins's poem 'Spring' has many structural similarities with 'The Starlight Night'. The octave has five distinct natural pictures--weeds, thrush's eggs, thrush's song, peartree leaves, and

racing lambs, while the sestet interprets the pictures. There are several differences though. The octave of 'Spring' is much more unified than that of 'The Starlight Night'. It starts with a generalisation--'Nothing is so beautiful as Spring'--which better prepares us for and includes the pictures which follow, than did the first line of 'The Starlight Night'. There are pieces of some pictures which overlap with others--'thrush's eggs . . . and thrush', and 'the descending blue; that blue'. The implied blueness of 'thrush's eggs' in line 3 is compared to the blueness of the heavens, which is mentioned in both lines 3 and 7. There is movement and sudden sharp intensity throughout the octave--'shoot' (line 2), 'rinse and wring' (line 4), 'strikes like lightnings' (line 5), 'brush' (verb, line 6), 'descending . . . all in a rush' (line 7), 'racing . . . fling' (line 8).⁽⁹⁾ The pictures are not just part of the same visual scene, as they were in 'The Starlight Night', but they are part of a scene where several different senses are occupied--hearing and feeling as well as sight, and which seems to have a scenario so that things happen in a unified way. The sentence 'that blue is all in a rush/ With richness' acts as a backcloth which both summarises and reinforces some prominent recurring elements in the scene--blueness, sudden movement ('rush'), and 'richness', a word which itself

9. There is a similarity here with Schubert's late song-cycle Die Winterreise. The unity of this cycle is not that of narrative--one song does not lead on to the next as steps in a story, and as happens in Schubert's earlier, more conventional, cycle, Die Schöne Müllerin. Instead themes and motifs connect, and each song describes movement, which the music echoes, so that there is no sense of static picture-painting.

summarises the many sensuous 'sh' sounds that there are in the octave ('shoot', 'lush', 'thrush's', 'thrush', 'brush', 'rush'). Use is made of the natural emphasis given to the last syllables of lines--an emphasis increased by the recurrence of the same two sounds in the rhymes of the octaves--so that the 'sh' and 'ing' sounds re-echo through the octave and are a further, auditory and sensuous, help to unity. There was no similar use made of the rhymes in 'The Starlight Night', with one repeated sound representing a particular quality which was a characteristic feature of the whole night scene. There are several different pictures in the octave of 'Spring' and yet because they are not static but pictures in motion, and because there are the many varieties of unifying devices I have pointed to, the octave is satisfyingly bound together.

The question arises whether the octave and sestet are inimically different: do they complement each other, being the flux and reflux of a single poetic and argumentative tide, or are they parts of two different worlds and two different frames of mind, connected not intrinsically but only incidentally? The first sign of unprofitable tension between the two parts is the peculiar impact made by the break. The traditional natural break in the sonnet form between the octave and the sestet is not only used by Hopkins but emphasized and exaggerated in 'Spring' so that the two parts are immediately separated. The world of the octave has been so self-contained, colourful, sensuous, and full of lively movement that the line 'What is all this juice and

all this joy?' seems oddly foreign, distant, cold, plodding and clumsy. It is not just a break but a sudden standing-back from his subject-matter that makes Hopkins appear to be two separate people, to speak from quite different viewpoints in different voices. So when he summarises the octave with 'all this juice and all this joy' the alliteration of 'juice' and 'joy' no longer works its effect; it is a cold pedantic figure, an attempt to make the reader feel that it is of the same quality as the alliteration of the octave and hence a unifying factor, not just part of a cold summary of the octave. The line's staccato monosyllables contrast with the flowing previous lines, and this contrast is made more abrupt by the syllable 'What' which enters the poem at that point with an ugly destructive force. The octave had not given any hint that the natural scene was being incompletely expressed by the poet; it seemed a complete unified scene in which the poet was involved to such an extent that he feels some of the urgent joyous movements of the season within himself, and these he transfers onto paper in descriptive words and lifting rhythms. In the octave there is a genuine 'flow onwards' from life into art, with the poet as the 'transmitter of life', in D.H. Lawrence's phrases. (10)

When Hopkins asks the question 'What is all this?' he can only answer by going into metaphor and weakening the poem thereafter, because he has already described accurately, strongly, and completely what 'all

10. In the poem 'We are transmitters--', in W.E. Williams (ed.), D.H. Lawrence: Selected Poems (1950), p.145.

this' is, what its actual nature is, in the octave. And yet, despite the abrupt change that the sestet makes and the weakening of the poem that comes with the transition into metaphor, the poet nevertheless answers the question by saying that 'the juice and joy' is a 'strain' of something else. The word 'strain', as used here, needs examination, because it means something more than just 'echo, reminder or symbol' (as Donald McChesney interprets it);⁽¹¹⁾ it also partly has the same meaning as 'strains' (a verb) in Hopkins's 'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves' and 'strains' (a noun) in 'The Woodlark'.⁽¹²⁾ In 'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves' the colour of the day is gradually filtered off until there is only the black of night, a process expressed by 'strains' in line 2 of the poem; and in lines 16 and 17 of 'The Woodlark',

the sky is two and two
With white strokes and strains of the blue,

the blue is 'strained', only a fainter version of the ideal true blue exists. The juice and joy of 'Spring's octave is, Hopkins is saying, merely a 'strain', an essentially weaker version, of 'earth's sweet being' as it was in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. The strength of the scene in the octave, which was sensuously and convincingly demonstrated there, is now, in the sestet, said to be only a weaker version of something else.

11. Donald McChesney, A Hopkins Commentary (1968), p.59.

12. Poems^{4r}, pp.97 and 176.

A very similar process takes place in 'The Windhover', lines 10 and 11,

. . . AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

where the brilliance of the bird is, similarly, a strain, a weaker version, of something else, the fire of Christ. In 'Spring' Hopkins has substituted his priestly role for his artistic one; he is using dogma, making a bland assumption that as the legend of the Garden of Eden and the Fall is not just factual and historical to him, but a matter of basic eternal necessity, he can just state it, as a priest, without fulfilling his comparatively unimportant artistic role, which he has now abruptly discarded, of demonstrator--the artist demonstrating by logical, rhetorical, and sensuous means. Hopkins's purpose here is not to prove, as an artist's should be; he is paying a religious act of homage to his subject-matter, and, as priest, requires his reader to do the same. The response required by him is not, in other words, ethical according to artistic standards, it is not worked for and earned by the poet, but is a response elicited automatically, without a preliminary thought or feeling process, from the conditioned occultist. Just as 'juice' and 'joy' were inadequate after the richness of the octave, so 'sweet' also seems weak and summarising: the result, not of a genuinely felt experience, but rather an intellectual attempt at a sensuous word, the kind of half-hearted adjective a priest could use from the pulpit to slightly rouse his audience without his

or their being guilty of the sin of sensuous over-indulgence. Hopkins is not going through and expressing a genuine experience in this second part of the poem; as the priest he is now cut off from the sensuous kind of involvement in which the artist of the octave could and did indulge.

The dash in line 11 signals, as it often does in Hopkins's poems,⁽¹³⁾ a further distancing away from the subject of the octave; an analogy is now made between on the one hand the natural progression of the seasons from the juice, joy and sweetness of Spring to the decay of later in the year, which Hopkins characterises with 'cloy', 'cloud', and 'sour', and on the other hand the moral degeneration which, according to Hopkins's ideology, will develop in people unguided by Christ, however innocent they are in the youthful May period of their life. Provided that the reader either comes to the poem already accepting the Christian idea that youth is to be identified with innocence (rather than with ignorance and immaturity) and age with degeneracy (rather than with experience and maturity), or else is willing, out of goodwill for the poem, not to quibble but to suspend his disbelief, then this analogy seems plausible. But a closer look at lines 11 to 14 reveals a less satisfactory interlocking process between the two parts of the analogy--natural seasonal development and

13. In, for example, 'The Starlight Night', as I have indicated above, 'The Candle Indoors' (Poems^{4r}, p.81, l.8), and 'Ribblesdale' (Poems^{4r}, p.90, l.10).

man's. The difficulty arises, as it did with 'The Starlight Night' (and, we will find, will again do so in 'The Windhover'), over the connection between the involved diversified description of natural sensuous reality and an interpretation of it in terms of a moral ideology of which there is no premonition in the octave. Even if we are willing to overlook Keats's objection, in 'To Autumn', to conventional generalisations about inter-seasonal decay--

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou [Autumn] hast thy music too--

the two kinds of development, seasonal and moral, are quite different. The seasonal development in nature from the height of fulfillment to decay in appearance and strength is an organic, natural one, necessary for the renewal process. To Hopkins the development of people's moral nature, on the other hand, is normally from innocence to wickedness. That is their nature, unless their development is arrested (there is something of a definite stop to the natural process asked for by Hopkins with the blunt syllables 'Have, get') by Christ and put on an unnatural new course. But to describe the natural human course of sinning in terms of the seasonal decay analogue, Hopkins uses terms of seasonal unnatural perversion--'cloy' and 'sour'. 'Sour' can have two different seasonal connotations--suggesting either pre-mature bitterness (as of fruit) or post-mature fermentation

(as of milk). The pre-mature bitterness is the only one of these two which is part of a natural cycle, and yet Hopkins needs here an image of post-maturity. Because Hopkins has stopped the feeling which was the unifying factor of the octave he has no natural motivation to provide it in the sestet, and he has slackened his grip on the poem.

Before leaving this poem, I should also point to the clumsy expression in the sestet of 'Most, O maid's child, thy choice', a clumsiness, as I have shown, similar to 'These are indeed the barn' in 'The Starlight Night', in that, contrasting with the spontaneous-seeming flow of the octave, it shows the poet stumbling ineptly over a fairly simple thought, making unnecessary difficulties for the reader in the cause of alliterations ('indeed . . . withindoors', 'mind . . . Mayday . . . Most . . . maid's') which are bindings-together of words not justified by any sensuous connection (in the way that alliterations in the octaves are justified). The parts of a poem where Hopkins's intellect is in control are thus seen to be artistically much weaker and less unified than those where his painter's emotions are the immediate cause of his words.

The third poem I will discuss is 'The Windhover: To Christ our Lord'. As with 'The Starlight Night' and 'Spring' the poem falls into three parts, each easily distinguished. In this poem

the three groups are distinct both in meaning and in typographic separation: lines 1 to 8, lines 9 to 11, and lines 12 to 14 are visually separated groups both in the manuscript and on the printed page. The general meaning of the three groups seems to me to be fairly clear once we have looked at similar patterns in 'The Starlight Night' and 'Spring'. The first group is description of the bird's fairly simple movements and both explicit and implicit, almost simultaneous, accounts of the poet's reactions to these. (By 'explicit' I mean the sentence 'My heart . . / . . of the thing', lines 7 and 8, and by 'implicit' the highly-strung and -pitched emotion of 'how he rung . . / In his ecstasy', lines 4 and 5, which significantly echoes that in lines 7 and 8.) The nouns in line 9, 'Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume', are an attempt to summarise the descriptive picture of the octave in the same way that 'all this juice and all this joy' were in 'Spring'. These nouns are noticeably more successful in this function than the bland, unfelt, 'juice' and 'joy' are in 'Spring', so that thus far the transition is a smooth one, although some uneasiness is perhaps caused by the many different categories of description in the octave being summarised by terms which are selected because they are either immediately applicable to chivalry, or else helpful in supporting chivalric images. But with the word 'Buckle' in line 10 there is a damaging break and awkwardness. It is this awkwardness that

is largely responsible for the apparently endless critical debate about 'The Windhover''s meaning, the crux of which usually rests upon one's interpretation of 'Buckle'. At this stage in each of the three poems Hopkins has to change from an earthly, visual image to a spiritual analogue, from description of natural looks to an allocation of these looks to their appropriate place in the Catholic ideology. In 'The Windhover' Hopkins makes this allocation in his mind but unfortunately, instead of making a straightforwardly comprehensible statement of this allocation, expresses it in a metaphor, 'buckle', and so makes not just the break in sense--a transference to another mode of thinking and feeling--but a distancing away to a further metaphorical plane. If the reader is not a Christian, this will appear as a double-metaphor; if a Christian, then it will presumably still be a double movement, from physical to spiritual world, then to metaphor. As I plainly see it, the poet is using the imperative 'buckle' to tell Christ (as he did in 'Spring' with 'Have, get . . . Christ, lord') in his role of 'chevalier', or chivalric lord, to buckle on the armour of 'beauty', 'valour', 'act', 'air', 'pride', 'plume', displayed by his dauphin. 'Buckle', in other words, has the same meaning as 'have, get', but is put here into chivalric metaphor. When Christ claims the bird's magnificence as his own, then the chivalric fire that echoes off his armour⁽¹⁴⁾ is, we are told, 'a billion/

14. Cf. the sun 'flamed upon' the armour of Sir Lancelot, in Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott' (ll.76 and 94), and the shining and fiery appearance of Prince Arthur in The Faerie Queene (Bk.I, Canto vii, ll.256-79).

Times told lovelier, more dangerous'. The weaknesses here are of exactly the same kind as those in 'Spring'. Firstly, the nouns 'beauty' and the rest are not adequate as the pieces of armour which Hopkins makes them into by his metaphor 'buckle', even if we accept them as an adequate summary of the falcon's qualities as displayed in the octave; they are more or less appropriate as chivalric qualities but not as something as tangible as parts of armour. And secondly, Hopkins asserts that the chevalier's magnificence is 'a billion/ Times told' more magnificent, without showing us; we need poetic demonstration, not just assertion unsupported except by the doctrinal mythology in the poet's mind which he assumes that his readers share, as he did with the strain of Eden in 'Spring'.

The third part of 'The Windhover' is an anti-climax, a further change in tone and subject-matter, and the complete break between the sense of 'chevalier' in line 11 and 'no wonder' in line 12 makes lines 12 to 14 seem like a coda, not part of the main body of the sonnet. In these last three lines Hopkins gives two analogies of actions which transform something ordinary into an unlooked-for and unsuspectedly magnificent act. These instances are supposed to connect with the windhover's ordinary actions being transformed into a magnificence whose ultimate significance is as a strain of Christ's glory. Its connection is weak, though, because it acts as a link between the bird's action and Christ in

the wrong position within the poem. It is as though Hopkins realises that, firstly, the link in lines 9 to 10 is not a strong one, and secondly, that the extreme terms of the comparison ('a billion/ Times') are implausible as they stand; and so he adds these three lines to patch up his faults, but places them in the poem so that they stand out as an afterthought, not as an integral part.

To summarise the features of these three poems which we have seen they have in common: the poems fall into two distinct parts, the first part, where the poet is describing something in nature in pictorial, rather than argumentative, terms; and the second part where the poet is not a painter but a priest, an interpreter, drawing a lesson from the first part, which did not seem to give any prediction or hint of any such development; that the two parts did not combine naturally, but only artificially, with the connection imposed by the artist from outside; and that not only was the connection inept but the moral itself was only stated by the artist, not proved, and so seemed anti-climactic and not artistically worthy of what had gone before; and finally, as part of the pictorial quality of the first parts of the three poems, we noticed that the octaves consisted of a succession of images connected by the poet's emotion and by the overall subject-matter, rather than bound together by any more intrinsic developing argument.

* * * * *

I will connect Hopkins's poetry with Pre-Raphaelite^{painting}/by means

of two quotations from one article in a periodical:

(1) 'They [the Pre-Raphaelite painters] were the bad boys of art, doing everything they should never do . . . The subject decided on, they looked for the requisite bits of nature and fitted them together--mice, snails, ivy-leaves, moss, lilies, old boots, sheeps' heads. Their eyes never took in a sun-illuminated, sun-modified impression at a glance, and gave it translated perfection on canvas'. . . Of 'The Hireling Shepherd', by Hunt, The Times Literary Supplement says that it seems at first sight a country idyll but like Millais' 'The Blind Girl' turns out to be 'really only a sermon in paint'.

(2) The Pre-Raphaelites combined in their work two elements that had hardly ever . . . been combined before: there is a new romantic vision of nature, seeing each particular thing, in its particularity, with wonder as if it were the day of creation and first discovery, and there is none the less a profound sense of the universal inherent in the particular things . . . But the man who had Ruskin's and Hunt's insights into nature and set them in a philosophy and indeed a theology, and who had the stature both of mind and spirit to realize their implications to the full, was Gerard Manley Hopkins . . . Hopkins is not only the greatest of the Pre-Raphaelites; he is the key to them; he may show where some moderns 'fable and miss'.

The article was published, significantly, in The Month, the periodical published by the Society of Jesus in England. The author, Elizabeth Rothenstein, is quoting in (1) the opinions of two secular aesthetic authorities, Geoffrey Grigson and The Times Literary Supplement, who suggest two non-religious ways of criticising the Pre-Raphaelite painters.⁽¹⁵⁾ In (2) she is putting forward her

15. Elizabeth Rothenstein, 'The Pre-Raphaelites and Ourselves', The Month n.s.i (March, 1949), pp.180-98.

answer to those charges. She is careful to emphasize the combination of the two elements, the particular and the universal, in the Pre-Raphaelite painters, and says that the combination was even more perfectly achieved in Hopkins. Miss Rothenstein's article is printed in a periodical whose purpose is primarily religious, not aesthetic, and her conclusions are reached not by an empirical process, but by a priori reasoning. She is praising the Pre-Raphaelite painters because their works were made in the mid nineteenth century in a similar spirit of natural theology to that which she and the Society of Jesus believe in today. She therefore accepts that the Pre-Raphaelites achieved in their paintings what they set out to do, combine truth to Nature in its particulars with larger moral purpose, and she changes the wording of these two ideas slightly into semi-religious terms ('the day of creation' and 'a profound sense of the universal'). She gives the Pre-Raphaelites additional sanction by associating them with Hopkins, who is a firm, long-established bridge over the chasm between the aesthetic and religious worlds, and whose reputation sometimes so inflates him that he is often thought to demonstrate that the chasm does not exist at all. Despite its unsatisfactory conclusions Miss Rothenstein's article conveniently links with corresponding elements in Pre-Raphaelite painting the two aspects of Hopkins's poetry which we have been examining above, detailed natural observation and moral lesson. I will now therefore examine the

structures of six Pre-Raphaelite paintings, to see whether a similar pattern emerges from them.

The six paintings I have chosen are all well-known, and belong to the period 1849 to 1853 when Hunt, Millais, and D.G. Rossetti were working as a school, in close cooperation. They are Holman Hunt's 'Our English Coasts', 'The Scapegoat', and 'The Awakening Conscience';⁽¹⁶⁾ Millais' 'Ophelia' and 'Christ in the House of His Parents';⁽¹⁷⁾ and D.G. Rossetti's 'The Girlhood of Mary Virgin'.⁽¹⁸⁾

Holman Hunt is perhaps the easiest painter to fit into a similar artistic mould to Hopkins. More than any other of the

16. In this thesis paintings discussed at any length will be identified by collection and, where they are by Brown, Hunt, Millais, or Rossetti, by their reference numbers in the catalogues of the four recent major exhibitions of these artists' works (see Bibliography for details). This is to avoid confusion caused by 'the replica habit of the times', as Mary Bennett describes it:

'finishing' sketches or producing second and third versions of the same composition as deliberate pot-boilers

(Brown Exhibition [1964] Catalogue, p.6).

- Hunt's 'Our English Coasts' (Tate Gallery; not in Hunt Exhibition [1969]); 'The Scapegoat' (Lady Lever Gallery, Port Sunlight; Hunt Exhibition [1969], no.33); 'The Awakening Conscience' (Trustees of Sir Colin and Lady Anderson; Hunt Exhibition [1969], no.27).
17. Millais' 'Ophelia' (Tate Gallery; Millais Exhibition [1967], no.34); 'Christ in the House of His Parents' (Tate Gallery; Millais Exhibition [1967], no.26).
18. D.G. Rossetti's 'The Girlhood of Mary Virgin' (Tate Gallery; Rossetti Exhibition [1973], no.36).

Pre-Raphaelite painters he felt that art should have a moral purpose (he was called the High Priest of Pre-Raphaelitism) and it is in his paintings that there is the greatest gap between what meets the eye and the total effect the work of art is supposed to have on the onlooker, between the artist's intention and his expression. In my discussion of each individual painting I will try to draw the distinction between, on the one hand, what the onlooker's eye actually sees before the artist's interpretation of the painting is known, and, on the other, what the artist intends to signify.

The first painting I will deal with is Holman Hunt's 'Our English Coasts, 1852', which significantly is more usually known by the name 'Strayed Sheep', which Hunt never gave it.⁽¹⁹⁾ It was the result of a commission by Charles Maud in 1852 for a repetition of the sheep in 'The Hireling Shepherd'. Hunt substituted a completely fresh composition, but was nevertheless bound by the terms of his commission for a painting of sheep, and so could not make such explicit moral gestures as he had done in 'The Hireling Shepherd'.⁽²⁰⁾ Its popular title however shows the way in which it was generally understood.

19. Timothy Hilton, The Pre-Raphaelites (1970), p.88; the painting's entry (no.5665) in [Tate Gallery,] The Collections of the Tate Gallery/ British Painting/ Modern Painting and Sculpture (1967), p.42, and the painting's Tate Gallery superscription both have 'Strayed Sheep' parenthetically after Hunt's title.

20. City of Manchester Art Galleries; Hunt Exhibition (1969), no.22.

The picture consists of a group of sheep and lambs in the right-hand middle-ground and fore-ground, on fairly high brown ground. Surrounding the group on three sides is a sudden drop into more luxuriant green pasture-land or exotic foliage and flowers. Most of the sheep are poised on or near the edge of this drop which continues downwards into an inlet from the sea. The most luxuriant part of the fore-ground foliage masks a steep drop and one lamb is over the edge among the foliage at this point. In the right-hand background there is solid flat brown earth stretching away into the distance, with buildings, presumably a farm, on the horizon. The sheep are in different attitudes and facing different ways. Two of them are completely black, and a few of the others have black on their heads. Some of them have reddish-brown stains on their backs. In the central background is a wood on the edge of a headland, and to the left and beyond that is a small area of sea which blends into the sky. The sheep, the boulders at the edge of the drop, and the foreground foliage, are accurately realistic down to the most minute detail, and the middle-distance and background are completely generalised. A patch of angled sunlight is convincingly shown falling across the backs of the sheep, the meadow in the centre of the painting and some parts of the foreground foliage, making a fully realised landscape. The only possible criticism that might be made from a strictly realistic point of view is that, in the patch of sky

and sea in the top left-hand corner Hunt might be said to be indulging his taste for lurid colouring (which in the later paintings often became peculiarly grotesque) at the expense of naturalism. This is what the picture literally consists of, and what the objective eye, in my estimation, sees.

However, if one's mind has been conditioned by the religious and moral teaching of one's age, as most mid-Victorian minds had, then particular kinds of images have more meaning than that which the unassisted objective eye sees. To the iconographic mind there would be another layer of meaning, which I will attempt to reconstruct. The painting now becomes notable for its pairs of contrasts--black sheep and their opposite, white sheep; featureless flat ground and steep or dropping ground; the flat ground is black, earthy and featureless, while the steep ground is colourful, luxuriantly variegated, rich; the one is straightforward, exactly what it looks like, the other has a deceptive covering so that you cannot tell its exact lines; sheep and lambs; homely farmstead and unknown dangerously beautiful cliffs. These contrasts bring with them non-artistic associations. The outstanding example is the black sheep. The picture of black sheep suggests to the mind the phrase 'black sheep', with its biblical and household-maxim field of moral meaning. The artist is encouraging his audience to construct a fable from these pairs of opposites, a fable which is imposed on the painting by extraneous associations, and not by his intrinsic

insights.

The fable probably develops as follows, from the obvious starting-point of the black sheep. The eyes of the two black sheep are of a peculiarly yellowish red, quite infernal, whereas the eyes of the other sheep are not nearly so bright or noticeable. The black sheep at the bottom right of the painting seems to be edging the stupid-looking white lamb over the cliff-edge into the bramble-mass. The other lamb, in the centre at the bottom of the picture is already lost in the brambles, and has a glazed look in his blue and vacant eyes. It seems probable that he is either dead or dying as there is a briar twig caught in his throat so that his head is thereby tilted unnaturally. The black sheep in the bottom right-hand corner is malevolently evil-looking, while the other black one seems to represent a more ignorant, blind, kind of evil, with blank eyes, standing at the edge of the precipitous descent. The moral implications of this group of sheep thus seem obvious. Then it is noticeable that all the sheep except one are stained with a red mark on their backs, just behind the neck. This could be both the stain of original sin, and also a sign of ownership by, presumably, the Devil. It is also noticeable that whereas the band of red on the white sheep is a narrow one, that on the black sheep seems to be a larger one, indefinitely spreading out into the general black of the sheep, again with obviously symbolic value. It is noticeable that only

one sheep does not have this red stain--the one occupying the centre right of the painting, looking over the edge of the cliff, alert and alarmed, and probably bleating. This sheep has probably lost the lamb entangled in the briar. It is essentially a guardian and warning figure, the one among the whole flock who sees the true state--that the enticements of the foliage and brambles are there to mask the deadly danger of the cliff-edge. The attitudes of the sheep and lambs are illustrative of moral positions, in other words. The animals are posed like models in Victorian moral paintings.⁽²¹⁾ The sheep in a huddle at the top of the cliff are all higgledy-piggledy and disordered; some are coming from outside the top right of the painting, rushing in to join the mass, and may easily push some of those in the main group over the edge; they are all on the edge, on the brink, of disaster; two lambs are lying down as a separate group, lazy, with no motivation, and one of these two is wantonly lying with its head on the other's breast. Some of the sheep have partially black heads, possibly symbolising the morally black potential in people.

Just below the edge of the precipice, beneath the brambles, which symbolically are only just below the edge (you are in them

21. In the Tate Gallery, this painting is significantly hung next to W. Lindsay Windus's 'Too Late', a typical Victorian moral genre painting, in which all four of its characters have exaggerated melodramatic poses which tell their own histories and contribute to the story of the overall painting.

as soon as you step over the precipice), are some glorious flowers and two Red Admiral butterflies (bottom left-hand corner), reds, pink, magenta, and rich brown--the deceptive fruits of sin which entice one over the precipice edge. The lamb had been caught in the briars before he could reach them. Most of the flat land is green pastureland--lower down and healthy-looking, but not so variegated or brightly-coloured as that below the cliff-edge. The sheep are on a knoll, higher than this pasture, which they have forsaken. On the distant skyline at the top right of the picture is a farmstead, made up of a group of buildings--again showing that the sheep have strayed away from genuine healthy comfort, tempted by the exotic, for which sin they will suffer the moral price, as the lamb has already done.

With an occasional detail altered I do not think there is much in the above interpretation which would seem fanciful to a mid-Victorian.

The points I wish to make follow from this analysis. Firstly, there are two quite separate ways of looking at the picture--it can either represent 'Our English Coasts', or 'Strayed Sheep', depending on whether the objective aesthetic eye is looking at it or whether the iconographically trained moral mind is interpreting what the eye sees. The two approaches are completely distinct, you cannot use them both simultaneously. Secondly, if you use the first approach, then you see a picture of a scene with several features

which catch your eye, which stand out from the background by virtue of their more detailed and varied treatment--the sheep, the exotic foliage and flowers, the boulders, and the lurid piece of sky, compared with, as I said, the completely generalised middle-distance and background. These outstanding individual features are not particularly connected with each other apart from being within the same scene. The onlooker cannot look at two of these features at the same time, they demand too much individual attention. Thirdly, there is certainly no hint in the picture of any other import than this one of actual bits and pieces in a scene. It cannot be a fable of anything else unless other factors than those which are actually in paint are added. Fourthly, when the iconographic mind draws the fable-conclusions I have mentioned from the painting, these conclusions are based on an idea in the onlooker's mind of what is on the canvas. The picture on the canvas is no longer the direct cause of what is in the onlooker's mind, which is influenced not by the actual picture but by words and associations in his own mind. This is not a genuine aesthetic response, therefore, with a continuous action between the painting and the onlooker's mind, but a response only sparked off by the painting, and then most of the work is done by the onlooker isolated from the painting. This process is encouraged by the painter because morality in life has a higher place for him than artistic values, and because he is not making any intrinsic connection between real life and art.

Because he is not doing more than merely sparking off responses, the morality is of a banal kind, as static as a maxim on the wall; there is not the slightest attempt to probe or develop a moral idea, just to bring again to the surface of the onlooker's mind what was already there but deemed to be hidden. The large conclusion I make, then, is that the artistic process of the whole painting is faultily conceived by the artist because of his moral preoccupation: there is not the genuine flow from reality through the artist to the work of art and on to its audience.

In the second Holman Hunt painting that I will consider, the two-part pattern is more immediately intelligible and easily demonstrable. That the artist intended to tell a moral story in 'The Scapegoat' is shown by the title and by the inscription on the frame:

Surely he hath borne our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows:
yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and
afflicted. (Isaiah, liii, 4).

And the Goat shall bear upon him all their Iniquities
unto a Land not inhabited. (Leviticus, xvi, 22).

In order to make the moral intention and fable absolutely explicit, the entry in the Royal Academy catalogue of 1856, the year when the picture was first exhibited, reads:

The scene was painted at Oosdom, on the margin of the salt-encrusted shallows of the Dead Sea. The mountains beyond are those of Edom.

While the ceremonies of the day of atonement were in progress in the Temple, after the lots had been cast which had devoted one of the two goats for the Lord, and while it was being sacrificed as a burnt offering, the congregation present manifested their impatience

by calling upon the priest to hasten the departure of the scapegoat, and afterwards by following the beast as he was led away by the man appointed, to a cliff about ten miles from Jerusalem; tormenting it by the way, and shouting, 'Hasten, carry away our sins'. It is recorded that, on many occasions, the poor beast sprang over the precipice, and there perished; but that oft-times it turned aside, to be hooted and driven away by every 'Israelite who met it, until it had reached a land not inhabited'. A fillet of scarlet was bound about its horns, in the belief that, if the propitiation were accepted, the scarlet would become white (in accordance with the promise in Isaiah: 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool'.) In order to ascertain the change of colour, in case the scapegoat could not be traced, a portion of the scarlet wool was preserved on a stone, and carefully watched by priests in the Temple.--See the Talmud. (22)

Hunt presumably meant the visitors to the Royal Academy to look at the painting and then the catalogue and combine the two experiences into one. But the two experiences of the catalogue's story-telling and the picture of a shaggy goat in some white crusty marsh with a few bones projecting out of the white and a range of low hills in the background are completely dissimilar. The only parts of the published story which actually appear in the painting are a goat, a piece of scarlet on its horns, and a barren landscape. There is, then, this basic gap between what actually appears on the canvas and what Hunt intended the onlookers to take into their minds, a gap which he could only bridge in words.

22. Hunt Exhibition (1969) Catalogue, p.42.

This gap is, in fact, much larger than it at first appears. One reason for this is that Hunt's symbolic intentions in the picture, as stated in his diary, add further pieces onto the intentions which he stated in the catalogue, and so are at an even greater distance than ever from what he actually painted. In Hunt's further development of the symbols, the goat in the picture is supposed not only to represent the goat of the Jewish tales but also, by a further, metaphorical, leap, to represent Christ in his role of the outcast scapegoat for human sins. As with the Hopkins poems there is not just a chasm between the picture and the interpretation, but a further leap between the interpretation and a metaphorical parallel. So the onlooker is meant to go one stage beyond pity for an animal who is the innocent victim of human cruelty, and translate the goat into a symbol of Christ. To help the process further, Hunt rather crudely, and too casually, takes the original red fillet and invents a second role for it, that of representing Christ's crown of thorns.

(His diary for 14 February 1855 says:

In the vagueness of the description in the Talmud of the form in which the scarlet was placed on the head I feel it to be very much left to myself so I merely place it round about the horns to suggest the crown of thorns.)⁽²³⁾

What is in the painting, though, remains the goat with an odd

23. Hunt Exhibition (1969) Catalogue, p.42.

piece of red on its forehead. This dichotomy was realised at the time of the picture's first exhibition by the reviewer of the Athenaeum, who wrote that he shuddered 'in anticipation of the dreamy fantasies and the deep allegories which will be deduced from this figure of a goat in difficulties'.⁽²⁴⁾ In 'Strayed Sheep' the Victorian onlooker can deduce a story, if he so wills it, from the details in the painting combined with the mythological iconography in his mind, but in 'The Scapegoat' very little inkling can be inferred from what is actually there of what the artist intended.

The second reason for the gap being wider than it appears at first is that several features of the painting claim the audience's attention in their own right at the expense of the story, for their vivid dramatic effect which is unconnected with the subject. As the Athenaeum critic said (footnote 24), Hunt,

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24. 'It is a picture from which much has been expected, not merely from the original feeling of the painter, but from its being a Scripture subject, and one the scene of which is laid in a spot of prophetic and awful desolation, where it was actually painted. It was one of Wilkie's theories that Scripture scenes should be painted in the Holy Land, a theory which Raphael and some others are quite sufficient to disprove . . . The question is simply this, here is a dying goat which as a mere goat has no more interest for us than the sheep which furnished our yesterday's dinner; but it is a type of the Saviour, says Mr. Hunt, and quotes the Talmud. Here we join issue, for it is impossible to paint a goat, though its eyes were upturned with human passion, that could explain any allegory or hidden type. The picture, allowing this then, may be called a solemn, sternly painted representative of a grand historical scene (predominant colours purple and yellow) with an appropriate animal in the foreground.'
- (Hunt Exhibition [1969] Catalogue, p.43)

with Wilkie's example to support him, travelled to the scene's original setting of the Holy Land to paint his picture,⁽²⁵⁾ and so the background of the Dead Sea and the mountains of Moab is authentic and painted with Ruskinian accuracy. But Ruskin himself laid his finger on one cause of Hunt's failure in this painting, and that is the over-dramatic emotions which he tries to put into a scene which is basically and purposely static.⁽²⁶⁾ To heighten the emotion of the scene he has added remarkably vivid and extraordinary colours to the hills, and also to the goat (the 'purple and yellow'

25. Wilkie and several other painters, among them David Roberts, Thomas Seddon, and Edward Lear, all travelled in the East to paint and sketch scriptural subjects realistically. For an example of this aspect of Lear's work, see his oil painting 'Bethlehem' (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool), and the note on it in [Walker Art Gallery,] The Taste of Yesterday (1970), p.25.
26. Interestingly, Ruskin himself seems to have been torn between a desire to praise Hunt for his moral effort and a reluctant admission of the failure of this painting as a whole. In his Academy Notes for 1856 he says:
- The singular picture, though in many respects faithful, and in some wholly a failure, is yet the one of all in the gallery, which should furnish us with the food for thought . . . This picture, regarded merely as a landscape, or as a composition, is a total failure. The mind of the artist has been so excited by the circumstances of the scene, that like a youth expressing his earnest feeling by feeble verse . . . Mr. Hunt has been blinded by his intense sentiment to the real weaknesses of the pictorial expression; and in his earnest desire to paint the Scapegoat, has forgotten to ask himself first, whether he could paint a goat at all. [Quoted in Hunt Exhibition (1969) Catalogue, pp.43-4.]
- Ruskin has failed here to diagnose the main fault, which lies in Hunt's choice of subject, not in his execution of the goat, which is, in its draughtsmanship at least, solidly realistic.

of the Athenaeum criticism). Hunt insisted on painting the scene only at sunset.⁽²⁷⁾ The result is garish and grotesque colouring which immediately rushes out of the painting into one's vision and, quite irrelevantly, takes your mind off the real subject-matter, substituting to your eye the colour as main subject. As with Hopkins in 'The Windhover' something has been added afterwards to the basic structure to heighten the interpretation, as if the artist realises that he has not adequately dealt with the unity between pictorial subject and its intended interpretation. Despite the intensity and sincerity behind his earnest piety and truthfulness to nature, Hunt has not succeeded in the painting because his basic idea is artistically faulty, it is not a proper subject for painting. The subject, as stated in the Royal Academy catalogue, and as added to by Hunt, is unpaintable because it is a story, with movement and progression.

The third main example I will take from Hunt's canon is 'The Awakening Conscience', perhaps the most completely worked-out story-telling picture of the Victorian age. (W.P. Frith's large canvases 'The Derby Day' and 'The Railway Station', which might be considered to be serious rivals, both contain more incidents, but these are usually self-explanatory and each has its own strictly delimited small area of the canvas which the artist does not

27. Hunt Exhibition (1969) Catalogue, p.42.

intend to immediately interconnect with the next incident.)⁽²⁸⁾

The picture consists of a woman sitting on the lap of a man who is lounging on a chair in front of a piano, in the elaborately furnished corner of a Victorian drawing-room which is laden with objects picked out in extreme detail--besides the chair and piano, there is a table, an elaborately framed mirror which reflects further objects in the room, including an open window which bewilderingly leads on to a further host of detailed pieces of nature in a garden, which the artist's narrow angle would not otherwise enable him to include, a painting, a baroque clock with figures in a glass case, two pieces of music ('Oft in the Stilly Night' on the piano, and Edgar Lear's setting of Tennyson's 'Tears, Idle Tears' lying on the floor), embossed books on the table painted in such detail that the kinds of bindings have been identified, a glove and unravelled wool on the floor, a cat cruelly playing with a bird under the table, patterned carpet and wall-paper which has on it a design of corn, fruit, birds and human figures. The predominant colours are rich dark red, indigo, and browns. The

28. I do not wish, however, to make too much distinction between the Pre-Raphaelites and their contemporary painters. There seem to me to be more similarities and fewer differences than are generally acknowledged, even as regards Frith. Ruskin, for instance, noted the Pre-Raphaelite influence in the wreath of flowers round the child's head in Frith's 'Many Happy Returns of the Day' (1856). (See Nevile Wallis [ed.], A Victorian Canvas/ The Memoirs of W.P. Frith, R.A. [1957], plate facing p.224.)

main impression on the objective onlooker is of an overwhelming cluster of objects, lovingly painted in very precise detail, like a corner of a small overstocked shop dealing in Victorian furniture and bric-à-brac, with a man and woman in the midst, whose faces express, respectively, light-heartedness and a bland looking into the distance. The purpose behind the painting is impossible to guess unless one is assisted by commentary from outside the picture-- impossible not just for modern eyes, but also for Victorian ones: when it was first exhibited the Morning Chronicle's critic wrote:

it fails to express its own meaning, either in the general composition or through the agency of its details. (29)

Hunt's 'modern moral story' intentions are not expressed in the painting. When it was first exhibited (Royal Academy, 1854), the spectator was given additional assistance. On the frame was (and still is) inscribed:

'As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart' (Proverbs).

And there were two further biblical quotations in the exhibition catalogue:

'As of the green leaves on a thick tree, some fall and some grow; so is the generation of flesh and blood.'-- Ecclesiastes, xiv, 18.

'Strengthen ye the feeble hands, and confirm ye the tottering knees; say ye to the faint hearted: Be ye strong; fear ye not; behold your God.'--Isaiah--Bishop Lowth's Translation.

29. Hunt Exhibition (1969) Catalogue, p.36.

These quotations plainly make the painting more cryptic not less, and so the first contemporary criticism of it is of two kinds-- hostile and pained if the critic had not been privately informed further (The Morning Chronicle), or patronisingly exegetical if the critic had been told. Ruskin's letter to The Times of 25 May 1854 is in this latter class. The close relationship its explanation bears to Hunt's (in a pamphlet of 1865) suggests that Ruskin was being dishonestly pontifical, sympathetic to the artist's faulty conception rather than to his audience's justified bewilderment, when he wrote:

Not that this picture is obscure, or its story feebly told. I am at a loss to know how its meaning could be rendered more distinctly, but assuredly it is not understood. People gaze at it in blank wonder, and leave it hopelessly; so that, though it is almost an insult to the painter to explain his thoughts in this instance, I cannot persuade myself to leave it thus misunderstood. The poor girl has been sitting singing with her seducer; some chance words of the song 'Oft in the still night' have struck upon the numbed places of her heart; she has started up in agony; he, not seeing her face, goes on singing, striking the keys carelessly with his gloved hand Even to the mere spectator a strange interest exalts the accessories of a scene in which he bears witness to human sorrow. There is not a single object in all that room, common, modern, vulgar . . . but it becomes tragical, if rightly read. That furniture, so carefully painted, even to the last vein of the rosewood--is there nothing to be learnt from that terrible lustre of it, from its fatal newness; nothing there that has the old thoughts of home upon it, or that is ever to become a part of home? Those embossed books, (30)

30. Examples of the moulded papier-mâché bindings of the day, according to Hunt Exhibition (1969) Catalogue, p.36.

vain and useless--they also new--marked with no happy wearing of beloved leaves; the torn and dying bird upon the floor; the gilded tapestry, with the fowls of the air feeding on the ripened corn; the picture above the fireplace with its single drooping figure--the woman taken in adultery; nay, the very hem of the girl's dress, which the painter has laboured so closely, thread by thread, has a story in it, if we think how soon its pure whiteness may be soiled with dust and rain, her outcast feet failing in the street; and the fair garden flowers seen in the reflected sunshine of the mirror--these also have their language--

Hope not to find delight in us, they say (31)
For we are spotless, Jenny--we are pure.

Ruskin could not have written this detailed explanation of the symbols, which exactly corresponds to what Hunt intended, if he had not been given foreknowledge of the symbolism. In his desire to support the Pre-Raphaelite painters Ruskin more than once similarly perjures himself. Here he is being disingenuous by denying the picture's obscurity and then explaining it, 'though it is almost an insult to the painter'. Some parts of this interpretation are completely fanciful--the story of the dress's whiteness and the Tennysonian flower language (parodied mercilessly in Alice Through the Looking Glass)--and at other times Ruskin is adding considerably to what is there. The critic of the Athenaeum, who did not have an axe to grind, was being far more honest when he wrote:

Enigmatic in its title, it is understood by few of the esoteric visitors . . . Innocent and unenlightened spectators suppose it to represent a quarrel between a brother and sister.

31. Letter to The Times of 25 May 1854.

Ruskin is purposely clouding the real issue which is concerned with Hunt's basic conception of the painting and of what a picture can do. Ruskin's account is a verbal one, put into words in his own head from a plot in Hunt's head, and so if it seems satisfactory to the reader, it is not the painting that is vindicated but a verbal transformation of the painter's intentions. Because his intention was to tell a moral fable, something which could not be put over in artistic form, then the two processes remain completely separate--one in paint and one in words.

A common characteristic of partisan art criticism in Victorian periodicals is praise (or blame) of a minor feature in order to make the subsequent subjective attack (or advocacy) appear objective and balanced; and an example appears in Ruskin's same account of this painting:

to many persons the careful reading of the inferior details in this picture cannot but be at first offensive, as calling their attention away from the principal subject.

Ruskin has noticed in this painting, as we have in the other two we have thus far examined, that the lack of unity between the artist's intention and his achievement is exacerbated within the painting by his loving concentration on particular details for their own sake to the detriment of the picture's unity--why are the details of a disreputable house painted with such loving care? (This charge is even more relevant to 'The Hireling Shepherd', where the attractiveness of the lovers' situation makes it difficult to

see them as types of moral degenerates.)

To turn from the most moralistic of the Pre-Raphaelite painters to the least, to Millais, is at least to substitute for Hunt's moral weight masquerading as artistic worth an enervating flexibility. Millais' 'Ophelia' is a prime example of subject-matter superimposed on a detailed natural background so that the two do not cohere. It is very similar in this studio type of construction to many other Pre-Raphaelite paintings, the strangest example of which is William Dyce's 'The Garden of Gethsemane', which consists of mountainous wooded scenery, with a rough wall and a stony stream. It is very much a northern English landscape, as in Yorkshire, or the Derbyshire Peaks, or the Lake District. But walking out of the left-hand side of the picture, and occupying about one-seventieth of the painting, is a figure with the conventional appearance and dress of Christ; and this figure gives the picture its title. (32)

Millais' painting is a succession of technical accomplishments rather than an artistic whole. The greenery is drawn with skilled draughtsmanship, but as with the three Hopkins poems we dealt with many items are drawn at the same high pitch, with the same precision and minute attention, and there is no chiaroscuro to make a distinction between what the eye should concentrate on and what it should quickly absorb the elements of but pass over. If everything is at

32. Emma Holt Bequest Collection, Sudley, Liverpool, no.221.

a high pitch what can the eye do but dart about over the painting and continually feel the rival pull of the next piece of the painting when it needs to settle on one? Individual flowers, reeds, and leaves are drawn with such precision that botanists can identify their species easily. Millais could not concentrate his own attention. There is a distracting robin at the far left of the picture, distracting because it has a different colour and shape to the foliage surrounding it.

Millais' desire to paint with Ruskinian accuracy was, however, likely to fall victim to his flippancy, his proclivity towards turning off his feeling for a principle apparently at will. On his Glenfinlas holiday with the Ruskins in 1853 Millais was able to make fun of Ruskin's idea of ornament derived from natural forms by sketching Effie Ruskin covered in pieces of creeper, flowers, ears of corn, a squirrel, and two lizards.⁽³³⁾ And in 'Ophelia' the stream is painted remarkably laxly, with no noticeable sense of purpose in the water, which is of an unnatural blue, and is technically vastly inferior to the greenery. The overall impression of over-vivid green, the result of the new technique of painting on a wet white ground, makes this foliage too intense for the eye, in perhaps a similar way to Hopkins's combination in his octaves of over-intense emotion and noticeably

33. Millais Exhibition (1967), no.s 315 and 316.

distended syntax.

The main objection to the picture, though, is that the figure of Ophelia does not satisfactorily cohere with the scenery. The background was painted on the river Ewell near Kingston-on-Thames, and the model for Ophelia, Elizabeth Siddall, was painted in a bath of water in a house in London, and, as one critic unkindly wrote, 'looks it'.⁽³⁴⁾ There is much technical awkwardness and uncertainty about the edges of the body in the stream. The body strikes a fixed attitude more appropriate to stage melodrama than to painting, with the head and hands unnaturally far out of the water, as though the edge of the Gower Street bath is still there to support them. Millais did not absorb more about Ophelia than the absolute superficial minimum, a girl in a natural setting with flowers in a stream. Shakespeare, in contrast, had intensely realised the possibilities inherent in the old ballad idea of a young girl, frustrated in love and incapable of adjusting to the reality of the situation, drowning herself. Gertrude's speech in Hamlet (IV. vii. 165-82) gives the setting, action, symbolism and feeling all unified. In it the flowers and foliage act parts in the drama before the main event--'willow' ('the emblem of disconsolate love'),⁽³⁵⁾ 'dead men's fingers', 'weeping brook'.

34. Leslie Parris, The Pre-Raphaelites (1966, unnumbered pages).

35. J. Dover Wilson (ed.), Hamlet (1936 edn.), p.230.

Millais is, in other words, relying on Shakespeare to provide the matter to fill the gap between what the onlooker sees, the strange sight of a fully clothed girl lying in a stream surrounded by foliage and flowers, and what the artist intends to be seen, which is the visual realisation of a literary creation. The words of Shakespeare succeed in the play because the combination of different artistic elements is suited to his medium and is fully conceived. Millais' painting does not because the desired effect is not suited to the medium, because the girl is not related to her background and because the artist concentrates on the natural background for its own sake, and without making the necessary distinction in focal importance between its various parts.

For the background of 'Christ in the House of His Parents' Millais similarly aimed at exact authenticity, painting it in a carpenter's shop in Oxford Street, and modelling the body of Joseph from a carpenter to obtain the correct muscular development. As a result, the carpentering details are remarkably accurate, realistic still-life paintings. (Although, as with the stream in 'Ophelia', Millais could suddenly relax and paint so casually that he seems a split person: his sheeps' heads in the left-hand background, despite his having bought two from a butcher to model from, are very badly drawn--some resemble a cross between a cow and a pig rather than sheep.)

Contemporary criticisms of Pre-Raphaelite paintings seldom hit the nail on the head, but sometimes only just avoid the main issue, and Dickens's well-known destructive criticism of this painting and The Times's are both based on its proliferation of elaborate realistic detail. The same criticism is implicit in Punch's description of a Pre-Raphaelite Holy Family, written by 'our Surgical Adviser', who

detailed all the diseases and malformations which he maintained he could see in the picture, and proved that this and, by implication, all Pre-Raphaelite pictures were in fact composed out of the phenomena of morbid anatomy. ⁽³⁶⁾

These critics are correct in their implication that the onlooker's attention is diffracted into the many different outstanding details, but they do not see how the detailed realism also helps to emphasize the disparity between what the eye sees in the painting and the fable that it is intended to construct. ⁽³⁷⁾ On the one hand, the purpose of most of the painting appears to be to display talented draughtsmanship with lovingly delineated objects, but on the other

36. Punch xviii (1850); quoted in John Steegman, Victorian Taste (1970), pp.174-5.

37. The Times said:

The meanest details of a carpenter's shop, with no conceivable omission of misery, of dirt, of even disease, all finished with the same loathsome minuteness . . .

(Millais Exhibition [1967] Catalogue, p.29)

But both The Times and Dickens (Household Words, 15 June 1850) continue their attack not by describing the problem of unity which the emphatic quality of the details brings with it, but by attacking the lack of a Raphaellesque sublime.

Millais is trying to tell a story with symbols. Quite apart from the clash caused by the insistence of the details on drawing attention to themselves at the expense of the human figures and symbolic objects, these figures and objects do not succeed in telling their intended story.

Although the picture is not as weighted down with symbols as 'The Awakening Conscience' there are still several, which have varying degrees of success. The wound in Christ's hand is probably the only symbol which does not need to be pointed out; but in order to carry the interpretation of the symbolism further, as Millais probably intended:

one hand raised to display his prefigurative wound and the other held at right angles to it across⁽³⁸⁾ the body in a gesture of separation from his mother,

the onlooker has to be told the significance because he can not discern it from the painting itself. The tools and ladder associable with the Crucifixion, and the set-square emblematic of the Trinity, similarly need a third authority to bridge the gap between what the objective eye sees of them and the symbolic purpose which the artist wants them to carry. The unsatisfactory sheep presumably represent the faithful of the Church, and studies for the painting in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and the Tate Gallery, show that Millais originally intended even more symbolic objects, including

38. Leslie Parris, op.cit. (unnumbered pages).

a winding-sheet and flowers.⁽³⁹⁾ The poses of the two figures at the sides are presumably meant to prefigure the ritualistic attitudes of the two thieves who were crucified with Christ, but they are indecisively half-way between the conventional attitudes in Crucifixion paintings (with the feet awkwardly placed together), and those of figures in an English conversation piece; and, a further complication, the boy on the right is supposed to be Saint John at the same time. Another disrupting characteristic of the painting is that some features of the human figures are inappropriate both for their symbolic purpose and on the grounds of realism. Joseph's head is not a workman's but a Victorian gentleman's.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The face badly connects with the workman's arms, which are exaggeratedly veined and muscled. Christ's hands are appallingly manlike: they are too large and sinewy and worked for a child's. Christ's hair behind his right shoulder does not fit with the rest of his hair. The two main figures are not impressive enough to carry symbolic weight;

39. See Lindsay Errington's note in [John Gere et al.,] The Pre-Raphaelites (exhibition catalogue, Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1972, unnumbered pages).

40. Not, incidentally, that of Millais' father, as Mary Bennett says in her account of the picture (Millais Exhibition [1967] Catalogue, p.28), but plainly that of Thomas Gordon Hake--compare with the painting the photograph of Hake in William E. Fredeman, Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study (1965), plate 5.

as with so many Pre-Raphaelite characters in paintings they retain the essential characteristics of their models, not just in physical feature but in their belonging to a particular class of Victorian person. They have not undergone the essential transformation of art.

We are more likely to associate the kind of symbolism we have been discussing, combined with minute particularisation, with Hunt than with Millais, because Millais' symbolism becomes much less insistent and important as his career develops. D.G. Rossetti also developed away from crude symbolism, but in some of his early works there is plain visual proof that he was of the same school as Hunt and Millais. It is common today to notice the temperamental and ideological differences between the three main Pre-Raphaelite painters, but their similarities in the period from 1848 to 1853 are more remarkable. Rossetti, noticeably the least competent draughtsman of the three, and Millais, the best, still seem mistakeable for each other in drawings of this period. If it were not for their subject-matter, Rossetti's pen and ink drawing 'The First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice: Dante Drawing the Angel',⁽⁴¹⁾ and Millais' study for 'Christ in the House of His Parents',⁽⁴²⁾ could each be

41. Rossetti Exhibition (1973), no.85.

42. Millais Exhibition (1967), no.254.

ascribed to the other artist.⁽⁴³⁾ And when we turn to the more important early Rossetti oil paintings, certain similarities with Millais and Hunt stand out. 'Christ in the House of His Parents', which is often said to be the most primitive and 'Early Christian' of Millais' paintings,⁽⁴⁴⁾ and Rossetti's 'The Girlhood of Mary Virgin', which is a conscious attempt at a Quattrocento style, have many things in common.⁽⁴⁵⁾ As Millais' did, Rossetti's painting reacts against the mannerisms of Renaissance painting by a certain simplicity and naturalism. Rossetti has loaded the canvas with symbols, each one of which has to be individually interpreted. It is like a symbolic Christian equivalent of Frith's 'Derby Day', with numerous little incidents in different areas of the painting, each one of which has to be interpreted in turn. The symbolic objects have no artistic value at all; they are competently painted so that they are recognisable for what material objects they are, but

43. This similarity in technique is pointed out by Timothy Hilton, op.cit., p.41, and by John Gere, introduction to Rossetti Exhibition (1973) Catalogue, p.11.

44. For example by Leslie Parris, op.cit. (unnumbered pages).

45. In spite of what Hunt reports Millais' father as saying: Rossetti's picture of 'The Annunciation' . . . is undoubtedly very dainty and chaste, but the principle he carries out is not Pre-Raphaelitism as you [Hunt] and Jack [Millais] started it. His is church traditional work, gilt aureoles and the conventionalities of early priesthood, which we did away with at the Reformation. Jack has treated his 'Holy Family' ['Christ in the House of His Parents'] in a strictly natural manner, and you have painted your 'Early Missionary' ['A Converted British Family...'] so.

(W. Holman-Hunt, Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (1913) i 156.) Hunt is always at pains to separate Rossetti from 'true Pre-Raphaelitism', i.e., from himself and Millais.

have no intrinsic life or compositional value. Rossetti attached two sonnets to the painting, the second of which was to explain the symbols:

These are the symbols. On that cloth of red
 I' the centre is the Tripoint:--perfect each
 Except the second of its points, to teach
 That Christ is not yet born. The books (whose head
 Is golden Charity, as Paul hath said)
 Those virtues are wherein the soul is rich:
 Therefore on them the lily standeth, which
 Is Innocence, being interpreted.

The seven-thorn'd briar and the palm seven-leaved
 Are her great sorrow and her great reward.
 Until the end be full, the Holy One
 Abides without. She soon shall have achieved
 Her perfect purity: yea, God the Lord
 Shall soon vouchsafe his Son to be her Son.

This is neither competent poetry nor clear as explication, but it shows that Rossetti saw the need of extrinsic additions to the painting before the spectator could register the intended effect, and also that when Rossetti translates his intentions into words he can only make a list of objects, which is why the composition is a collection of pieces, not a whole. The 1973 Rossetti Exhibition catalogue does the job much more competently:

The youthful Virgin (Christina Rossetti) sits beside her mother St Anne (Mrs Gabriele Rossetti) and embroiders on to a crimson cloth the tall lily-stem standing before her on the volumes; the latter bear the names of the cardinal virtues and of three of the theological virtues, the golden book Caritas uppermost, Fides, Spes, Prudentia, Temperantia, Fortitudo beneath. On the ground by her feet lies a seven-leaved palm branch and a seven-thorned briar tied with a scroll inscribed Tot Dolores tot Gaudia, telling of the Passion still to come. The lily, signifying purity, is

held by a child-angel, and almost unobserved behind the serene figure of St Anne, a Cross serves as a trellis for tendrils of ivy, significant of the True Vine and the Great Sacrifice, and in its shade a haloed Dove heralds the coming of the Holy Spirit. On the balustrade below the Cross a crimson cloak has been loosely thrown, emblematic of the Robe of Christ, bearing in its centre two sides of a triangle marked with the signs of the Trinity and the Holy Ghost, to which the second of the two sonnets refers. (46)

These symbolic objects, together with the lifelessness of the surroundings caused by Rossetti's technical incompetence give the figures, despite their naturalness a dead weight to cope with, so that they take on the 'laboured mortality' (47) that symbolic figures in Pre-Raphaelite paintings so often do, although painted from real people. The figure of St Joachim, the only one which does not seem ill at ease, resembles figures in the Lasinio engravings that the Pre-Raphaelites knew (in the one reproduced by Timothy Hilton there are several similar figures stretching upwards while working on a vine entwined round a trestle framework), (48) and so may be more convincing because he was copied. This lack of ease which the characters show, torn between their roles of realistic human beings and symbol-carriers, is increased by Rossetti's lack of skill in draughtsmanship--other parts of this painting fit badly into the whole (the structure behind the three foreground figures is very uncertain, and St Joachim is disproportionately large).

46. Rossetti Exhibition (1973) Catalogue, p.25.

47. From a review of the 1973 exhibition by Nigel Gosling, Observer, 21 January 1973.

48. Timothy Hilton, op.cit., p.24.

In this painting, in its associated picture 'Ecce Ancilla Domini', and in a further, unfinished, work of his, 'Found', with its minutely detailed brick wall and the individually painted hairs on a calf,⁽⁴⁹⁾ Rossetti shows his close relationship with Hunt and Millais in the early days of the P.R.B. Another common characteristic of the early Pre-Raphaelite paintings including those of Rossetti, as I have shown, is their frequent reliance on symbolism to impose values on the onlooker which are extrinsic to the work, not painted into the picture. Quite often in Pre-Raphaelite paintings the artist showed how extrinsic this symbolism was to the values portrayed on the canvas picture itself by using the frame of the painting to add further ideas. Sometimes there is a text on the frame (as we have seen there is on that of Hunt's 'The Awakening Conscience'); at other times there are painted emblems--'The Awakening Conscience' has a border, designed by the artist, of 'chiming bells and marigolds, the emblems of warning and sorrow, and a single star',⁽⁵⁰⁾ and the frame which Hunt designed and had specially made for 'The Scapegoat' has carved on it seven stars, a seven-branched candlestick, a dove holding an olive-branch in a trefoil, and a four-leaved flower (which Mary Bennett suggests

49. Rossetti Exhibition (1973), no.s 37 and 69.

50. Hunt Exhibition (1969) Catalogue, p.36; the star presumably represents Christ as the soul's single guiding star: cf. Hopkins's 'On the Portrait of Two Beautiful Young People', l.19 (Poems^{4r}, p.196).

is called the Star of Bethlehem).⁽⁵¹⁾ These are usually religious symbols, but not specifically appropriate to that painting they surround, or worked into it by the artist. Their purpose is the artistically illegitimate one of trying to impress the onlooker not by something which adds to the intrinsic quality of the painting, but by superimposing a weight of religious iconography onto it, as Hopkins was doing with the figure of the Windhover (I will discuss in more detail Hopkins's employment of iconographical trimmings in Chapter Five.) There are numerous examples besides of Pre-Raphaelite painters using the shape of the picture to gently nudge the onlookers in the direction the artist wants but which he has not been able to express adequately in the painting itself. With Millais' 'Ophelia' the top corners of the painting have been rounded off to add a sentimental, soft aspect to the picture. Other examples of intentional deviation from the conventional rectangular shape are not always as successful as this one in making some contribution to the painting--Brown's 'The Last of England' (almost round) and 'Chaucer at the Court of King Edward III' (almost arched at the top), James Collinson's 'The Empty Purse' (oval), Charles Alston Collins's 'Convent Thoughts' (appropriately rounded like an arch), and perhaps the most successful, because intrinsically connected with his subject-matter and treatment, Arthur Hughes's 'The Eve of St. Agnes',⁽⁵²⁾ which is in the form

51. Hunt Exhibition (1969) Catalogue, p.43.

52. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

of a triptych of three gothic pointed arches, the narrow side ones suitably portraying figures standing upright, while the wider centre one has the more horizontal subject of Madeline lying in her bed and Porphyro kneeling beside it.

Their audiences were taught by the Pre-Raphaelite painters, as their parents had been by the trite story-teller-painters whose tradition the Pre-Raphaelites, along with other contemporary English painters, were unconsciously keeping alive and only slightly modifying, that when they saw objects in a painting they were to think on another level as well, even if that level was only complete in words and in their heads. The idea of art for art's sake rather than for the story's sake was quite foreign to the general spirit of the time. We can see this basic misunderstanding in the reception that Ford Madox Brown's 'The Pretty Baa Lambs',⁽⁵³⁾ received at the Royal Academy in 1852, 'at a time', Brown ruefully commented afterwards,

when discussion was very rife on certain ideas and principles of art, very much in harmony with my own, but more sedulously promulgated by friends of mine. Hung in a false light, and viewed through the medium of extraneous ideas, the painting was, I think, much misunderstood. I was told that it was impossible to make out what meaning I had in the picture. At the present moment [1865], few people I trust will seek for any meaning beyond the obvious one, that is--a lady, a baby, two lambs, a servant girl, and some grass. I should be much inclined to doubt the genuineness of that artist's ideas who never painted from love of the mere look of things, whose mind was always on the stretch for a moral. This

53. City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham; Brown Exhibition (1964), no.21.

picture was painted in the sunlight; the only intention being to render that effect as well as my (powers in a first attempt of this kind would allow. ⁵⁴)

People, in other words, expected there to be an extraneous message, and were unable to see a painting for what it actually was.

Hopkins's mind worked in very much the same kind of way.

I have already attempted to form a moral fable from Hunt's 'Our English Coasts' in the way that Victorian onlookers would have done. It seems probable that Hopkins himself made a poem out of a similar interpretation of the same picture, in the summer of 1864, when he was an Oxford undergraduate. His mind was intensely occupied with the Pre-Raphaelites during this summer, as his diaries prove. ⁽⁵⁵⁾ The poem is as follows:

54. Brown Exhibition (1964) Catalogue, p.17; and Leslie Parris, op.cit. (unnumbered pages).

55. On 18 July 1864 he wrote out the names of the P.R.B. He knew the painter F.W. Burton, and made a note to ask him about the Brotherhood, the French Pre-Raphaelites, the 'one great medievalist' of the Belgian School, Henri Leys, and the German Nazarenes, the P.R.B.'s precursors. There are notes on individual painters of the English, French, and German 'medievalist' schools (as Hopkins called them). He wrote numerous Ruskinian pieces of natural description done into verse-fragments. See Humphry House and Graham Storey (eds.), The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1959), pp.30-5 (referred to hereafter as Journals). He had been sketching Ruskinian subjects, clouds, water, stone, and foliage, with the requisite close attention to detail during the previous year and a half (see Figures 8 to 22, and Plates 1, 2, and 9 to 17 in Journals).

Glimmer'd along the square-cut steep.
 They chew'd the cud in hollows deep;
 Their cheeks moved and the bones therein.
 The lawless honey eaten of old
 Has lost its savour and is roll'd
 Into the bitterness of sin.

What would befall the godless flock
 Appear'd not for the present, till
 A thread of light betray'd the hill
 Which with its lined and creased flank
 The outgoings of the vale does block.
 Death's bones fell in with sudden clank
 As wrecks of minèd embers will. (56)

The similarities between the picture and the poem are plain: a flock of animals (since Hopkins uses 'flock' and 'chew'd the cud', and since sheep are used thus symbolically in the Bible, it seems at least probable that sheep are intended), who represent godless people have transgressed against a moral law by pursuing some forbidden pleasure. 'The lawless honey' is not to be taken literally--it is, as the editors of Journals explain (p.316), a reference to an Old Testament situation; a suitably parallel situation where Yahweh's vengeance morality is demonstrated. Hopkins is trying to say that for the flock the moment of truth has arrived--having experienced the forbidden joy of straying, they are now about to suffer their penalty of going over the edge of the cliff. Since their pleasure is a forbidden one it turns sour on them, and this act of God's vengeance is heralded by a sudden shaft of light which

56. Poems^{4r}, p.130; also note its placing in the 1864 diaries, surrounded by numerous Pre-Raphaelite, medievalist, Gothic, and Ruskinian entries (Journals, p.35).

illuminates a steep stone descent ('the square-cut steep'). This steep cuts off what would otherwise be an exit to the valley. The similarity seems to me remarkable, particularly the light betraying the deceptive nature of the ground. Even if the similarities between the incidents of the poem and those in the picture are considered coincidental, the poem still provides an example of immoral animals ('the godless flock') used to represent human beings in a very similar situation of moral retribution.

The poem shows, I maintain, that Hopkins was not averse to the practice of forming a fable in words out of a statically conceived realistic representation of a landscape with figures, and it is thus a concrete example of the main connection between the Pre-Raphaelite paintings and the Hopkins poems we examined: the fact that the unity of each of these works of art depends on extraneous associations, not on insights of the artist directly incorporated into, and inseparably and intrinsically connected with, the work. The unity of these works is unsatisfactory because if it is accomplished at all it is in the artist's mind; it is not felt in a continuous line that starts with the object in reality, goes through the artist's mind and is expressed in the work--it is not truly artistic.

The works tend to be choked with detail, like a Victorian drawing-room, each object skilfully individualised, but with the connecting factor which the artist uses, the moral element, imposed

from without. Both the groups--the Hopkins poems and the Pre-Raphaelite paintings--ignore Lessing's leading idea in the Laokoön, that the spheres of painting and poetry are strictly delimited and distinct.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Hopkins's unconscious artistic motivations are those of a painter; his real twin subjects are natural objects and his own emotions, and these are combined in a genuine simultaneous artistic process in his octaves. But he has employed a painter's process in that he is picturing statically, he is using only a single moment of time. This is the process Ivor Winters is describing when he says:

it is the usual procedure of Hopkins . . . to hurl miscellaneous images at his subject from all sides, rather than to develop one of them fully.⁽⁵⁸⁾

In Laokoön's words:

the artist, out of ever-varying nature, can only make use of a single moment, and the painter especially can only use this moment from one point of view.⁽⁵⁹⁾

The priest-interpreter part of the poet insists, as a similar persona insists with the Pre-Raphaelite painters, that if not actually immoral, the picture by itself is not more than an example of sensual indulgence, it is not a worthy work of art, if it does

57. In 1881 Hopkins wrote to Dixon:
 That is a lie, so to speak, of Lessing's that pictures ought not to be painted in verse, a damned lie--so to speak. (C.C. Abbott [ed.], The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon [1955], p.61; referred to hereafter as Letters ii.) 'Lie' and 'damned' are never used lightly by Hopkins after he became a Jesuit.
58. Ivor Winters, The Function of Criticism (1962), p.132.
59. Laokoön, ch.3, in Edward Bell (ed.), Selected Prose Works of G.E. Lessing (1905 edn.), p.19.

not turn out to be an exemplar or an illustration of something outside its immediate subject. This something with Hopkins is always God and explicit Christian doctrine, and with the Pre-Raphaelite painters a narrative of some admirable significance, either from Christian or medieval or literary or modern myth. [By 'modern myth' I mean a fiction of the Victorian age which had acquired an archetypal strength--the 'fallen woman' or the sweetly-sad tryst.] Hopkins insists that his art must be 'Ad maiorem dei gloriam', and so the destiny of the poem is abruptly changed part of the way through, and an artificially alien and degenerate part is added on. What the poet needed to add on was, in the words of the narrator of Arnold's 'Epilogue to Lessing's Laocoön', 'life's movement', which is what distinguishes the poet's sphere from the painter's:

. . . he must life's movement tell!
 The thread which binds it all in one,
 And not its separate parts alone. (60)
 The movement he must tell of life.

The thread which the Pre-Raphaelite painters are saying binds the separate parts of each of their paintings into one entity is a story, part of life's movement from one point to another. Like Hopkins, they are unaware of the difference between an artist's and a poet's function, that a painter 'can only use a single moment with reference to a single point of view'. They fail by not

60. Lines 140-3, in Kenneth Allott (ed.), The Poems of Matthew Arnold (1965), p.513.

trying to gauge accurately this moment, sometimes substituting static academic exercises in Ruskinian observation which are not sufficiently involved in the moment, at other times substituting a mixture of odd moments in a story caught only with the force of illustration to words also provided; like a book with words on one side of the open page and a picture on the other, and even if not providing the word-half, at least giving indications of where it may be found. In the cases of both Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelite painters the nature of the artistic vision was misunderstood, and so the finished works of art are failures as integrated wholes, and what is substituted consists of, in its best parts, skilled artistic exercises, and in its worst, clumsy prosaic moralising which has not been transmuted into artistically worthwhile emotions or form.

...ooOoo...

Chapter Two: Moral Earnestness

In Chapter One I demonstrated that some poems of Hopkins's and some Pre-Raphaelite paintings fall distinctly into two parts which are not satisfactorily integrated into one unified structure; and that these two parts can be identified as firstly, a depiction of a scene expressed by the artist in a succession of minutely observed realistic details, and secondly, a moralising or literary fable not foreshadowed in the first part, but added on afterwards and extrinsically in order to bring the details together and force them to play a part in the audience's reaction to the total work of art--a role which by themselves the details are incapable of fulfilling. In order to discover the reasons for this incompatibility I will examine in detail four major components that Hopkins's poems and Pre-Raphaelite paintings have in common, and which, in my opinion, contribute in different ways to the lack of unity I have demonstrated--moral earnestness, story-telling, medievalism, and Ruskinian detail. Each of these common factors will be examined in turn against its Victorian cultural background, so that its origins, its nature, and the mode and extent of its influence on Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelite painters can be determined.

Professor Houghton's The Victorian Frame of Mind provides a convenient starting-point for a discussion of Victorian earnestness when it says that the 'one distinguishing fact' about the age

was that it was 'an age of transition', and that this fact, 'the basic and almost universal conception of the period', was widely recognised by the Victorians themselves.⁽¹⁾ This recognition came, according to Houghton,⁽²⁾ in the 1830's, when the effect was felt of revolutions abroad, the passing of the first Reform Bill and that for Catholic Emancipation, and the attack on the established Church by Whig liberals and Benthamite agnostics. But long before Victoria became queen the nineteenth-century reaction against several aspects of eighteenth-century life had started. There was dissatisfaction, for instance, with the social hierarchy which had as its twin peaks the privileged complacent land-owner and the essentially aristocratic, easy-conscienced parson, out of contact with most of his parishioners. As Gibbon remarked (though following a criticism of the privileged position of Oxford and Cambridge Universities) 'the spirit of monopolists is narrow, lazy, and oppressive'.⁽³⁾ By the time the Victorians realised that theirs was an age of transition, that there had been violent revolutions in France, Italy, Poland and Belgium, that not only Ireland but the hayfields of Kent and Dorset seemed

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1. Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870 (1957), p.1.
 2. Walter E. Houghton, op.cit., p.2.
 3. Quoted in G.M. Trevelyan, British History in the Nineteenth Century and After: 1782-1919 (1965), p.42.

imminent battlefields,⁽⁴⁾ they had brought into common use the word 'earnest' to sum up the best frame of mind in which to put forward their response to the laxities of the eighteenth century, to counter pre-Victorian leisurely, unserious ways of life, and the easy conscience.

We have all had too much of this irreverence and losel levity. Life is too real, too earnest, too solemn a thing, to be spent in producing or reading such light literature . . . Earnestness is at the root of greatness.⁽⁵⁾

According to Fitzjames Stephen, reviewing Tom Brown's Schooldays, 'earnest' was substituted for 'serious' by Dr Arnold, whose

special peculiarity of . . . character would seem to have been an intense and somewhat impatient fervour.

Later in the review we read that Dr Arnold's aim was 'to make his boys morally thoughtful', and he had a constant habit of 'referring every action to the great fundamental principles of right and wrong'.⁽⁶⁾

Carlyle prefixed the motto 'ernst ist das Leben' (from Schiller) to his Past and Present.⁽⁷⁾ It was a key word and concept for the Victorians and lasted as such until around the time it was satirised by Wilde (The Importance of Being Earnest was first published in 1895). Samuel Butler's The Way of All Flesh, although not published

4. G.M. Young, Early Victorian England, 1830-1865 (1934) ii 113.
5. Gerald Massey, 'Thomas Hood, Poet and Punster', Hogg's Instructor, n.s. iv (1855), p.323.
6. Edinburgh Review cvii (1858), pp.183, 185, 188; this article was brought to my notice by Walter E. Houghton, op.cit., p.220.
7. Mentioned by Walter E. Houghton, op.cit., p.221.

until 1903, was written between 1873 and 1885, and suggests that although during that period some Victorians, Hopkins among them, were still using the word as forcefully as when it first became current, it could be regarded in the last quarter of the century as a period of whimsicality:

Theobald had proposed to call him [a baby born 6 September 1835] George after old Mr. Pontifex [as his name implies, born before Victoria's reign], but strange to say, Mr. Pontifex overruled him in favour of the name Ernest. The word 'earnest' was just beginning to come into fashion, and he thought the possession of such a name might, like his having been baptized in water from the Jordan, have a permanent effect upon the boy's character, and influence him for good during the more critical periods of his life.⁽⁸⁾

Its use was widespread among religious and political enthusiasts of many kinds to describe the best frame of mind in which to think about religious and moral issues. Kingsley, the low churchman, Newman, the high churchman, and George Eliot, the agnostic, all advocated earnestness in their different ways, as did Utilitarians, Whigs, and Tories alike. Earnestness became the currency in which the different ideologists tried to outdo both their predecessors and their contemporary rivals.

Professor Houghton usefully distinguishes between 'intellectual' earnestness and 'moral' earnestness.⁽⁹⁾ 'Moral' earnestness is about the end and purpose of life, against self-indulgence and

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8. Samuel Butler, The Way of All Flesh (Signet Classics edn., 1960), p.73.
 9. Walter E. Houghton, op.cit., pp.220-1.

slackness of aims; 'intellectual' earnestness is more concerned with method, a decision to be serious, concentrated and professional in one's pursuits, rather than casual and half-hearted. I will be particularly concerned here with moral earnestness and its effect on art, rather than with intellectual earnestness, although the two overlap.

Literature and art became vital moral battlefields, because they could be used either for objectively practical purposes or for mere self-indulgence. Early Victorian sages leave no doubt in their audience's minds as to what they consider to be the purpose of art. Carlyle's opinion of Lamb and Hazlitt shows a typical attitude:

How few people speak for Truth's sake, even its humblest modes . . . Not one of that class will tell you a straightforward story or even a credible one about any matter under the sun. All must be packed up into epigrammatic contrasts, startling exaggerations, claptraps that will get a plaudit from the galleries!
Wearisome, inexpressibly wearisome to me is that sort of clatter . . . [Lamb's] speech wriggles hither and thither with an incessant painful fluctuation, not an opinion in it, or a fact, or a phrase that you can thank him for. (10)

Newman wrote that

A man should be in earnest, by which I mean he should write not for the sake of writing, but to bring out his thoughts. (11)

Carlyle denounced Byron and Scott as writers of 'literature of amusement'. Scott wrote for 'indolent languid men'. He had no

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10. J.A. Froude, Carlyle: First Forty Years (1882) ii 209; quoted in Walter E. Houghton, op.cit., p.226.
 11. Wilfrid Ward, The Life of John Henry, Cardinal Newman (1912) ii 335; quoted in Walter E. Houghton, op.cit., p.226.

positive attitude towards the 'great Mystery of Existence'.

Instead he 'quietly acquiesced, and made himself at home in a world of conventionalities'. Scott's novels did not contain anything

profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for edification, for building up or elevating, in any shape! The sick heart will find no healing here, the darkly-struggling heart no guidance. (12)

Even if one writer is not in agreement with the details of another's works, the main criterion for judging him and for feeling sympathy is whether he is considered to be in earnest. Thus George Eliot of Ruskin:

His little book on the Political Economy of Art contains some magnificent passages, mixed up with stupendous specimens of arrogant absurdity on some economical points. But I venerate him as one of the great teachers of the day. The grand doctrines of truth and sincerity in art, and the nobleness and solemnity of our human life, which he teaches with the inspiration of a Hebrew prophet, must be stirring up young minds in a promising way. (13)

In a similar way both Hopkins and Newman, despite their many radical differences from Carlyle, admired him; Hopkins wrote to

Canon Dixon:

I do not like his pampered and affected style . . . (14)
but the force of his genius seems to me gigantic,

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12. 'Sir Walter Scott' (1838), Essays iv 36, 49, 55; quoted in Walter E. Houghton, op.cit., pp.228-9.
13. Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, in J.W. Cross, Life of George Eliot (n.d.), p.239; quoted in Raymond Williams, Culture and Society 1780-1950 (1961), p.140.
14. Letter of 24 September 1881, Letters ii 59.

and Newman wrote to Hopkins in the same year:

I have ever greatly admired Carlisle's [sic] French Revolution.⁽¹⁵⁾

Writing to her publisher John Blackwood George Eliot contrasted 'the high responsibilities' of art with the general public's demands:

The ordinary tone about art is, that the artist may do what he will, provided he pleases the public.⁽¹⁶⁾

Art must morally lead and teach, rather than pander. In the visual arts, John Steegman has shown that there were similar tendencies before Ruskin, voiced by, for example, Charles Eastlake:

With all his deep love of pictures for their own sake, the Eastlake of 1835 could not quite free himself of the didactic approach to what he admired, however hard he tried. 'In the hands of English landscape painters', he said, having in mind Gainsborough and Richard Wilson, 'the useful capabilities of art, however extensively cultivated, have never been suffered to supersede its more tasteful attributes'. That might possibly have been said as early as the very end of the 18th century; but no contemporary of Wilson and Gainsborough would ever have talked about the 'useful capabilities' of their art. It could only have been said in a generation whose values have undergone the change of the Industrial Revolution. That revolution, moreover, not only brought new moral values into what the 18th century had regarded as an intellectual field, but it also very quickly affected critical taste.⁽¹⁷⁾

The 'useful capability' of visual art is primarily a moral one.

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15. C.C. Abbott (ed.), Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1956), p.411; hereafter referred to as Letters iii.
 16. Quoted by Morton Berman, afterword to The Mill on the Floss (Signet Classics edn., 1965), p.551.
 17. John Steegman, Victorian Taste (1970), pp.20-1.

A similar combination of utilitarian and personal ethics is apparent in all Victorian art forms: in architecture, for example, where Pugin's emphasis on the intrinsically Christian moral qualities of the Gothic style, combined well with the inherent practical disadvantage of the classical style, which, needing 'a great deal of unnecessary stone . . . on porticoes and pediments',⁽¹⁸⁾ would be too expensive a luxury for an age which needed to cope with the new religious zeal by building many churches quickly and cheaply.

'Moral earnestness' was not exclusively a Christian concept or prerogative, as I have said, but in age of religious revival and enthusiasm the concept for many people was almost inseparable from the Christian ethos. For a professional Christian like Hopkins the word is only rarely distinguishable from a feeling for Christian truth. Hopkins uses the word frequently in extant writings. He dwells on the meaning of the word in a sermon:

Truth--reality or earnest and the feeling of it, earnestness; spiritual insight. This guards chastity and temperance . . . it cuts off the flowing skirts of idleness and worldliness, a spreading of ourselves and of our being out on lower things, and braces, binds us fast into God's service. As we are soldiers earnestness means the same things, ready obedience to our Captain Christ.⁽¹⁹⁾

He often uses the word in sermons to describe prayer--'our earnest

18. Kenneth Clark, The Gothic Revival (1964), p.82.

19. Christopher Devlin (ed.), The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1959), p.234; referred to hereafter as Sermons.

hope and prayer', 'I have much and earnestly prayed', and 'with earnest and humble entreaties'.⁽²⁰⁾ And even in non-religious contexts, when, for instance, he writes in his diaries Ruskinian nature descriptions, the word takes on an ominous significance when he uses it, and words of a similar meaning, to describe the sky--a traditional Romantic usage (Keats's 'earnest stars' in Hyperion i 74, for instance)--'the higher, zenith sky earnest and frowning', and 'it was a grave . . . sky'.⁽²¹⁾ Because of the word's substantive meaning of 'portent' it provides the keynote to his poem 'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves', of which it is the first word.⁽²²⁾ (This sonnet, which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Six, is the most successfully unified of Hopkins's baroque poems because its lesson--it is a plea for earnestness about the four Last Things in the Catechism, Death, Judgement, Hell, and Heaven--is bound up with the natural description from this first word onwards.)

Hopkins's two most interesting usages for us, however, are when he employs the word in aesthetic contexts. In a letter to Bridges he writes:

20. Sermons, pp.251, 256, 31.

21. Journals, pp.207 and 218.

22. I do not think that Hopkins ever intended a word in a poem to have two different meanings at the same time; but in this poem the adjective Hopkins intended is so particularly appropriate if it is also used as a noun that the ambiguity seems to me to inevitably occur to the reader.

a kind of touchstone of the highest or most living art is seriousness; not gravity, ⁽²³⁾ but the being in earnest with your subject--reality.

The important connection here is between art, earnestness, and reality. Reality is nature, which to Hopkins could only be construed in terms of Christian dogma; art is the artist's version of nature; and earnestness in the artist is the criterion by which the success of the artistic transformation must be judged. The second occurrence contains an uneasy element which is significant for us:

He might be slow and something feckless first,
Not . . . and here no harm
But earnest, always earnest, there the charm⁽²⁴⁾

In this fragment of a verse-portrait not only are other personality traits subordinated in importance to the subject's earnestness, but earnestness is considered the key to his charm--a largely moral quality made out to be the basis of aesthetic appeal. The connection between these two quite different sets of criteria seems to me to be typical of both Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelite painters.

Hopkins's earnestness in his mature poems is most noticeable. Although his wit is very evident in his letters, his comic verses are rare, strained and facetious, and earned a puritanical rebuke from Bridges who thought them not worth preserving. 'These verses', Bridges wrote tersely of the trio of triolets printed in The Stonyhurst Magazine:

23. Letters 1 225.

24. Poetic fragment in MS. 'H' (fol.51v) not in Poems^{4r}, but published by me in a letter to the Times Literary Supplement, 22 August 1968.

are by Father Hopkins. They were for some private magazine. He sent me when I lived in London a number of comic verses which I did not preserve,

and in his account of the 'H' manuscript Bridges writes of Hopkins's 'humorous pee verse', the deletion thus relegating Hopkins's comic stanzas to the lower category of 'verse'.⁽²⁵⁾ Hopkins is much more comfortable when he is writing poetry on earnest subjects. Before 1875 'intellectual' earnestness (to use again Houghton's term) is almost a constant factor, with 'moral' earnestness a frequent concomitant, but after 1875 moral earnestness is a sine qua non of his poetry. The well-known extract from a letter to Dixon shows Hopkins's intense moral seriousness where his poetry is concerned:

What I had written I burnt before I became a Jesuit and resolved to write no more, as not belonging to my profession, unless it were by the wish of my superiors; so for seven years I wrote nothing but two or three (26) little presentation pieces which occasion called for.

Poetry, he thought, was 'not belonging to my profession'. The only pieces he wrote while a Jesuit before 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' were those which '[a religious] occasion called for'. There is

25. Bridges's manuscript notes on folio 306 of the Hopkins 'A' MS, and f.125 of the 'H' MS; published in my note 'G.M. Hopkins's Triolet "Cockle's Antibilious Pills"', Notes and Queries, n.s.xv, no.5 (May 1968), pp.183-4; but Fr. Alfred Thomas takes the triolets much more earnestly in his misleadingly titled article 'G.M. Hopkins: An Unpublished Triolet', MLR lxi (1966), p.182.

26. Letters ii 14.

some uncertainty about the burning of the poems, as almost all of the early poems referred to in letters are still extant, and the destruction of one's ~~poetic~~^{literary} manuscripts is more in line with common Romantic practice (Byron, Emily Brontë, D.G. Rossetti, John Gray, and others no doubt) than with Jesuit requirements. 'The Wreck of the Deutschland', however, was only written after Hopkins's rector had hinted that a poem could be written. After that poem

I held myself free to compose, but cannot find it in my conscience to spend time upon it. (27)

He would write poetry, but his conscience would dictate the conditions. The amount of leeway his conscience would be allowed by the Society of Jesus and his training can be estimated from Father Thomas's account of the Jesuit training that Hopkins underwent. It was a hard and disciplined life similar ~~similar~~ in some ways to that of some Continental university in Luther's time, and in others to an excessively rigorous and impecunious boys' boarding-school. Even Hopkins himself said that the life was 'steeped in the dankness of ditchwater', and to an outsider it is most chilling to read of the intentional humdrum monotony and blind obedience, the community's lack of reaction to the death of a member, hot-water pipes which 'couldn't raise the temperature above 46° F.', 'baths not oftener than once a month', and phrases like 'we were always

permitted to laugh when we could not help it'. 'We used to roar with laughter if anything happened', as Hopkins said, and on occasion he burst into unmotivated sobbing. Speaking in English was sometimes curtailed or totally forbidden, and a great deal of the training outside studies had reduction or even total rejection of the senses (the self-imposed 'custody-of-the-eyes' penance, for example) as the primary aim. (28)

With most things subordinated to the severe Christian moral discipline of the Society or oneself, it is not surprising that religious moral earnestness was an indispensable condition of Hopkins's poetry. Poetry as a product of his mind was, he thought, judged by the same criterion of moral rightness as were other actions of his:

For as to every moral act, being right or wrong, there belongs, of the nature of things, reward or punishment, so to every form perceived by the mind belongs, of the nature of things, admiration or the reverse. (29)

Literature, like all activities, was a moral pursuit, and would be judged as such by Christ, the 'only just judge'. Christ was therefore 'the only just literary critic':

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28. Alfred Thomas, SJ, Hopkins the Jesuit: The Years of Training (1969), particularly Chapter Two: The Noviceship 1868-1870; reviewed by me in Notes and Queries, n.s.19, no.11 (November 1972), pp.431-4. A much better account of what it felt like to be a Jesuit only a few years afterwards is Denis Meadows, Obedient Men (1954).
29. Letters ii 6-7.

The only just judge, the only just literary critic, is Christ, who prizes, is proud of, and admires, more than any man, more than the receiver himself can, the gifts of his own making. (30)

While he composed his mature poetry he was aware that it would be judged on Judgement Day according to moral standards. Hence the inevitability of his poetry's preoccupation with moral earnestness. (31) Morality to Hopkins was the basis of aesthetics.

Around the middle of the nineteenth century it was normal for ethics and aesthetics to combine in literature. This form of art subserved social and moral ends. The artist wrote as a part of the social and moral system, and his purpose to write was usually, as Graham Hough says, his desire

to maintain something or to change something, and only as an occasional indulgence to contemplate, to experience, to accept the immediate impact of the moment as it comes. (32)

The novelists are 'primarily commentators on the social scheme',

30. Letters ii 8; cf. 'The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo', ll.18-19 of The Golden Echo, Poems^{4r}, p.92:

. . . deliver it, early now, long before death
Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, beauty, back to God, beauty's
self and beauty's giver.

31. Hopkins wrote to Dixon:
you have great reason to thank God who has given you so astonishingly clear an inward eye to see what is in visible nature and in the heart such a deep insight into what is earnest, tender, and pathetic in human life and feeling as your poems display. (Letters ii 9)

The ideal poet saw visible things clearly, and comprehended with the heart the worthwhile parts of human feeling, which were characterised by earnestness, tenderness, and pathos. Earnestness was the first-mentioned worthwhile human quality.

32. Graham Hough, The Last Romantics (1961), p.xiii.

as are Carlyle and Matthew Arnold in his prose. In the world of painting things were slightly different. In most Western European countries the literary and visual arts underwent movements of similar thought and feeling at the same time, so that there is a distinct rapport between the two at any point of time. French painting and literature, and even, to a lesser extent, music follow distinctly parallel courses in the nineteenth century, so that blanket terms for artistic movements like 'Romanticism', 'Realism', and 'Impressionism', can take illustrations from two (or sometimes three) of the genuinely 'sister' arts. In England, by contrast, painting, although not architecture, had remained peculiarly static since the end of the eighteenth century. None of the three main categories in which English painting had a claim to greatness could progress smoothly into the nineteenth century. With the disruption of the class system in Victorian society the grand formal portrait could not survive. And for the other two kinds, as Basil Taylor says:

Satire, comedy and caricature were by the mid-century enfeebled, and now sharp observation of contemporary life could be found not in painting so much as illustration. Most of the strength and variety of English landscape painting, whether formal or intimate, had gone. Wilson, Gainsborough, Turner, Constable, Crome had no comparable successors between 1850 and 1880; picturesqueness and sentimentality widely prevailed in every treatment of the countryside and its way of life. ⁽³³⁾

33. Basil Taylor, Painting in England 1700-1850 (1967), p.45.

In the words of Holman Hunt, typical subjects for painting before 1850 were

'Monkeyana', frivolities, 'Books of Beauty', Chorister Boys, whose forms were those of melted wax with drapery of no tangible texture. (34)

It is not surprising then that when a new movement arose, moral earnestness should be one of its ideals, as a reaction against what it saw as intangible frivolities. Art for Intellect's sake was being replaced by Art for Morals' sake, which would, in its turn, be replaced in the late nineteenth century by Art for Art's sake. (35)

The way in which this moral earnestness could be given pictorial form was suggested by the first volume of Ruskin's Modern Painters, which was published in 1843. Ruskin proposed a higher role for painting; not only should it enjoy status equal to that of poetry, but it should be no less than the principle means of interpreting God's ways to men. The painter was to be a priest-figure, the intermediary. In keeping with its increased stature painting should also be more concerned with those subjects in which had, previously, plain writers' claims to large importance--in other words, with social and moral subjects. Ruskin was a very important influence on both the Pre-Raphaelite painters and Hopkins in this way, being

34. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 98.

35. To use the terms of John Steegman, op.cit., p.5.

a large source of the aesthetic and moral elements they shared, which made the Pre-Raphaelites literary painters and Hopkins a poet of visual phenomena. This dual influence of Ruskin will be discussed in more detail in later chapters. It is sufficient here to quote J.G. Millais, who relates that on Ruskin's first visit to a Royal Academy exhibition that contained Pre-Raphaelite paintings he pointed to works by Millais and Hunt and pronounced

I have great hope that they may become the foundation of a more earnest and able school of Art than we have seen for centuries. (36)

Moral earnestness is far more noticeable as a common quality in the early works of Pre-Raphaelite painters than it is in later ones; and there is a plain connection after 1853 between the separation of the individual members of the group onto their own different paths and the deviation of Rossetti and Millais away from Hunt's emphasis on moral subjects. If we wish to document the moral earnestness of the Pre-Raphaelite painters it is to the early documents and to Hunt that we must go, therefore. The Germ was published at a time when the Pre-Raphaelites were being attacked for their innovations, and when therefore a public statement of aims would be both appropriate and useful; and as the journal was essentially an attempt to fuse the pictorial with the literary arts, we might, in 1850, have expected some excursions into social

36. John Guille Millais, The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais (1899) i 112.

or moral criticism. The principles that are mentioned there, however, are primarily aesthetic, and we do not find in any of the four issues of The Germ the moral aims of the group officially stated. The reason for this is that it was D.G. Rossetti (not an emphatic moralist like Hunt) who first suggested that the Pre-Raphaelites produce their own journal, and the Rossetti family who were its main contributors (well over half the total number of contributions are from Gabriel, Christina, and William Michael). Holman Hunt seems to have been given, or to have chosen, a subordinate role, although he was one of the group of four enthusiasts who first planned the journal. Although his etchings (particularly his two illustrations to Woolner's poems 'My Beautiful Lady' and 'Of My Lady in Death', at the start of the first issue) are probably the best in The Germ, he did not publish any literary contribution.

Although the preliminary list drawn up of suggested titles for the journal included some of biblical origin ('The Advent', 'The Sower') and books on evangelical religion featured prominently on the list of its publishers, Aylott and Jones,⁽³⁷⁾ the only whole-hearted and extended explicit proselytising was on behalf of the general aesthetic aim that Art should entirely adhere 'to the simplicity of Nature'. On the cover appeared a sonnet by William Rossetti which was meant to 'express the spirit in which

37. G.H. Fleming, Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (1967), pp.119-20.

the publication was undertaken'. This spirit is less clearly expressed in the poem than in its author's prose explanation which gives the artistic principle (by 'artistic' he refers, significantly, to both painting and writing) of 'individual genuineness in the thought, reproductive genuineness in the presentment'.⁽³⁸⁾ A long essay by John Tupper, the son of the journal's printer, on 'The Subject in Art', adds the idea that a contemporary subject is probably at least as valuable to a work of art as one taken from the past. This may be of some potential moral import, but the writer does not elaborate his thesis. Ruskinian aesthetic ethics, however, are briefly touched upon in F.G. Stephens's essay, 'The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art',⁽³⁹⁾ which preaches against 'sensuality' and 'voluptuousness', which cause art to degenerate; and John Orchard's dialogue between the artist Christian, the worldly man Kosmon, and the aesthete Kalon, connects the 'natural', or, as he calls it, the 'exact and simple', with art, which is 'mature and wholesome in the same degree that it is tasteful, a perfect round of beautiful, pure and good'. Notice here the naming of the artist 'Christian', and the ethical emphasis of 'wholesome' and 'good', which is confirmed when Stephens, in the last number of The Germ, praises the 'deep earnest and noble thinkers,

38. W.M. Rossetti, Preface to facsimile of The Germ (1901), p.15.

39. The Germ, no.2 (1850), p.58.

like angels' (that is, ethically pure beings). Despite these contributions the emphasis in The Germ was not mainly moral, but, showing D.G. Rossetti's controlling influence, vaguely and amorally medieval--Thomas Dixon, a Sunderland cork-cutter who wrote a letter of appreciation to William Rossetti, said:

for these pictures and essays & c., being so realistic, yet produce on the mind such a vague and dreamy sensation, approaching as it were the Mystic Land of a Bygone Age. (40)

Another, and more prolific, source of early Pre-Raphaelite information is the P.R.B. Journal, which was kept by William Rossetti, the Brotherhood's secretary. This is useful for its account of the Brethren's activities but, in keeping with William's important but minor-key and self-effacing role in the movement's history, it only rarely and incidentally attempts to theorise.

Turning to the personal documents and memoirs of individual Brothers, we should remember that these reflect one man's views rather than those of the body. Hunt's two volumes⁽⁴¹⁾ have the additional disadvantages of having been written fifty years after the event, and with the purpose of correcting previously published impressions of Gabriel Rossetti's role and importance in Pre-Raphaelite painting. They are, however, the fullest account of the ideas of the movement, and abound with statements of its aims as Holman Hunt saw them, more often than not expressed in moral terms. Many of

40. Letter of 10 January 1859, quoted in W.M. Rossetti (ed.), Ruskin: Rossetti: PreRaphaelitism (1899), p.221.

41. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit.

his 'we's', however, refer ostensibly to him and Millais only, and actually on occasion, one more than suspects, to Hunt alone, with the then-dead Millais, or even the longer-dead father of Millais, cited as authority to support him.

Holman Hunt's reaction to the painting current in his youth is expressed mainly in moral terms. Significantly, in view of the indignant chauvinism displayed in many different aspects throughout the two volumes, his strongest objection is to the subjects of foreign art:

for the unexpected charm of ecstatic innocent love we looked [in the Louvre] almost in vain. There was nothing to make intelligible the axiom that 'art is love'. The startling antithesis was proclaimed that art is hatred, war, lust, pride, and egoism. (42)

By stating here that the antithesis of 'love' is 'hatred, war, lust, pride, and egoism', Hunt shows that he is using 'love' with its generalised, New Testament, Christian meaning. Similarly, much literature, both English and European, was noticeably immoral in subject-matter:

in looking over the [French book-] stall I saw Monsieur de Camors which a lady in Florence had praised as a book exempt from some strictures I had expressed on French novels in general, a book in fact which she had selected for a nephew. In half an hour's reading of this book I had grown astonished at the lady's judgment, for although I had not met with a coarse word, it overflowed with pernicious sentimentalism and revolting immorality. (43)

42. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 129.

43. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., ii 202.

We can note here that both the lady in Florence and Hunt assume that a book is chosen for moral, not aesthetic, reasons. When Hunt visited Oxford he was similarly shocked to see that the older generation there still selected literature for the wrong reasons:

The fashion for making robbers, regicides, corsairs, and betrayers of homes and innocence, into heroes of romance, which Byron, Schiller, Goethe, and Shelley had followed, still captivated the elder world.⁽⁴⁴⁾

At Oxford Hunt was, according to his own estimation, 'at the very centre of the High Church party'.⁽⁴⁵⁾ He summed up what he was against in current literature with the phrase 'bombastic heroism',⁽⁴⁶⁾ -- by 'bombastic' he means here self-flaunting and not based on moral principles. It is noticeable that popular painting and literature are condemned for similar moral reasons, and that Hunt sees the objectives of the two art-forms in similar terms, and the paths along which they should progress as parallel ones. His main battle, though, was against current English painting. It was one of his objects, he said,

to lead artists to recognise the necessity of sitting in judgment on the fashion of the day, throwing away that which is wanting in health and high purpose.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Art had become 'puerile and doting'.⁽⁴⁸⁾ It had become the custom

44. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 238.
 45. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 237.
 46. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 238.
 47. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., ii 360.
 48. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., ii 376.

in his day to

flaunt trivial fancies into dainty form, cherished by idle patrons as the choicest examples of taste . . . [and for artists to] lounge about from studio to studio and confer about the things that 'go off' best, or to report the highest sum given in Paris for an approved piece of manipulation, executed to suit the whim of a star of the demi-monde. (49)

We can note here that Hunt's criticism is not primarily of the paintings but of the moral and social habits of the artists and their patrons--'idle patrons', 'lounge', 'star of the demi-monde'. Art must no longer be held 'a light and irresponsible pursuit'. (50)

Too large a proportion of his contemporaries

still looked askance upon Art as an untrustworthy exponent of moral ideas, remarking that taste for it had ever been the precursor of a nation's decline . . . The statement that sublime truths could be brought to mind by Artists . . . would have been denounced as absurd. (51)

But there is the example of the artists of old [that is, those before Raphael] who

continuously worked with the desire to satisfy the longing for the larger and nobler instincts of man, obedience to which is morality. (52)

What purpose should Art then have, and what function the Artist?

49. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i xiv.

50. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i xi.

51. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 119.

52. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., ii 375.

The purpose of Arts is, love of guileless Beauty, leading men to distinguish between that which being pure in spirit, is productive of Virtue, and that which being flaunting and meretricious is productive of ruin to a Nation. (53)

This statement is a typical product of Hunt's moralistic approach to art, and yet it gives us an insight into how he was able to ally himself with those Pre-Raphaelites whose approach was primarily an aesthetic one. By 'guileless' he means, of course, what other Pre-Raphaelites called 'Natural', and yet he has used a term with ethical implications. Elsewhere Hunt elaborates on 'guileless Beauty' to show how it includes both inanimate and human nature:

art should interpret to men how much more beautiful the world is, not only in every natural form, but in every pure principle of human life, than they could without her aid deem it to be.

It should show them order in creation, wisdom in evolution, and sublime influence and purpose. (54) These passages bring to mind the Wordsworth of The Prelude. Perhaps it seemed to Holman Hunt that the Pre-Raphaelites should renovate painting in the same way that Wordsworth had attempted to raise the purpose and status of poetry.

As Coventry Patmore once said,

Holman-Hunt was heroically simple and constant in his purpose of primarily serving religion by his Art. (55)

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53. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., ii 379.
54. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., ii 376.
55. Patmore quoted in W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 206.

Hunt once wrote to Millais:

I hope we may devise some means of serving God together.
I am in gloom sometimes as to the capacity of Art. (56)

Significantly Hunt sees the artist as a priest:

As priests we are bound to remove all veils from vice and preach that virtue alone in [sic, for 'is'] imperishable, so the true limner has to show the hideousness and deadliness of sham fascination by proving the everlasting dignity of the natural proportion of the human form . . . The office of the artist should be looked upon as a priest's service in the temple of Nature, where ampler graces are revealed to those that have eyes to see, just as ever gentler chords announce the fuller life to those that have ears to hear, while declared Law opens up wide regions unordered and anarchic, where selfish greed has yet to be tutored into wise rule. In the circle of the initiated, responsive beings recognise the elimination of immature design in creation to be a triumph of patient endeavour, and they join in the chorus of those 'who sang together for joy' on the attainment of the ideal of Heaven's Artist, who in overflowing bounty endowed the colourless world with prismatic radiance, prophesying of Titians yet to be who should go forth to charm away scales from the eyes of the blind. (57)

By such means the artist could fulfill his patriotic duty:

To whom but the artist is relegated [sic, for 'delegated?'] the task of giving a tangible and worthy image of the national body and mind? who else may select and uphold the visible sign of that beauty in his face which is most heroic physically and mentally? (58)

To Hunt, as they were to Hopkins, duty to God and to one's country were often not noticeably distinct. After all, if one believed, as they both did fervently, that one's country was the morally best

56. J.G. Millais, op.cit., i 235.

57. and 58. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i xiv.

one in the world, it would be only Christian to try and improve the world by advertising one's own country's moral qualities.

Hopkins similarly often forces a connection between his religion and his native-country, so that his moral earnestness sometimes appears in his work narrowly applied to patriotism.

In a letter to Bridges, Hopkins wrote:

We [all true poets] must then try to be known, aim at it, take means to it . . . Besides we are Englishmen. A great [artistic] work by an Englishman is like a great battle won by England . . . It will even be admired by and praised by and do good to those who hate England. (59)

In June 1886 Hopkins wrote to Patmore:

Your poems are a good deed done for the Catholic Church and another for England, for the British Empire, which now trembles in the balance held in the hand [i.e., Gladstone's] of unwisdom. (60)

Non-aesthetic morality in art, then, could narrow in both Hunt and Hopkins to the sectarianism of patriotism, and with Hopkins, as the last extract shows, also to that of Roman Catholicism. There is more than a hint of this in a letter to Bridges in which he praises the composer Weber:

In personal preference and fellow feeling I like him of all musicians best after Purcell . . . I shd. like to read his life. He was a good man, I believe, with no hateful affectation of playing the fool and behaving like a blackguard. (61)

59. Letters i 231.

60. Letters iii 366-7.

61. Letters i 98-9.

Here Hopkins has mixed up artistic value, personal morals, and sectarian fellowship, for Weber, according to Abbott, 'though his life was not impeccable, was a conscientious Roman Catholic'.⁽⁶²⁾

Patriotism was of course a high moral virtue to most Victorians, but sometimes neither Hopkins nor Hunt could distinguish between a kind of artistic jingoistic imperialism and a more evangelistic role. Hunt wrote, for instance, that:

Millais and I had thought at first of husbanding only our own fields, but the outspoken zeal of our companions raised the prospect of winning waste lands and of gaining for English Art a new realm from the wilds, such as should be worthy of the Race . . . the eternal test of good art is the influence it is calculated to have on the world, and, when actuated by patriotism, all propagandists will consider first the influence of their teaching upon their own nation. What the people are led to admire, that they will infallibly become.⁽⁶³⁾

The narrower chauvinistic roots of this moral and artistic patriotism sometimes showed themselves, however, in Hunt's writing:

. . . in these days men of British blood, whether of insular birth, or of the homes beyond the seas, should not subject themselves to the influence of masters alien to the sentiments and principles of the great English thinkers and poets . . . there is the greater reason for regarding the foreign training as pernicious and to be shunned by students of the race to which Chaucer, Shakespeare,⁽⁶⁴⁾ Milton, and the great fathers of our own art belonged.

Here again is demonstrated that English art to Hunt is essentially

62. Letters i 98fn.

63. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 96 and ii 372.

64. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i xii.

literary--'Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton' are the gods here, and 'the great fathers of our own art' (i.e., painting) follow somewhat vaguely after. Aesthetic and narrow moral standards are hopelessly mixed in Hunt and at times could lead to odd conclusions such as

Had China accepted the teaching of Greek art [as England did] the nation would have been incapable of hideously laming its women, (65)

or to the principle that a casual liking for a great work of art should be replaced by 'a patriotic enthusiasm' for it. (66)

Hunt's moralising is far closer to Hopkins's than is any other Pre-Raphaelite's, and is sustained, as Hopkins's was, throughout his mature life. There is a distinct change of tone when we turn from Hunt's earnestness to Millais' or Rossetti's. One of Hunt's main ostensible reasons for disapproving of Rossetti's paintings in his autobiography is his lack of earnestness, which, according to Hunt, gave the P.R.B. a bad reputation. Sometimes this lack showed in personal habits; to Ruskin, for instance, 'P.R.B.', when referring to Rossetti, meant not 'carefulness' but 'casualness':

But can you dine with us on Thursday at 6? (and not be too P.R.B. as Stanfield is coming too!

and

The carriage will be at your door at half-past twelve, whichever day you choose; so mind you get up in time. (67)

65. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i xiv.

66. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 96.

67. Letters of Ruskin to D.G. Rossetti in 1854 and 1855; in W.M. Rossetti (ed.), Ruskin: Rossetti: Praeraphaelitism (1899), pp.32 and 94.

And William Rossetti, himself the most sober and objective of the P.R.B., quotes a letter to himself from J.F. M'Lennan:

I am very glad that Dante is at work; long may he be so, and all success to his labours . . . Hasn't he been prevailed on to exhibit? 'Twill do him endless good. It isn't enough to live for one's self or art alone, neither is oneself nor art the better of such devotion [*sic*]. I used to fear for Gabriel, with his lying on his ⁽⁶⁸⁾back tossing his legs in the air and Mon-Dieu-ing.

This picture suggests that D.G. Rossetti was a Romantic rather than a realist, and we find that he was keener on the self-indulgent mystical, aesthetic aspects of religion rather than on Hunt's morally earnest emphasis. Both Hunt and Ruskin were critical of his lack of practical earnestness. Ruskin, despite, or rather because of, his patronage of Gabriel, often wrote disapproving letters to him:

I have read [the poem] Jenny, and nearly all the other poems, with great care and with great admiration. In many of the highest qualities they are entirely great. But I should be sorry if you laid them before the public entirely in their present state.

I do not think Jenny would be understood but by few, and even of those few the majority would be offended by the mode of treatment. The character of the speaker himself is too doubtful. He seems, even to me, anomalous. He reasons and feels entirely like a wise and just man--yet is occasionally drunk and brutal: no affection for the girl shows itself--his throwing the money into her hair is disorderly--he is altogether a disorderly person. The right feeling is unnatural in him, and does not therefore truly touch us. I don't mean that an entirely right-minded person never keeps a mistress: but, if he does, he either

68. W.M. Rossetti (ed.), Ruskin, Rossetti, Praeraphaelitism (1899), p.130; letter of 13 March 1856.

loves her--or, not loving her, would blame himself, and be horror-struck for himself no less than for her, in such a moralizing fit.⁽⁶⁹⁾

This judgement of Ruskin's is of the moral of the poem, not of its artistic worth, although Ruskin here makes it clear that moral value, if not the same as aesthetic is at least a large part of the criteria for judging the poem. Hunt similarly disapproves of Gabriel's lack of earnestness and attributes it to medievalism and, particularly, to Ford Madox Brown's influence. In this extract (part of which we have already glanced at in Chapter One) he interestingly says this under the guise of letting Millais' father say it:

Rossetti's picture of 'The Annunciation', whatever critics may say, is undoubtedly very dainty and chaste, but the principle he carries out is not Pre-Raphaelitism as you and Jack started it. His is church traditional work, gilt aureoles and the conventionalities of early priesthood, which we did away with at the Reformation. Jack has treated his 'Holy Family' in a strictly natural manner, and you have painted your 'Early Missionary' so, and when the subject was historical that was what, as I understood, you originally intended to do . . . I [Hunt] replied that his [Rossetti's] medievalism certainly needed explanation, but this I found in the fact that the 'Annunciation' design was a sequence to his last picture which he had made before coming under our special influence--when, in fact, he was inspired by Brown in his Overbeckian phase--and that I had agreed to the choice of this composition for his essay in painting under me as an experiment.⁽⁷⁰⁾

Hunt justifies his prejudice against Rossetti's medievalism in social and moral terms:

69. W.M. Rossetti (ed.), Ruskin, Rossetti, Praeraphaelitism (1899), pp.233-4.

70. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 156.

Modern scientific discoveries had no charm for him; neither had the changed conditions of the people who were to be touched by Art any claim for special consideration; for when men were different from the cultured of mediaeval days they were not poetic in his eyes.

I have no intention of criticising this philosophy. It was inherent in him; the character of the literature he had most dwelt upon had fostered it, and Brown's recent indulgence in quaint mediaevalism had confirmed the predilection. (71)

Hunt here lays his finger on the impractical, romantic, self-absorbed aspects of Rossetti, which together with Brown's bad influence account for his 'quaint' (unnatural) medievalism, and the 'ecclesiastical strain' (as he called it at another time) (72) in his work, but does not, for personal reasons, acknowledge the obvious straightforward seriousness and piety of Rossetti's two major P.R.B. paintings.

By these words 'quaint' and 'ecclesiastical' Hunt is separating his own kind of earnestness from Rossetti's. The only painting of Rossetti's he thoroughly approved of was, significantly, 'Found'--

Rossetti's early designs were pronouncedly religious, and his picture of 'Found' was, in the just sense, intrinsically so. (73)

That is to say that it was 'religious', as opposed to 'ecclesiastical'.

Rossetti's religion is in fact an aspect of his romanticism, and arose from a mixture of his temperament and his love of ornate ritual--he used to accompany his devout High-Anglican mother and

71. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 104.

72. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 117.

73. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., ii 362.

sisters to church. He recognised this fact himself; in his Germ prose tale 'Hand and Soul' he relates of the hero, modelled on himself, that

much of that reverence which he had mistaken for faith had been no more than the worship of beauty.

The slight changes in the wording of contemporary Athenaeum criticisms of his paintings are significant. In 1849, of 'The Girlhood of Mary Virgin', when it was first exhibited at the Hyde Park Gallery, the criticism read:

The sincerity and earnestness of the picture remind us forcibly of the feeling with which the early Florentine monastic painters wrought.

But the Athenaeum for 11 July 1857 says of Rossetti:

his designs in this exhibition are mystic ones, full of thought and imagination.

'Earnestness' and 'picture' are in the first criticism, but 'design' and 'mystic' are prominent in the second. Religious pictures are not prominent in his work after the hostile reception of 'Ecce Ancilla Domini' in 1850, and after he was free of close contact with the P.R.B. During the 1850's he executed a number of drawings and water-colours on religious subjects, but his lack of radical interest in them can be shown by the facts that many of his depictions of incidents in the life of the Virgin Mary, as the 1973 Rossetti Exhibition Catalogue says, 'had been conceived at the time of his first religious pictures in the late 1840's', and he was also able to express his interest 'in romantic lovers and fallen women in

the subjects of "Ruth and Boaz" and "Mary Magdalene";⁽⁷⁴⁾ and, I should add, Elizabeth Siddal's face appears more than once in the guise of a biblical character.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Millais' earnestness is also of a very different quality to Hunt's. It is a much less intrinsic and permanent part of his character than it is of Hunt's, and there are few signs of it outside the paintings we have discussed in Chapter One. The main source outside his paintings for discovering Millais' opinions is The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais written by his son, John Guille Millais, who seems, from the book's first usage of the word 'earnest', to have inherited some of his father's lightweight skittish qualities:

It was a jolly bachelor party that now assembled in the farm-house--Holman Hunt, Charlie Collins, William and John Millais--all determined to work in earnest.⁽⁷⁶⁾

The operative word here is 'jolly', and 'determined to work in earnest' suggests that their earnestness was a matter of an occasional fashionable display of will-power rather than a permanent characteristic. These memoirs have almost nothing to say about the principles, moral or aesthetic, of Pre-Raphaelitism apart from what is quoted from Holman Hunt's autobiography, which is used extensively.

74. Rossetti Exhibition (1973) Catalogue, p.37.

75. For example, she is the Virgin in 'The Annunciation', Rossetti Exhibition (1973), no.106.

76. J.G. Millais, op.cit., i 116.

There is, however, one significant, and apparently verbatim, quote of J.E. Millais'. The purpose of this is to support Holman Hunt's view that Gabriel Rossetti was never a true Pre-Raphaelite and was opposed to Millais' and Hunt's views, but it does show Millais' simplistic idea of the Pre-Raphaelite painters' aim:

His [D.G.R.'s] aims and ideals in art were also widely different from ours, and it was not long before he drifted away from us to follow his own peculiar fancies. What they were may be seen from his subsequent works. They were highly imaginative and original, and not without elements of beauty, but they were not Nature. At last, when he presented for our admiration the young women which have since become the type of Rossettianism, the public opened their eyes in amazement. 'And this', they said, 'is Pre-Raphaelitism!' It was nothing of the sort. The Pre-Raphaelites had but one idea--to present on canvas what they saw in Nature; and such productions as these were absolutely foreign to the spirit of their work. (77)

As we have seen, Millais is here taking no account of Hunt's emphasis on a very different kind of morality in art. J.G. Millais also quotes with approval from an article in The Artist which elaborates with insight his father's view of art:

He had a hand that, even in childhood, was singularly skilful to record the impressions of the eye . . . How came this straightforward depicter of what he saw before him to link himself with idealists [i.e., Hunt] and dreamers of dreams [i.e., D.G. Rossetti]? It was probably the earnestness and the devotion to the nature [sic] of the movement that attracted the youthful Millais, and also the scope that its conscientious minuteness of finish afforded him for the display of his even then astonishing technical powers. (78)

77. J.G. Millais, op.cit., i 55.

78. J.G. Millais, op.cit., i 56-8.

Stated in less polite terms this means that Millais used the Brotherhood as a convenient peg upon which to hang his hat temporarily. It makes the important point, which Millais' later work supports, that it was not the principles behind the Pre-Raphaelite theories of art that mattered to him, but the practice; and that Millais, rather than modifying or ordering what he depicted according to a principle, was a 'straightforward depicter of what he saw before him'. The theory of devotion to Nature happened to suit the skilled recorder because it gave his work a higher status, the status of a moral principle, at a time when people expected that of art. It had an honoured place in artistic tradition as the rallying cry of new movements, and was sufficiently indefinite for all the members of the P.R.B. to agree with, however much they disagreed with each other.

Holman Hunt was being kind, but not strictly honest (although behind his phrase 'childish faith' there lurks the meaning 'merely perfunctory acceptance'), when he said:

One scarcely expressed purpose in our Reform, left unsaid by reason of its fundamental necessity, was to make Art a handmaid in the cause of justice and truth. Millais in childish faith wrought out his fancies in this spirit. (79)

Hunt later admitted 'Millais' occasional occupation upon unworthy themes'. (80) Perhaps the best summary of Millais' artistic principles is given, or perhaps given away, by his son in a discussion, or rather

79. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 118.

80. W. Holman-Hunt; op.cit., ii 330.

a denial, of Ruskin's influence on Pre-Raphaelite aims:

At the Academy one of Mr. Ruskin's admirers lent Hunt a copy of Modern Painters, and Hunt read it with enthusiasm, as partially embodying his own preconceived ideal of art. Millais, however, when asked to read the work, resolutely refused to do so, saying he had his own ideas, and, convinced of their absolute soundness, he should carry them out regardless of what any man might say. He would look neither to the right nor to the left, but pursue unflinchingly the course he had marked out for himself. And so he did. ⁽⁸¹⁾

This practical policy seems much more typical of Millais' work after 1853 than (as Hunt described it)

the sacred earnestness and the high aspiration with which he had designed and painted his picture of 'Christ in the House of His Parents'. ⁽⁸²⁾

But during his Pre-Raphaelite period, which probably ended, as Christina Rossetti wrote in her poem 'The P.R.B. is in its decadence', in 1853 when he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, and occasionally afterwards, he could sometimes bring a truly P.R.B. earnestness into his attitudes towards and methods of work. Ford Madox Brown described in his diary, for instance, a

conversation between Seddon, Millais, and Collins, highly moral and religious; they of opinion that no really good man is ever unsuccessful in life . . . Millais citing as instances two examples to the contrary of irreligious men going to the dogs. ⁽⁸³⁾

Although there is something here of a capitalist ethic, it is very much the kind of subject found in 'The Awakening Conscience' or 'Found'

81. J.G. Millais, op.cit., i 58.

82. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 153.

83. In Rossetti Exhibition (1973) Catalogue, p.34.

or Brown's 'Work'. Often works of art which do not seem to us today to have moral import were considered, either by Millais himself or by contemporary audiences, as being more than just story-telling.

J.G. Millais considered 'Lorenzo and Isabella' to be 'the fruit of long and earnest conviction'.⁽⁸⁴⁾ Hunt admitted that Millais

but rarely painted so-called religious subjects, but he loved to illustrate what may justly be looked upon as sacred themes. The story of Lorenzo and Isabella, considered on moral grounds, is thoroughly healthy and sound in its claim to human sympathy and interest; their affections were obnoxious to no righteous judgment, but only inimical to greed and vanity. In his picture 'L'Enfant du Regiment', the child sleeping on the warrior's tomb, contrasted with surrounding violence and bloodshed, typifies the trustful peace which the building was originally intended to inspire. Although the work is not labelled religious, it may be regarded as a Christian homily. His 'Blind Girl', moreover, is a heartfelt appeal to commiseration. 'The Rescuing Fireman' provokes expansive recognition of the Divine in unpretending humanity.⁽⁸⁵⁾

Hunt's purpose in much of his two volumes, as I have said, is to denigrate D.G. Rossetti and to minimise the differences between himself and Millais. Thus here he is exaggerating Millais' earnestness-- 'sacred themes' just will not do to describe the subjects of the paintings which follow. He is going one stage further than Millais by adding to the story content of these paintings a religious moral one.

In a few of the extant accounts of Millais' painting processes, however, there is not just methodical earnestness, which was a constant (but not invariable) quality throughout his painting career,

84. J.G. Millais, op.cit., i 73.

85. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., ii 361-2.

but also a deeper moral feeling. For instance, he wrote in a letter to Mrs. Combe in 1851:

I shall endeavour in the picture I have in contemplation-- 'For as in the Days that were Before the Flood,' etc., etc.--to affect those who may look on it with the awful uncertainty of life and the necessity of always being prepared for death . . . all deaf to the prophecy of the Deluge which is swelling before their eyes--all but one figure in their midst, who, upright with closed eyes, prays for mercy for those around her, a patient example of belief standing with, but far from, them placidly awaiting God's will.

I hope, by this great contrast, to excite a reflection on the probable way in which sinners would meet the coming death--all on shore hurrying from height to height as the sea increases; the wretched self-congratulations of the batchelor who, having but himself to save, believes in the prospect of escape; the awful feelings of the husband who sees his wife and children looking in his face for support, and presently disappearing one by one in the pitiless flood as he miserably thinks of his folly in not having taught them to look to God for help in times of trouble; the rich man who, with his boat laden with wealth and provisions, sinks in sight of his fellow-creatures with their last curse on his head for his selfishness; the strong man's strength failing gradually as he clings to some fragment floating away on the waste of water; and other great sufferers miserably perishing in their sins . . .

One great encouragement to me is the certainty of its having this one advantage over a sermon, that it will be all at once put before the spectator without that trouble of realisation often lost in the effort of reading or listening. ⁽⁸⁶⁾

Hunt himself could scarcely have devised a more pointedly moral scenario; and it is quite incredible how Millais can imagine that all that movement and all those thoughts and feelings can be translated from words into paint. We can note especially 'sermon . . . without

86. J.G. Millais, op.cit., i 103-5.

that trouble . . . often lost in the effort of reading or listening'. The conception in pictorial form is a substitution in less intellectually demanding form for a sermon in words. Significantly, Millais never went further than the preliminary sketches for this painting, which he later intended to be called 'The Eve of the Deluge'.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Instead he showed at the R.A. a painting called 'The Return of the Dove to the Ark',⁽⁸⁸⁾ which is simply a portrait of two girls and a dove with hay on the ground and a blank dark background, and from which it is almost impossible to draw any lesson. This is one of the most striking examples of the gap between the artist's intentions, formed in words in his mind, and the executed work--the gap made inevitable by the precedence of moral over aesthetic criteria in Victorian art.

Another kind of morality which Millais showed in his painting on occasion we might term aesthetic piety, despite the fact that he was not ardently religious. Lady (Effie) Millais described how she and her husband thought about and prepared themselves for the painting 'The Vale of Rest':⁽⁸⁹⁾

We imagined to ourselves the beauty of the picturesque features of the Roman Catholic religion, and transported ourselves, in idea, back to the times before the Reformation had torn down, with bigoted zeal, all that was beautiful

87. Millais Exhibition (1967), no.s 257-62. The Victorian artist who did achieve a painting based on this kind of scenario was John (or 'Mad') Martin, who although possessing something approaching the strength of Van Gogh's temperament was imaginatively inadequate to transfer his feelings into paint. See 'The Great Day of his Wrath', Tate Gallery.

88. Millais Exhibition (1967), no.32.

89. Millais Exhibition (1967), no.57.

from antiquity, or sacred from the piety or remorse of the founders of old ecclesiastical buildings in this country. The abbots boated and fished in the lock, the vesper bell pealed forth the 'Ave Maria' at sundown, and the organ notes of the Virgin's hymn were carried by the water and transformed into a sweeter melody, caught upon the hillside and dying away in the blue air. We pictured, too, white-robed nuns in boats, singing on the water in the quiet summer evenings and chanting holy songs, (90) inspired by the loveliness of the world around them.

The painting itself does not differ in many respects from the tone of this dreamy Romantic (the Millais' were High Anglicans) description, and despite its bad initial reception at the Royal Academy, was praised by Millais' friend Lloyd, who wrote:

Some, too, agree with me that it is not only your greatest work, but that it by far excels in truthfulness, in rendering, and in nobleness of conception any picture exhibited within my recollection on the Royal Academy walls by any other artist . . . the gradual liberation of the public mind from conventional rules will bring thousands more to the shrine hallowed by yourself and those of your brother artists who boldly and conscientiously pursue the path of truth. (91)

A friend of Millais' who was undoubtedly much more pious in his personal life than he was Charles Collins, Wilkie Collins's brother. His particular kind of abstemious personal piety was so uncommon and foreign to the early Pre-Raphaelites that there is always a comic note brought in when he is mentioned in Pre-Raphaelite literature:

Blackberry pudding was hugely in favour with Millais, and on one occasion he ridiculed Charlie Collins for refusing the dainty dish, taking the despised portion in addition to his own, so that the pudding when it returned to the

90. J.G. Millais, op.cit., i 329; a similar lack of sectarian involvement is shown in 'The Huguenot', but there an incident of religious significance in itself has been chosen only for its sentimental opportunities.

91. J.G. Millais, op.cit., i 345.

kitchen bore no trace of want of appreciation. On our return to the sitting-room he bantered our abstemious friend on his self-denial, saying, 'You know you like blackberry pudding as much as I do, and it is this preposterous rule of supererogation which you have adopted in your high-churchism which made you go without it. I have no doubt you will think it necessary to have a scourge and take the discipline for having had any dinner at all'.⁽⁹²⁾

If a comparison is made between 'A Vale of Rest' and Collins's 'Convent Thoughts' this attitude of Millais' seems quite justifiable; Collins's pious, personal life does not seem to have had much good effect on his painting, which seems peculiarly shallow compared with Millais'. We can readily believe Millais' explanation of the origin of 'Convent Thoughts':

In some ways . . . the good fellow has the unflinching resolve of the conductor of a storming party. When he left Oxford he got hipped about a fancied love affair, and becoming a High Churchman, changed the subject of his picture from being an illustration of the lady in Shelley's Sensitive Plant--

'Who out of the cups of the heavy flowers
Emptied the rain of the thunder showers',
to a picture of a nun with a missal in her hand, studying the significance of the passion flower.⁽⁹³⁾

Collins, however, was essentially similar to Hunt and admired his moralistic approach:

You [Hunt] saw the peril of becoming one of those who faint by the way, and you were prepared to encounter obstacles; you put out all your strength to arrive at your goal. In doing this you were forced to tread new ground, and you acquired the habit of doing so.⁽⁹⁴⁾

92. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 207.

93. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 212; 'Convent Thoughts' is in the Ashmolean, Oxford.

94. Letter in W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i 215.

These words are about as meaningless as expression of thoughts as are Collins's paintings, but the desire to praise Hunt's artistic modus operandi shows in them. And Millais, writing to Mrs. Combe, was still capable of putting Collins's piety where it essentially belonged--within the kind of moral framework Holman Hunt advocated for art, showing once again Millais' adaptable nature:

You are not mistaken in thus believing him [Collins] worthy of your kindest interests, for there are few so devotedly directed to the one thought of some day (through the medium of his art) turning the minds of men to good reflections and so heightening the profession as one of unworldly usefulness to mankind.

This is our great object in painting, for the thought of simply pleasing the senses would drive us to other pursuits requiring less of that unceasing attention so necessary to the completion of a perfect work. (95)

Millais, then, is an inconsistent chameleon, and seems to say what appears to be appropriate at the time--it is puzzling, for instance, to be told that in another letter to Mrs. Combe he wrote that 'The Huguenot', to which Hunt, typically, objected on the grounds of the subject's lack of significance, 'I think contains the highest moral'. (96)

A 'moral' was considered standard practice in pictorial art until much later in the nineteenth century, and, as Brown found with his Baa Lambs, spectators could be relied on to find a moral however superficially it was expressed. At successive annual Royal Academy banquets, in 1864 and 1865, the Archbishop of Canterbury was

95. J.G. Millais, op.cit., i 103.

96. Letter of 22 November 1851, in Millais Exhibition (1967) Catalogue, p.34.

a guest speaker, and exemplifies for us the platitudinous expectations, moral and aesthetic oddly jumbled, that a middle-class philistine of that day held. Part of his after-dinner speech reads:

Still, Art has, and ever will have, a high and noble mission to fulfill. That man, I think, is little to be envied who can pass through these rooms and go forth without being in some sense a better and a happier man; if at least it be so (as I do believe it to be) that we feel ourselves the better and the happier when our hearts are enlarged as we sympathize with the joys and the sorrows of our fellow-men, faithfully delineated on the canvas; when our spirits are touched by the playfulness, the innocence, the purity, and may I ⁽⁹⁷⁾ add [pointing to Millais' picture of 'My First Sermon'] the piety of childhood. ⁽⁹⁸⁾

In 1865 Millais cynically followed up the easy popular success of 'My First Sermon' with 'My Second Sermon', ⁽⁹⁹⁾ which probably marks the lowest point in aesthetic and moral standards that he attained (the Hanging Committee of the Royal Academy, not surprisingly, at first rejected it as a plagiarism of the former picture). The painting is simply of a small girl asleep on a chair, presumably in a church; and it is remarkable how Millais was so attuned to the expectations of the contemporary public and had so trained them that even this painting, which could far more easily be taken as a rather crude mixture of sentimentality and a knowing *fausse-naïveté*, was considered by the Archbishop, among many, to be 'moral':

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97. Millais Exhibition (1967), no.64.
 98. J.G. Millais, op.cit., i 378.
 99. Millais Exhibition (1967), no.65.

I would say for myself that I always desire to derive profit as well as pleasure from my visits to these rooms. On the present occasion I have learnt a very wholesome lesson, which may be usefully studied, not by myself alone, but by those of my right reverend brethren also who surround me. I see a little lady there (pointing to Mr. Millais' picture of a child asleep in church, entitled 'My Second Sermon'), who though all unconscious whom she has been addressing, and the homily she has been reading to us during the last three hours, has in truth, by the eloquence of her silent slumber, given us a warning of the evil of lengthy sermons and drowsy discourses. Sorry indeed should I be to disturb that sweet and peaceful slumber, but I beg that when she does awake she may be informed who they are who have pointed the moral of her story, have drawn the true inference from the change that has passed over her since she has heard her 'first sermon', and have resolved ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ to profit by the lecture she has thus delivered to them.

We can note that firstly, the Archbishop was regularly invited to speak at the Royal Academy function, a moral and spiritual authority at an artistic function, surrounded by his 'right reverend brethren'. And secondly, Millais' son thinks this speech valuable enough to include it in a biography of his artist father. Despite his arch tones I think that the Archbishop intends himself to be taken seriously: in both his speeches he concentrates in a similar way on moral values in art ('a high and noble mission to fulfill' and 'derive profit . . . a very wholesome lesson . . . usefully studied'; the italics in the second passage are Millais'). He is representative of the art-viewing public in this inevitable 'pointing the moral' and 'drawing the true inference' from a painting.

100. J.G. Millais, op.cit., i 379.

It seems a fitting place to leave this chapter on moral earnestness in Victorian art with the Archbishop of Canterbury as the after-dinner arbiter of artistic values. The most important criterion for judging a work of art has become, in Victorian England, moral earnestness, rather than^a specifically artistic quality. The approved kind of moral earnestness is a trite conventional conservative middle-brow one, which is no doubt suited to the purpose of keeping people's minds comfortable at a time of unprecedented social, political, and philosophical upheaval; but when it is demanded by society as a precondition of its artistic output, it can have the effect of stifling genuine artistic impulses and producing banality. In its most exaggerated form, this imposition of its narrow values on its art by a society which is only precariously secure leads to the impotent conventional art produced in totalitarian states, at the expense of genuine self-expression.

Victorian moral earnestness of a wider, more generous, nature could help art by extending the range of an artist's human sympathies. George Eliot could sympathise with many different sides of her characters that would be quite foreign to Fielding in a less earnest age and with his more limited range of understanding. But moral earnestness of a narrower kind, particularly when it was motivated primarily by religion at a time when traditional basic religious tenets were being openly attacked, could clamp down against self-expression in art.

Both Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelite painters were so affected by

the moral earnestness of their time that their art was irreparably also affected, and, I believe, harmed. The minds of the Pre-Raphaelite painters, with the possible exception of Gabriel Rossetti's after 18⁵³~~59~~, were not of a sufficient artistic originality or depth to escape the imposition of those aspects of society's moral values which were harmful to art. Hopkins's artistic strength and originality fell a victim to a mixture of traditional and contemporary values-- those of the society around him combined with the rigid moral framework of his religious order which he wilfully imposed on himself.

In earlier ages an artist did not need to form so consciously a synthesis between what he observed and the lesson he drew. The synthesis was already there in the values of his society. The natural religious consciousness of Donne and Herbert could without strain form poems out of their religious feelings combined with the world outside their own minds. Caspar David Friedrich's and Samuel Palmer's early paintings--only a generation before the Pre-Raphaelites--both use landscapes to show the hand of God, and succeed in being both sufficiently realistic and visionary at the same time without strain. Hopkins's and his age's religion was a combination of old forms and the will-power to believe in them advocated and engendered in the Victorian impulse called moral earnestness. Religion was primarily a matter of intellectual belief, rather than a radical emotional one, so that so much Victorian literature and art, like Hopkins's (in a large degree) and the Pre-Raphaelite painters', has a disappointingly anticlimactic

cold finish after an enthusiastic demonstrative start.

I will examine the enthusiastic part, the detail, in the works of Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelite painters in Chapter Five, and in Chapters Three and Four I will explore two large component factors of their works which combined with moral earnestness to give them the characteristic form which I described in Chapter One.

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Chapter Three: Telling a Story

It is only rarely that poems by Hopkins and paintings by Pre-Raphaelites are satisfactorily unified: where the artist, while he is working on the details, does not get absorbed in them for their own sake, but is deeply and constantly aware of the part they are playing in the completed work of art; where the artist's overall vision is of primary importance and the details are subordinate but integrated steps towards building the total structure. It is far more common for the poet or painter to write or paint small areas of the work in succession, becoming over-absorbed in each in turn before moving on to the next piece, and eventually reaching a stage where he is forced to ask himself 'for what purpose?' At this stage the framework which he had decided upon somewhat vaguely before he started working with the basic material of words or paint has to be pushed forwards to the front of his mind from its place in the back recesses. This framework has provided no kind of constant unifying pressure urging the pieces together and forcing the artist to treat them as though they were a succession of paving-stones making up the path along which he is journeying.

This kind of superimposed framework, far from being unique, radical, and intrinsic to the artist, has been imposed on him by his acceptance of the social climate of his time which has to have art as a weapon on the side of earnest morality against moral

slackness, in the battle for Victorian minds. Hence the poet or artist is completely true to his artistic self only in small component parts of the work, not in its whole. He allows himself to indulge in art for art's sake in the details only for as long as he can still justify the whole work of art in moral terms. The framework of the poem or painting is what is important, or so he and society think, because its preconceived pattern stops the artist self-indulgently developing his single images into a framework of his own. Therefore his intensive study of the particular is stopped before it can develop into a significant non-moral general vision.

Imposing a framework on the poet or artist from without is thus a form of moral restraint in itself. It is a way of nullifying the ego, of stopping the exploratory empirical process necessary for artistic self-expression before it reaches conclusions which are too uncomfortable for Victorian minds which are to some degree aware that breaking-up processes surround them. Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelite painters thus show that they are as involved with the problem of how to combine within an artistic form individual perception and conventional general conclusions, as are other eminent Victorians. The problem of organising one's perceptions in an age whose intellectuals often saw the world as characterised by 'multitudinousness' (as Arnold perceived and called it), could either be avoided, as Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelites usually avoided it, by the process

we have been describing, of superimposing a conventional framework on individual perceptions, or it could be painfully and more honestly faced, as it was by more sophisticated Victorians. Two recent essays, Lionel Stevenson's 'The Relativity of Truth in Victorian Fiction',⁽¹⁾ and Michael G. Sundell's 'Spiritual Confusion and Artistic Form in Victorian Poetry',⁽²⁾ usefully list different techniques that Victorian writers used to cope with the problem. In fiction authoritative authorial statement was often replaced by a more ambiguous treatment of events. The subjectivity of facts was suggested by a more complex attitude of the author towards his characters and the events he described, and by comparative, rather than authoritative, points of view. Bleak House, for instance, is bifurcated so that it

nearly reduces fact to opinion by causing us to view the same world through lenses of opposed value.⁽³⁾

Professor Sundell points to the ambiguous organisation and conclusions of The Ring and the Book and Idylls of the King. Both works consist of multiple versions of essentially the same material. Browning closed The Ring and the Book

without making clear the final spiritual state of Guido and without divulging the nature and fate of Gaetano, Pompilia, and Guido's son, the 'child born of love and hate',

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1. Lionel Stevenson, 'The Relativity of Truth in Victorian Fiction', in Warren D. Anderson and Thomas D. Claeson (eds.), Victorian Essays: A Symposium (1967), pp.71-86.
 2. In The Victorian Newsletter no.39 (Spring 1971), pp.4-7.
 3. Michael G. Sundell, op.cit., p.5.

and in Idylls of the King, Tennyson,

apparently uncertain about the relation between verifiable fact and moral significance, leaves Arthur's origins obscure, even bringing into question his literal humanity. (4)

Neither Hopkins (largely because of his wilful subservience to his religion's and his order's demands) nor the Pre-Raphaelite painters (largely because of their intellectual and imaginative incapacity) were usually able to use that kind of artistic integrity which could leave uncertainty or multitudinousness as the overall final main feature of a work of art, even if it were arrived at by an honest, sensitive process. A conventional moral or uplifting conclusion of their age almost invariably provides the frame of reference for each of their works, with the self-indulgent parts of the work forced retrospectively into playing the part of the exemplum. Victorian moral earnestness usually provided the characteristic begetting impulse, tone, texture, and conclusion for the framework which Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelite painters superimposed on their aesthetic observations, but the form that the framework itself took was usually the common Victorian one of narrative--the recital of events ordered into the form of a story. In rather the same way as sentences or phrases from Holy Writ and acknowledged masters of literature were often wrenched out of their context by Victorians and applied as maxims to real-life

4. Michael G. Sundell, op.cit., p.5.

situations, and as authorities and models for people to live up to, so significant scenes from religious myth, scripture, literature, or history were also often taken by both Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelite painters as the framework into which they would fit their detailed observations. The scene was selected by virtue of some kind of moral or exemplary value in it which the artist thought could be usefully promulgated in artistic form. The disadvantage that was intrinsic to that scene by virtue of its distance from contemporary reality was considered outweighed by its appeal to the insatiable contemporary appetite for narrative. Like Aesop, Christ, and La Fontaine, they felt that they could combine high purpose with an exploitation of the enormous public taste for story-telling.

There was nothing new in this combination of moral purpose and narrative. In his Romantic Narrative Art Karl Kroeber distinguishes between two kinds of poetic story written by the Romantic authors around the beginning of the nineteenth century-- 'the imaginative, moralistic narrative', and 'the adventurous, realistic narrative', the first kind of which shows

the tendency of Blake, Coleridge, and Wordsworth to use brief poetic narrative as a means . . . for expressing their conception of moral experience as dynamic process. (5)

Novelists had, from Defoe onwards, protested the good moral effect

5. Karl Kroeber, Romantic Narrative Art (1960), p.189.

of their works. Richardson had recommended his as conduct-books,⁽⁶⁾ and in a chapter of The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800, which bristles with quotations which, with the addition of the word 'earnest', could have come from a chapter of The Victorian Frame of Mind, J.M.S. Tompkins has documented the essentially practical moral nature of the late eighteenth-century novel and the expectation of its public:

The church-going, sermon-reading middle classes liked a good plain moral at the end of a book . . . feeling that the performance was incomplete without it, and not over-fastidious as to its connection with what went before. Critics and novelists of the sterner breed scouted mere 'amusement' as waste of time: the business of the novel was to teach those who by nature and upbringing were unqualified for serious study.⁽⁷⁾

The Pre-Raphaelite painters were appealing to very much the same public fifty-odd years later, who liked a 'good plain moral', and were 'not over-fastidious as to its connection with what went before'-- which was, of course, a good story. This moral nature of the late eighteenth-century novel, Dr Tompkins continues, went hand in hand with the 'two chief facts' about it, which are 'its popularity as a form of entertainment and its inferiority as a form of art'.⁽⁸⁾

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6. In a letter of 3 October 1853, Ruskin wrote to his father:
Effie is reading Sir Charles Grandison and I can't help listening to it and Everett [Millais] is delighted with it, more than with any book I have yet seen him open--he says it is pure pre-Raphaelitism.
(Quoted by Mary Lutyens, Millais and the Ruskins [1967], p.94.)
 7. J.M.S. Tompkins, The Popular Novel in England: 1770-1800 (1961), p.71.
 8. J.M.S. Tompkins, op.cit., p.1.

Despite its moral nature and its popularity, the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century novel was limited, as Ian Watt says in his note on 'Realism and the Later Tradition', by its 'distinctively commercial, bourgeois, and urban' public to dealing with 'private and domestic life'.⁽⁹⁾ This voracious appetite for narrative became extended from the novel to painting in the same period, but its tyrannically limited range of subject-matter and treatment imposed severe restrictions on artists, who were continuously bedevilled by them until the very late nineteenth century.

The English artist who first saw how these narrative and moral elements could be transferred from the novel and combined in painting was, of course, Hogarth, who was on the list of the Pre-Raphaelites' 'Immortals'. Hogarth was much influenced by the French genre style of painting and engraving, adapting it to his own moralising ends, and combining French elegance with English earthiness.⁽¹⁰⁾ He established detailed treatment of social behaviour in painting, calling the results 'modern moral subjects' (a phrase afterwards applied by Pre-Raphaelites to certain paintings of theirs), as a genre in English art. As Basil Taylor says:

He was an intimate friend of Henry Fielding and his modern moral subjects were properly regarded as novels in paint. He composed the stories as a novelist or a dramatist would and their affinity with literary narrative

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9. Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel (1963), pp.312-13.
10. See [Elizabeth Einberg] The French Taste in English Painting during the first half of the 18th century (exhibition catalogue, 1968), particularly the Introduction and pp.16-17.

predicts the way in which later painters were to treat their material. The idea that painting and literature are closely linked was to persist. In taking subjects from Shakespeare, in turning to the theatre itself for his Beggar's Opera scenes and in his portrait of David Garrick as Richard III, he introduced types of painting which others were to employ later in the century. (11)

Hogarth is universally acknowledged to succeed in using a story-telling framework to teach a moral lesson in paint, whereas the Pre-Raphaelite painters are open to many objections and are largely unsuccessful. In order to find out more about the nature of the Pre-Raphaelite painters' failure, I will make a comparison with some of Hogarth's narrative paintings. The most noticeable difference is that Hogarth seems to know exactly what he is doing in every detail of his paintings. There is no detail which does not seem to be subordinated to the total effect. If outdoor nature is in the picture, such as the trees in 'The Polling' and 'Chairing the Member' ('An Election', episodes 3 and 4), (12) it is subordinated to the main subject, the human figures within their story, by lighting and distance--in 'The Polling' there is a tree in the left foreground which is in shadow, with the light coming from the horizon behind it and thus falling on the figures in the centre of the painting; while in 'Chairing the Member' trees are quite flat and placed in the background, as they are in a Claude painting

11. Basil Taylor, Painting in England: 1700-1850 (1967), p.4.

12. William Hogarth, 'An Election', series of four paintings in Sir John Soane's Museum, London.

or in stage scenery for a ballet, and thus subordinated to the jostling lively people who seem to cover the rest of the painting. No botany instructor would be so delighted with Hogarth details that he would peer at them and forget the rest of the painting of which they form but a part.

The background in Hogarth's paintings is not bathed in the sourceless full light which is common in Pre-Raphaelite painting, but with the full use of chiaroscuro effects it plays the true part of background, subordinated to the main subject-matter and often unobtrusively setting the scene for it--the remarkably suggestive background shade in 'The Prison' and 'The Madhouse' (episodes 7 and 8 of 'A Rake's Progress'),⁽¹³⁾ for instance, which plays an intrinsic part in the paintings and yet which lets the eye take in its rhetorical point without dwelling on it. In each of Hogarth's modern moral stories the emphasis is on the story, which is all-important. The characters fit in with the objects and the background without any trace of awkwardness. The characters are living in the circumstances they are pictured among--there is no suspicion that Tom Rakewell is really a neighbour of Hogarth's or that Sarah Young is a favourite model of the painter's whom he discovered serving behind a shop-counter, whereas in Pre-Raphaelite paintings we are never quite sure where the stage-world ends and

13. William Hogarth, 'A Rake's Progress', series of eight paintings in Sir John Soane's Museum, London.

real life begins. We are quite likely to be startled by seeing Millais' face in a painting of Hunt's, or Mrs. Gabriele Rossetti suddenly transported from Victorian Mornington Crescent to a Palestinian courtyard of two thousand years ago with a quick clothes-change, or ten portraits of Elizabeth Siddal in paintings of different subjects by different artists, or, most grotesquely, Christina Rossetti changed into a man and peering out of Christ's traditional iconic garb.⁽¹⁴⁾ In the same way Hogarth's heads do not hinder the subject as Pre-Raphaelites' often do, with their 'fashionable coyness'⁽¹⁵⁾ getting in the way of straightforward expression, and contributing to the 'common' quality of the heroes and heroines which Ruskin disliked so much.⁽¹⁶⁾ Similarly there is no sense of 'stage-props' about non-human objects in Hogarth's paintings as there is with the Pre-Raphaelites, of a shawl which attracted the attention of one of the P.R.B. as he was passing a milliner's, or a new carpenter's tool neatly positioned on a bench which invites attention by its detail and distinctness from

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14. Millais sat for the young knight Adrian in Hunt's 'Rienzi'; Mrs. Rossetti appears in 'The Girlhood of Mary Virgin' and other P.R.B. paintings; Miss Siddal, or 'Guggums', is in hundreds (literally) of Rossetti's works, Millais' 'Ophelia', Hunt's 'A Converted British Family sheltering a Christian Priest' and 'Valentine Rescuing Sylvia from Proteus', W.H. Deverell's 'Twelfth Night', and others; Christ's face in Hunt's 'The Light of the World' is modelled from Christina Rossetti's.
15. A phrase used by Kenneth Clark in The Nude (1970), p.151, to describe how the heads of Etty's nudes do not live up to their 'bodies of ageless health'.
16. See John Ruskin, Works (1903-12) xii 324.

its surroundings. At the heart of the failures of Pre-Raphaelite paintings as moral narratives lies this inability to concentrate on the painting as a whole--in too many ways the painter's fascination with detail breaks up the picture.

Above all, Hogarth has not read Ruskin. He is not trying to combine different principles--fidelity to the exact appearance of a tree-trunk or a man's face with telling a moral tale. With him the tale is everything. The characters in it are only individualised as far as they need to be to play their role in the story. We are not likely to dwell on Sarah Young's features because the model from whom she was painted was pretty. It was important to Hogarth that his skill should not be engaged in individual detail but should be reserved for making his effects swiftly and certainly. Consequently in his tales about individual people we can tell immediately from most of the characters' faces and postures what function they fulfil in the plot, because Hogarth employs caricature with deadly accuracy, in contrast to the awkward and uncertain gestures of people in Pre-Raphaelite paintings. The Pre-Raphaelites' morally motivated desire to paint from reality does not allow them to paint convincingly to a fictitious programmed plot, whose characters represent all sorts of qualities not present in the real-life model. And so the impression of reality they produce does not convince the onlooker because the artists have not realised that realism is a quality attained by aesthetic, not moral, means. Copying Miss Siddal from

life onto canvas will reproduce Miss Siddal on the canvas, not Ophelia, who could only be achieved by the aesthetic process of making many carefully thought out alterations to and adaptations of the model. Art is not life.

The Pre-Raphaelite painters had not realised that realism is not achieved by having virtuous feelings about it, but by sheer technical and imaginative virtuosity. Hogarth's technical skill in composition is more remarkable than that of the Pre-Raphaelites because he better calculates the effect his painting will have on the spectator. In the first episode of 'A Rake's Progress' ('The Heir'), for instance, the characters are so carefully arranged in the tableau that the spectator's eye is programmed, and is conducted over the canvas, paying just the right amount of attention to each point at the right time. The main character, Tom Rakewell, is positioned almost centrally so that he catches the spectator's attention first. He is not exactly in the centre because that is a too heroic position, and he is here foolish and paltry.⁽¹⁷⁾

The light emphasizes his playing of the main role as it is coming from a window to the left, which he is facing. Our eyes then follow his outstretched right arm and hand containing coins towards the source of light, and next meet Sarah's mother, whose left arm

17. There is only one character in the exact centre of any of the eight episodes of 'A Rake's Progress', and that is the ridiculously affected dancing-professor in 'The Levee', a marvellous example of the mock-heroic. See also footnote 18.

is connected to his gesture of offering the money by continuing the line towards the source of light--she is both rejecting his offer with this arm and also pointing our attention to Sarah at the left of the picture, standing right at the window, the source of light. These three are the principal characters, and the only ones in the full light and prominently displayed. The two subordinate figures of the tailor and the lawyer are both placed lower than Tom and less significantly, and we only see them secondarily. The chest of hoarded wealth and pile of papers have quite a prominent position in the light at Tom's feet and then from them the eye can go around the sides of the painting and pick up the less important details. This is a simple example of Hogarth's compositional skill. Other examples of different types can be pointed to. In 'The Orgy' (episode 3 of 'A Rake's Progress') Tom, although the character whose fortunes are being illustrated, is not immediately noticeable--our eyes first run over the whole scene at the Rose Tavern, because nearly all the characters are placed in a circle round a table, and then are attracted by the whore--the only character not in the circle--in the left foreground of the painting, who is in the most prominent and the strongest position in the painting, with the light on her and turned with her back to Tom, who is uneasily semi-recumbent. This grouping echoes Tom's situation--he has been overwhelmed by the atmosphere of the Tavern, and it is the whore who is in a commanding position, not he, who is incapable of

asserting himself. (18)

A contrasting compositional skill is used in 'An Election Entertainment' (the first episode of 'An Election'), where not only is no one figure much more prominent than another, but the entertainment is going on around tables, so that the eye cannot come to rest but moves on to the next character. There are purposely two tables, not fitting together, one rectangular and the other round, to add to the sense of lack of orderly shape which characterised the election entertainment. But there is nevertheless a continuous line of people. This kind of grouping and subject involves skills obviously learned from Breughel. In Hogarth's paintings there is an awareness of previous traditions absorbed and learned from; while with the Pre-Raphaelite painters there is nothing of the sort. Their youthful brash disregard of traditional technical skills they had only imperfectly absorbed cost them dear.

Hogarth's technical skills are all useful and subordinated to the moral purpose of his paintings. It is noticeable also that he knows exactly how much information he can put into one painting--his 'modern moral subject' of 'A Rake's Progress' tells Tom Rakewell's story in no less than eight tableaux, in comparison with Holman

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18. Another similar example of Hogarth's compositional skill occurs in the climactic painting of 'An Election', 'Chairing the Member', which has the Boobyish fat Member carried and elevated in the exact centre of the painting, with the sunlight full on him, in a recognisably heroic position; the fact that his chair is toppling over combines with his ungainly person to make the position a satiric one..

Hunt's 'The Awakening Conscience' which tries to do everything in one, and thus, by overcrowding the canvas, diverts our attention from the central unifying focus the painting needs--a common fault in Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Hogarth's straightforward moral purpose shows more clearly than Hunt's because the moral lesson he wishes to put over is explicit in the events he portrays, and comes over to the spectator with an attractive clarity, while in Hunt's painting, as in so many Pre-Raphaelite works,⁽¹⁹⁾ there are dark hints and nudges from the artist, rather than explicitness. This is an unhealthy 'in your heart you know he's right' kind of morality, rather than one of universally recognised, and therefore unselfconsciously and openly stated, standards. In Hunt's painting there is also a fragmentation of the moral lesson effected by the artist's insistent parallel sub-plots.

What caused this remarkable difference between the works of Hogarth and the Pre-Raphaelite painters in spite of their common occupation with moral story-telling? Apart from innate differences in quality of skill and imagination it is partly due to the direction taken by painting after Hogarth. Hogarth also painted scenes from ordinary life which did not have a moral emphasis, and from this aspect of his work there developed 'genre' paintings, which became increasingly popular in England at the end of the eighteenth

19. The prime example is W.L. Windus's 'Too Late', with its hints of consumption, accusation, guilt, and desertion. Even Millais, noticeably the gayest of the three main P.R.B. artists, produced a pen and sepia ink drawing 'Retribution' in this furtive genre (Millais Exhibition [1967], no.334; more explicitly called by J.G. Millais, op.cit., if 490, 'The man with two wives'.)

and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, with Wilkie, Mulready, and Haydon carrying on story-telling where Hogarth left off. But these painters and their followers substituted heaviness and less skilful placing of human figures learned from Dutch seventeenth-century painters for the lightness of touch and compositional skills Hogarth had learnt from the French, and replaced his clear-cut moral sentiments with more mawkish ones which accorded better with the tastes of the novel-reading public. As the sentiment became more superficial it became less intrinsically permeated into the characters and actions of human figures in the paintings, and the total unity consequently lessened. This tendency for separate parts to become isolated from each other within the painting was increased by the Dutch heaviness, which made each figure an individual solid block of bourgeois reality rather than a part of the total composition connected to the next figure by compositional skills, such as those of Hogarth which I have already described. It is this degenerate offshoot of Hogarth, not Hogarth himself, which largely contributed towards making Pre-Raphaelite paintings what they are. For despite their pretensions to novelty, the Pre-Raphaelite painters continued, rather than broke off, the line of English narrative painting. In the list of fifty-seven Immortals drawn up in their early and most outspoken days,⁽²⁰⁾ there are named only three painters

20. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., i lll.

from the previous hundred years, Hogarth, Wilkie, and Haydon,⁽²¹⁾ these last two both being painters of sentimental genre pictures. The artist most often at the opposite pole to genre painting, Turner, the artist who could have led them into aesthetically worthier and forward-looking paths (as he did the French), does not appear in the list, and was seldom mentioned in Pre-Raphaelite writings, despite Ruskin's championship of his reputation.⁽²²⁾ The Pre-Raphaelite painters not only inherited but kept the mawkish sentiment, Dutch heaviness, and separateness of individual figures, which are characteristics not just of their works but of Victorian painting in general.

Continuously throughout the nineteenth century the narrative mode predominated in painting. In the Royal Academy Exhibition of

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21. Benjamin Robert Haydon, the friend of Wordsworth and Keats and the most violent devotee of High Art, might trust for fame, at his exhibition at the Egyptian Hall in 1832, to Xenophon and the Ten Thousand, first viewing the Sea; for bread he trusted to The Sabbath Evening of a Christian and The First Start in Life, or Take Care, my Darling. (Geoffrey Grigson, 'English Painting from Blake to Byron', in Boris Ford [ed.], From Blake to Byron [1969], p.268.
22. Although the most remarkable artist of the period Turner only achieved reputation and worldly honour among his contemporaries by working as illustrator for publishers and by canvases which 'astutely blended . . . traits of history, sensationalism, sentiment, and piety' (Geoffrey Grigson, 'English Painting from Blake to Byron', p.270). His pure land- and seascapes were generally little known and regarded (Ruskin was an exceptional champion of these).

1863, for instance--ten years after Christina Rossetti had written that the P.R.B. were in their decadence--the critic of The Art Journal found when he wanted to discuss the paintings by group that he could divide them under five main headings, with animal, fruit and flower, sea and landscape painting bringing up the unimportant rear. The headings he chose, obviously in some kind of hierarchical order, were 'High Art: History--Sacred and Secular', 'Subjects Poetic and Imaginative', 'Portraits', 'Scenes Domestic--Grave and Gay', and 'Out-door Figures--Rude, Rustic and Refined'. In all these sections except the portraits the emphasis was on scenes, either from contemporary life or from history or literature. Typical of the first section were 'Robespierre receiving Letters from the Friends of his Victims which threaten him with Assassination' (by W.H. Fisk) and 'La Toilette des Morts--an incident in the tragic life of Charlotte Corday' (by E.M. Ward); in the second section were Millais' 'The Eve of St. Agnes' and 'My First Sermon', besides numerous Shakespearean scenes--'Juliet' (by W.P. Frith), 'Hermione' (by W.M. Egley), 'Ferdinand and Miranda' (by F.R. Pickersgill), and 'Desdemona's Intercession for Cassio' (by H.W. Pickersgill).⁽²³⁾

As the century wore on, according to Maas, 'pictures from which moral undertones were more or less absent were becoming increasingly popular',⁽²⁴⁾ and although under the guise of morality the themes

23. Jeremy Maas, Victorian Painters (1969), pp.104-5.

24. Jeremy Maas, op.cit., p.117.

of fallen women, illicit love, death and bereavement, and poverty, were frequently painted and well-received, their appeal was one of sensationalism and of satisfying curiosity (the appeal of the cruder kind of story-teller) rather than a practically moral one. Some paintings which are considered Pre-Raphaelite because of their painter's personal connections with the P.R.B. are almost indistinguishable in most respects from genre pictures painted about the same time. James Collinson is known today only through his membership of the P.R.B. and his two paintings 'Queen Elizabeth of Hungary', which is in his 'Early Christian' style, and 'The Empty Purse', where any moral potential in the subject is destroyed by the bland coyness of the girl in the picture. Its sentimental tone and subject-matter is similar to that of another well-known painting of a Pre-Raphaelite associate, W.H. Deverell's 'The Pet'. After he resigned from the P.R.B. in 1850 (to become a Jesuit novice for a short time) Collinson did in fact only paint anecdotal genre scenes.⁽²⁵⁾ Most of the paintings of Arthur Hughes, another associate of the Brotherhood, are Pre-Raphaelite only in technique (particularly in colour and attention to the precise texture of details), and their sentimental subjects, such as meetings of frustrated lovers ('The Long Engagement', 'The Tryst') and the returned sailor-lad weeping over a grave

25. According to [Lindsay Errington,] notes on W.H. Deverell in John Gere et al., The Pre-Raphaelites (exhibition catalogue, 1972, unnumbered pages).

('Home from Sea') were well-known in the anecdotal repertoires of numerous other painters (for example, Charles West Cope's 'Widow and Children'). Ford Madox Brown, at different stages in his early career varied between painting overloaded social documents and messageless plein-air landscape. Although with this latter type of picture he seems ahead of his time, after 1865 he reverted to painting scenes from history and romantic literature, according with the lowest common denominator of public taste--he wrote to his patron George Rae:

I have had to fall back on the domestic pot-boiler from the dire necessity of keeping the establishment supplied in victuals. ⁽²⁶⁾

As a result his later paintings, such as 'Cromwell on his Farm: St. Ives, 1635', are almost indistinguishable from the host of trite late Victorian pictorial scenes. R.B. Martineau's 'The Last Day in the Old Home' is often counted among Pre-Raphaelite paintings for two reasons--its Pre-Raphaelite colouring and the fact that Martineau worked for a time in Holman Hunt's studio; but its kind of subject-matter--of an improvident profligate husband contrasted with a humble and practical wife in their house which is being sold--is common right up to Sir William Quiller Orchardson's 1880's paintings of 'Mariage de Convenance' and 'The First Cloud' (exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1887). Orchardson continued the 'vicious desire to

26. Letter quoted in Brown Exhibition (1964) Catalogue, p.25.

narrate an anecdote' (in George Moore's words) as leader of a group of Scotsmen (John Pettie, Tom Graham, and William McTaggart were the others) who later came to London. Moore criticised, during a discussion of Orchardson's 'Napoleon directing the Account of his Campaigns',

the supreme vice of modern art which believes a picture to be the same thing as a scene in a play. (27)

At the end of the nineteenth century Henry James could still say of contemporary paintings:

They are subjects addressed to a taste of a particularly unimaginative and unaesthetic order--to the taste of the British merchant and paterfamilias and his excellently regulated family. What this taste appears to demand of a picture is that it shall have a taking title, like a three-volume novel or an article in a magazine; that it shall embody in its lower flights some comfortable incident of the daily life of our period, suggestive more especially of its gentilities and proprieties and familiar moralities. (28)

The audience for story-telling had not changed much from the eighteenth-century one described by Dr. Tompkins. But the mention of Henry James makes us aware that there were subtle changes in the late nineteenth-century mind, particularly in the realm of self-awareness. An interest in banal narrative painting could not long survive the kind of psychological analysis that Henry James gave it in The Portrait of a Lady (first published in 1881). Early in the novel James is discussing Isabel Archer's intellectual make-up:

27. Quoted, without source, in Jeremy Maas, op.cit., p.244.

28. Quoted, without source, in Jeremy Maas, op.cit., p.105.

The poor girl liked to be thought clever, but she hated to be thought bookish . . . She had a great desire for knowledge, but she really preferred almost any source of information to the printed page; she had an immense curiosity about life and was constantly staring and wondering . . . her deepest enjoyment was to feel the continuity between the movements of her own soul and the agitations of the world. For this reason she was fond of seeing great crowds and large stretches of country, of reading about revolutions and wars, of looking at historical pictures--a class of efforts as to which she had often committed the conscious solecism of forgiving them much bad painting for the sake of the subject. (29)

Chronologically the Pre-Raphaelite painters flourished right in the middle of a period of painting whose main characteristic was its huge pressure towards the narrative mode. The distinctions that can be made between P.R.B. paintings, as I have said above, and those of their contemporaries and near-contemporaries are fewer and slighter than the similarities caused by their common allegiance to this mode. Where they differ is in respect of the particular kinds of attention they paid to detail and moral earnestness, but the common narrative instinct of their age is strong in Pre-Raphaelite paintings. When the Brotherhood broke up and Millais, Hunt, and Rossetti each went on their dissimilar paths according to each one's different sense of priorities, the main Victorian branch of painting, narrative, continued as though they had never existed as a body, and, as I have mentioned above, increased its emphasis on story for its own sake, the anecdotal painting, at the expense of moral emphasis. As we can

29. Henry James, The Portrait of a Lady (this edn., 1963), p.35 (Chapter 4).

see from the list of 1863 Royal Academy paintings above, Millais fitted in most easily of the three with this trend, and so satisfactorily to his contemporaries that he eventually became President of the Royal Academy. Even in his P.R.B. days he painted the occasional picture whose anecdotal motivation appears stronger than the moral one, however much both he and Hunt might protest the contrary. His 'scene in a play' was usually taken from the work of a writer whom the P.R.B. considered 'Immortal', but this could be as far as the morality of the picture went. In the first years of the P.R.B. Millais exhibited, for instance, 'Isabella' (from Keats's poem) at the 1849 Academy, followed in 1850 by 'Ferdinand lured by Ariel' (from The Tempest), and in 1851 by 'The Woodman's Daughter' (from Coventry Patmore's poem of the same name) and 'Mariana' (from Measure for Measure, via Tennyson's early poem). Despite 'Mariana's trappings of medieval Catholicism--the stained-glass windows and private altar which Ruskin disliked--here, as elsewhere, Millais is only using them as an incident in the story, to suggest that in her dejection Mariana had turned to religion for consolation; he is not moralising. And in spite of an occasional penchant for more painterly and unified subjects which sometimes asserted itself--producing, for example, 'Autumn Leaves' (1856), 'Chill October' (1870), and 'Winter Fuel' (1873)--Millais was always able and ready during the remainder of his life to paint scenes--such as, 'A Dream of the Past: Sir Isumbras at the Ford' (1857), 'The Eve of St. Agnes' (1863),

'The Boyhood of Raleigh' (1870), 'The Princes in the Tower' (1878), 'Sweetest Eyes Were Ever Seen' (from E.B. Browning's 'Catarina to Camoens', in 1881), and 'The Ruling Passion' (1885).

Significantly, the middle and late Victorian periods formed the great age of book illustration, and the distinction between the art-work in books and on canvas was at its slightest. Not surprisingly Millais was easily the most successful of the three main P.R.B. artists in book illustration (although they were all prolific in this field), because he was most easily able to accommodate his painting to another man's literary ideas. Anthony Trollope said of him:

Altogether he drew from my tales eighty-seven drawings and I do not think that more conscientious work was done by any man. Writers of novels know well--and so ought readers of novels to have learned--that there are two modes of illustrating, either of which may be adopted equally by a bad or a good artist. To which class Mr. Millais belongs I need not say; but, as a good artist, it was open to him simply to make a pretty picture, or to study the work of the author from whose writing he was bound to make his subject. I have too often found that the former alternative has been thought to be the better, as it certainly is the easier method. An artist will frequently dislike to subordinate his ideas to those of the author, and will sometimes be too idle to find out what those ideas are. But this artist was neither proud nor idle. In every figure that he drew it was his object to promote the views of the writer whose work he had undertaken to illustrate, and he never spared himself any pains in studying that work, so as to enable him to do so. I have carried on some of those characters from book to book, and have had my own ideas impressed indelibly on my memory by the excellence of his delineations. (30)

As Trollope saw, Millais had much sympathy with a novelist's way

30. Anthony Trollope, An Autobiography (1883), pp.140-1.

of thinking (the two men were, in fact, close friends, as well as colleagues). He is primarily concerned with putting onto canvas in quickly recognisable form the kind of facts that appealed to the novel-reading public. The predictable result of his concentration on narrative is that Millais' paintings throughout his career seldom rise above the level of book illustrations,⁽³¹⁾ where the function of the picture is merely to add a dimension to the story, which remains the important basic factor in the picture. By accepting such a framework to his pictures Millais ensured the approval of his own time and the aesthetic inferiority of most of his paintings. The inferiority is primarily due to three factors: the unsuitability of the narrative way of thinking to conversion onto canvas, the fact that the thoughts he tries to convert are not his own so that he has to subordinate his own feelings to someone else's scenario, and thirdly, by being close to the public taste for narrative in these other ways Millais unfortunately picks up bad stylistic habits from the tradition--the tendencies towards

31. The exceptions as I see them are of two kinds: the sensitive portraits (of Carlyle, Tennyson, and Gladstone, for instance, although most of his others seem banal in comparison); and the group I have distinguished above, 'Autumn Leaves', 'Chill October', and 'Winter Fuel', where, by not marking detail at all distinctly Millais achieves unity and a closeness to Impressionism. It is very seldom that distinctive feeling seems to show in his paintings: to me there seems something strangely and helpfully disturbing about 'The Vale of Rest', and his pen and ink drawing 'The Disentombment of Queen Matilda' does genuinely capture a medieval strangeness, but these are rare exceptions.

heaviness in figure-drawing, separateness and lack of unity of the characters--faults which, as I mentioned above, are common to Hogarth's successors in genre painting.

With Holman Hunt no less than with Millais the story framework predominates throughout his painting career. With him, however, the impulse for the framework is usually provided by the desire to tell a story not for its own sake, the anecdotal impulse, but for its moral's sake. Most of his paintings which do not deal with specifically moral subjects nevertheless have a moral near the surface. 'Rienzi', for instance, his first P.R.B. painting to be exhibited, has behind it, according to Hunt, 'the spirit of freedom of the passing revolutionary time',⁽³²⁾ and the actual title of 'The Eve of St. Agnes', exhibited in 1848, is 'The flight of Madeline and Porphyro during the drunkenness attending the revelry (The Eve of St. Agnes)', a subject chosen to illustrate the un-Keatsian theme of 'The sacredness of honest responsible love and the weakness of proud intemperance'.⁽³³⁾ Although the emphasis is on the story's moral, the framework is still that of the narrative painting. Hunt's most common practice was to select his subject-matter from a literary work and to alter the emphasis of the scene so that it took on the role of a moral fable. He carefully chose his scenes from plays

32. Quoted in Hunt Exhibition (1969) Catalogue, p.23.

33. Hunt Exhibition (1969) Catalogue, p.22.

of Shakespeare, for instance, for their moral-fable potential--an emphasis which, because Hunt had wrenched the scene out of its context in the play, was largely foreign to Shakespeare's purpose. 'Claudio and Isabella', for instance, allows Hunt to illustrate religious celibacy and sexual guilt, and in 'Valentine Rescuing Sylvia from Proteus', taken from Two Gentlemen of Verona, the moment of moral truth is chosen.

Because of this change of emphasis Hunt's book-illustrations were sometimes less than happily received by the author than were Millais'. Hunt clashed with Tennyson over his illustration to 'The Lady of Shalott' in the Moxon edition of Tennyson's poems, the poet laying it down that 'an illustrator ought never to add anything to what he finds in the text'.⁽³⁴⁾ Tennyson was comparatively lucky with the Moxon illustration, however, for when Hunt came to paint a small oil picture of 'The Lady of Shalott' in (probably) 1887, although remaining close to the Moxon illustration in its basic design, he added several details.⁽³⁵⁾ In the Moxon illustration there is a painting on each side of the mirror, but very much subordinated to it--'Christ in Majesty' on the left and Christ on the Cross to the right. In the small oil painting these two pictures

34. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., ii 36; an engraving from Hunt's woodblock drawing for the Moxon Tennyson is no.69 in the Hunt Exhibition (1969).

35. Hunt Exhibition (1969), no.58.

are enlarged and altered to represent the Agony in the Garden on the left and Christ in Majesty now on the right of the mirror.

Above the two paintings Hunt introduced

a relief of eight cherubs holding various musical instruments and implements . . . [which] represent the virtues of active and passive service to which the Lady has vowed herself; (36)

and Hunt also added doves and a seven-branched candelabra, thus introducing many kinds of moral symbols which it seems unlikely that Tennyson intended--Hallam Tennyson records the poet describing the poem thus:

The new-born love for something, for some one in the wide world from which she has been so long secluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities. (37)

And the lines that Hunt is illustrating (105-8 and 114-17), and which are inscribed on the frame of the small oil painting merely read:

From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra', by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side;
'The curse is come upon me', cried
The Lady of Shalott.

36. Hunt Exhibition (1969) Catalogue, p.57.

37. Hallam Lord Tennyson, Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir (1897) i 117. One critic has suggested, however, that the poem is influenced by G.S. Faber's religious mythologising:

It may be suggested that she is one of those nymphs, occupied in weaving, whom Porphyry explained as human souls about to be born into the world . . . In a very Tennysonian revision of Faber, the birth of a soul is identified with the coming of love, and love brings with it the doom of God. (W.D. Paden, Tennyson in Egypt [1942], pp.156-7; quoted in Christopher Ricks [ed.], The Poems of Tennyson [1969], p.354.)

This painting, like nearly all of Hunt's, is an illustration of a narrative that someone else has composed in words. He is trying to express words in paint, and if there are not enough words within the given text then he adds some of his own invention to complete the story to his own liking, to make it a complete moral fable. He alters the story not in order to make it more easily workable into a painting, but because his primary interest is in story-telling with a moral bias, and the poet has not rounded off the plot to Hunt's satisfaction. In a later (1905) larger oil painting of the same subject⁽³⁸⁾ he went even further, adding more symbols than ever, and published an extremely long and detailed explanation of the painting, which turns it into an elaborate moral fable. This account ends:

Having forfeited the blessing due to unswerving loyalty, destruction and confusion overtake her. The mirror, 'cracks from side to side', the doves of peace which have nestled in her tower find refuge from turmoil in the pure ether of the sky, and in their going extinguish the lamp that stood ever lighted, her work is ruined; her artistic life has come to an end. What other possibilities remain for her are not for this service; that is a thing of the past. It was suggested to me that the fate of the Lady was too pitiful! I had Pandora's Box with Hope lying hid, carved upon the frame.

Unwittingly the traitor, Lancelot, imparts consolation in his final words--

' . . . She has a lovely face;
God in His mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott'.⁽³⁹⁾

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38. In the Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, Connecticut; first exhibited in 1905, but painted over a long period; not in the Hunt (1969) Exhibition.
39. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit., ii 310-11.

Hunt does not here seem to distinguish between the poem and the painting. Although he uses the authority of Tennyson to put over his own moralistic ideas, the words which Tennyson wrote and his own additions have become mingled into one plot in his mind.

It is as though Hunt, at the end of his life and the Victorian age, having seen the doctrine of L'Art pour L'Art continuously gaining ground, is making a final sage-like assertion of his own Victorian insistence on narrative and moral content in art, desperately forming an allegorical story from a poem by a great Victorian which might otherwise be assumed by less morally-minded people to be a fore-runner of aesthetic art. He has composed a narrative by making a brilliant intellectual synthesis of ideas in his mind suggested by the poem, but the picture remains, as F.G. Stephens said of 'The Triumph of the Innocents',

an attempt to represent the unseen by substantial means
and all too faithful methods. (40)

His final paragraph, beginning 'Unwittingly the traitor, Lancelot, imparts consolation in his final words', shows how rigid Hunt's patterns of ideas remained throughout his life--in 'The Awakening Conscience' of 1853 the 'idle companion of the girl's fall' similarly became 'the unconscious utterer of a divine message'. The transformation of Tennyson's blithe and patronising Lancelot into a traitorous

40. F.G. Stephens, 'The Triumph of the Innocents', The Portfolio (1885), p.80.

agent of God is a prime example of 'poaching on another's preserves', as Henry James expressed it in his 1888 essay on 'The Journal of the Brothers de Goncourt' (in the following passage of Laökoon-school criticism, we can substitute 'poet' for 'novelist'):

The novelist competes with the painter and the painter with the novelist, in the treatment of the aspect and figure of things; but what a happy tact each of them needs to keep his course straight, without poaching on the other's preserves! In England it is the painter who is apt to poach most and in France the writer.⁽⁴¹⁾

Rossetti was neither moralist nor anecdotalist, and so his paintings of the P.R.B. days when he was in close contact with, and to some extent the pupil of, Hunt and Millais are his least successful and least unified. During this period he mostly painted ostensibly moral subjects incorporated into a second-hand narrative framework, and the half-heartedness of his involvement with his subject-matter can be seen from the oddly emotionless paintings he produced. The figures in human shape nearly all (the main exception seems to be St. Joachim in 'The Girlhood of Mary Virgin', who, as I have suggested above, was probably modelled from a figure in a Lasinio engraving) stare vacantly, without apparent consciousness of or connection with the people and scene around them. The narrative framework and, perhaps, the distance between the artist and his subject imposed on biblical episodes by its sacred nature,

41. Henry James, 'The Journal of the Brothers de Goncourt', Fortnightly Review i (October 1888), pp.501-20.

have combined with the traditional heaviness of genre figures to make it appear that Rossetti's emotions were not engaged in the painting.

Rossetti's paintings changed remarkably in this respect after he broke off close contact with Hunt and Millais. In spite of the facts that his later pictures are noticeably painted from particular real models, and that his paintings intended for the public still have titles taken from literature, his pictures are noticeably less static and more unified by his emotional involvement with their subject. In the early 1850's Rossetti concentrated on subjects from Dante, Shakespeare, and Browning, and at the end of the decade in medieval, Arthurian scenes, mainly derived from Malory. He still uses other people's narrative to provoke his paintings, but this narrative element does not usually seem to hinder his emotional self-expression. His 1850's illustrations, for example, are anything but objective. He is not primarily concerned with the narrative but with the emotional intensity of one moment. His subject is emotions. One of Rossetti's water-colour scenes from Dante, 'Paolo and Francesca da Rimini',⁽⁴²⁾ was praised for its justice to the original by Ruskin, who said 'Rossetti has thoroughly understood the passage throughout',⁽⁴³⁾ but the plot

42. Rossetti Exhibition (1973), no.94; in the Tate Gallery.

43. Virginia Surtees, The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Catalogue Raisonné (1971), p.37.

of the original is only touched on to provide a starting-point for the painting, and the picture's intensity of mood is very much Rossetti's own. Despite the inclusion of the shape of a cross made by the bars of the window at the left of the picture, which probably, according to Alistair Grieve, indicates 'Rossetti's belief that passionate love should be sanctified',⁽⁴⁴⁾ Ruskin realised that the non-moral passion was more emphasized than the sanctions (the picture is of the lovers' first kiss, which condemned them to whirl for ever in Hell):

Prudish people might perhaps think it not quite a young lady's drawing . . . All figures are draped--but I don't quite know how people would feel about the subject.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Ruskin, speaking on behalf of his age, could not avoid judging Rossetti about moral content and judging the painting by its fidelity to its literary source, without realising that by imaginatively translating Dante according to his own subjective emotional reactions into pictorial terms Rossetti had achieved a worthwhile picture on its own merits. Another water-colour painted in the same year, 'Dante's Vision of Rachel and Leah',⁽⁴⁶⁾ an illustration based on lines 97 to 109 of Canto XXVII of the Purgatorio, is again remarkable for

44. [Alistair Grieve,] notes to the Rossetti entries in John Gere et al., The Pre-Raphaelites (1972, unnumbered pages).
45. Quoted in Virginia Surtees, Catalogue Raisonné (1971), p.37.
46. Rossetti Exhibition (1973), no.92; in the Tate Gallery.

the fact that Rossetti's feelings were aroused by Dante's subject and then translated into and well expressed in pictorial terms.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Narrative could, then, provide a starting-point for a successfully unified painting, so long as it allowed the free working of the artist's emotional and aesthetic self-expression, and so long as he did not recognise the prior claims of the narrative's subject-matter and framework, or of the artist's role of moral preacher. Rossetti did in fact need some kind of starting-point outside himself to stiffen his paintings, because of a certain congenital softness of intellect. In the first half of the 1860's, when he was associating with Swinburne and Whistler, who encouraged him to believe that art should be independent of conventional restraints, Rossetti concentrated on obsessions of his own, such as that of the femme fatale (a subject which at that time also occupied Swinburne, with whom he lived), and his paintings of that period display too much self-indulgence.

47. Ruskin nevertheless insisted on finding a potential but unachieved moral fable again, in this painting:

You know that the two are usually supposed to be the Active and the Contemplative faculties. Don't people usually work with their hands, and see with their eyes? What does Beatrice contemplate? The nature of Christ always set forth in the middle ages by the Gryphon. What does Matilda work with? She herself refers you at once to the 92nd Psalm where, surely, it is plainly enough written 'Thou, Lord hast made me glad through my works. I will triumph in the works of thy hands'. Look back to Rachel and Leah. Leah decorates herself & works for herself. But Matilda has all her delight in God's work. Rachel contemplates herself. But Beatrice contemplates Christ, Therefore Rachel & Leah are the unglorified or worldly, active and contemplative powers.

(Virginia Surtees, Catalogue Raisonné [1971], pp.35-6.)

But Rossetti, alone of the three Pre-Raphaelite painters whom we have been discussing, approaches the line of aesthetic thinking which would lead to modern art:

Art . . . is thus always striving to be independent of the mere intelligence, to become a matter of pure perception, to get rid of its responsibilities to its subject or material; the ideal examples of poetry and painting being those in which the constituent elements of the composition are so welded together, that the material or subject no longer strikes the intellect only; nor the form, the eye or the ear only; but form and matter, in their union or identity, present one single effect to the 'imaginative reason', that complex faculty for which every thought and feeling is twin-born with its sensible analogue or symbol. (48)

* * * * *

In a letter to A.W.M. Baillie Hopkins wrote one paragraph on the subject of the Royal Academy Exhibition which I have already looked at above, that of 1863:

About Millais' Eve of S. Agnes, you ought to have known me well enough to be sure I should like it. Of course I do intensely--not wholly perhaps as Keats' Madeline but as the conception of her by a genius. I think over this picture, which I could only unhappily see once, and it, or the memory of it, grows upon me. Those three pictures by Millais in this year's Academy have opened my eyes. I see that he is the greatest English painter, one of the greatest of the world . . . If Millais drops his mannerisms and becomes only so far prominent from others' styles as high excellence stands out from mediocrity then how unfair to say he is leaving his school, when that school, represented in the greatest perfection by him, passing through stage

48. Walter Pater, 'The School of Giorgione', The Renaissance (this edn., 1961), p.132.

after stage, is at last arriving at Nature's self, which is of no school--inasmuch as different schools represent Nature in their own more or less truthful different ways, Nature meanwhile having only one way. (49)

The year in which Hopkins is writing is 1863 when the three main Pre-Raphaelite painters have already separated and gone their own artistic ways. Although opinion has it, Hopkins is saying, that Millais has departed from the principles of the Pre-Raphaelite school of painting, this opinion is mistaken because Millais, to a greater degree than the other members of that school, has almost fulfilled the major Pre-Raphaelite precept of truth to nature. Hopkins highly praises Millais but does not even comment on Hunt or Rossetti. Hopkins has broadly accepted that the main feature of Pre-Raphaelitism is the intent to follow Nature (as stated in The Germ), and it is Millais' particular emphasis which is closest to this, he implies, not Hunt's or Rossetti's.

At this undergraduate period of his life Hopkins was making aesthetic observations in words and sketches very much along Ruskin's lines. He continues this same letter, for instance, by saying that he is sketching a good deal 'in a Ruskinese point of view', and his drawings of that time support the account he goes on to give of a passionate Pre-Raphaelite kind of interest in one kind of natural object replacing that for another in quick succession:

49. Letters iii 201-2.

for a certain time I am astonished at the beauty of a tree, shape, effect etc, then when the passion, so to speak, has subsided, it is consigned to my treasury of explored beauty . . . while something new takes its place in my enthusiasm. (50)

One might expect therefore that when Hopkins judges that Millais' three 1863 paintings have almost achieved truth to Nature, his criterion would be one of Ruskinian accurate detailed natural description. But all the three paintings he is remarking on are noticeably deficient in that characteristic, and instead their outstanding common feature is their story-telling framework (the third picture, apart from the two I have mentioned, was 'The Wolf's Den'). Despite his private Ruskinian pre-occupations, Hopkins can still not only disregard any discrepancy between these and the Millais paintings, but even praise narrative paintings to the extent of saying that they have opened his eyes so that he sees that Millais 'is the greatest English painter, one of the greatest of the world'. The narrative element in a painting must have been an important part of Hopkins' criteria for judging it in 1863, despite the fact that at the same time he was exercising and building up his own powers of aesthetic self-expression in an opposed Ruskinian way.

There are distinct parallels between this discrepancy in Hopkins's undergraduate taste in painting and the difference between the two main types of poetic writing he undertook prior to 'The

Wreck of the Deutschland'. The arrangement of the four editions of his poems gives quite a misleading impression of Hopkins's poetry in some important ways, because it is designed with a proselytising end in mind, to make people look at the most attractive mature poetry and semi-disregard all his unfinished work and the vast majority of his pre-1875 poems.⁽⁵¹⁾ One result is that an overriding impression that the reader of Hopkins's poetic manuscripts cannot avoid, that the largest part of the pre-1875 poetry consists of bits and pieces in Victorian dramatic and poetic narrative forms, is likely to escape the reader of the printed poems. Nearly all Hopkins's early poetry is either short pieces of Ruskinian natural description versified ~~or~~ else narrative.

There are very few early poems of Hopkins's which are explicitly subjective, and even those which are, such as 'The Beginning of the End' and 'Where art thou friend . . . ?', are often distanced from

51. Following his qualitative distinction in a letter to Hopkins's sister between the 'undergraduate poems' and the mature ones, for 'serious reading' Bridges included in the First Edition only three, short and delicate, completed early poems, prefaced by a photograph of the sensitive undergraduate. The reader would be encouraged to read on. The author's 'serious mature poems' cover the crucial next sixty pages, with a characterful portrait of the mature Jesuit enticingly at the half-way mark. After this, the third, twenty/page, section of unfinished poems and fragments was almost an appendix. Bridges also added a sentimental appeal to the reader to concentrate on the important part: '[GMH] would probably not have wished any of his earlier poems nor so many of his fragments to have been included'. (Norman White, review of Poems⁴ in Notes and Queries n.s.xvi (June, 1969), p.234.) The three subsequent editions all kept to Bridges' basic divisions, although the proselytising purpose behind his divisions was no longer necessary. Editors since Bridges have been noticeably lazy in this and in other respects.

direct expression of personal feelings by antique phrasing, literary echoes, and pedantic word-play--'conceiving whom I must conceive amiss'.⁽⁵²⁾ Instead we usually find only timid projections of his personality in objectified form. The starting-point for the expression of his thoughts is, more often than not, a story or dramatic framework. Sometimes he continues not just the subject-matter but the mode of expression of another poet--such as his 'A Voice from the World/ Fragments of "An answer to Miss Rossetti's Convent Threshold"', and 'Continuation of R. Garnett's Nix'. Here nothing could be further from Ruskin's ideal that an artist's true style results, not when he tries to have a style, but when he earnestly tries to express what he sees. Similarly 'The Queen's Crowning', Hopkins's early attempt at a ballad, takes, as Humphry House pointed out, several motifs and themes from Child ballads:

The ending of this ballad has an obvious likeness to 'Sweet William's Ghost' (Child, No.77); the lily and rose are common to several ballads; in 'The Gipsy Laddie' (Child, No.200) the second and fourth lines of all stanzas but one rhyme on 'e', 'y' sounds.⁽⁵³⁾

And House cynically adds 'See Andrew Lang's "Recipe to forge a Border Ballad"'.
 .

Among Hopkins's early works are fragments of projected larger dramatic narrative works, 'Floris in Italy', 'Richard', 'Stephen and Barberie', and 'Pilate'. The first two of these are mixtures of

52. Poems^{4r}, p.22.

53. Humphry House (ed.), Note-books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1937), p.358.

Wordsworthian sentiment and Keatsian images and form, and in one fragment of 'Richard' the shepherd Richard asks his companion from the town (Oxford?) Sylvester to quote Wordsworth to him, while in another part Sylvester lies in a meadow reading Keats's Epistles. (54)

Another unfinished dramatic monologue, 'The Elopement', is derivative in style and subject from Keats's 'Eve of St. Agnes', beloved of

Pre-Raphaelite painters:

All slumbered

.

When I with never-needed wiles
Crept trembling out of bed

.

Then at the door

. . . keep the loaded bolt from plunging back

.

The rookery never stirred a wing,
At roost and rest they shifted not

.

And all within the house were sound as posts,
Or listening thought of linen-winded ghosts. (55)

'The Nightingale' is the sentimental Pre-Raphaelite or 'Enoch Arden' kind of modern story which Arthur Hughes particularly favoured.

It tells of a sailor Mike, whose loved one, Frances, while his ship is being wrecked far away, is troubled by the omen of a nightingale unnaturally singing in the morning:

While he was washing from on deck
She pillowing her lily neck
Timed her sad visions with his wreck. (56)

54. Poems^{4r}, pp.150 and 151.

55. Poems^{4r}, pp.173-4.

56. Poems^{4r}, p.31.

There are several other narrative fragments where no personal feeling seems to be involved, such as those of Castara Victrix, with its Arcadian-Shakespearian list of characters:

Silvian, the king, and his two sons Arcas and Valerian.
 Carindel. The fool, Carabella. Pirellia. Piers sweetgate.
 Daphnis. Daphne. (57)

Very little of this play is extant.

The more satisfactory early story-telling poems are those which contain 'projections of his personality in hiding', in the words used by W.H. Gardner (58) to describe 'The Alchemist in the City'--a poem in which, however, I find little evidence of autobiography, preferring to explain its genesis by its similarity with a poem written by his father, Manley Hopkins, called 'A Philosopher's Stone'. (59) In Professor Sulloway's Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper there is an acute interpretation of 'A Soliloquy of One of the Spies left in the Wilderness' as thinly disguised autobiography; it pictures Hopkins in the position of a spy at Balliol College, the home of Jowett and the Broad Church group, creeping out to Christ Church, base for the ritualist faction, to confess to Pusey there. (60) This narrative poem has a certain

57. And its heroine is Castara. Journals, pp.68-9.

58. W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins ii (1949), p.87.

59. Part of this poem is included in W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins ii (1949), p.3.

60. Alison G. Sulloway, Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper (1972), Chapter One.

dramatic strength which is lacking in most of the story-telling undergraduate poems. Similarly, the two early poems about religious vocation (written just before he was converted), where he projects obviously personal feelings into the personae of nuns, 'The Habit of Perfection' (sub-titled 'The Novice') and 'Heaven-Haven' (sub-titled 'A nun takes the veil') have a strong clear uncluttered expression lacking in most of Hopkins's poems written before 1876.

The narrative form has a similar effect on Hopkins's early poetry to that which we noticed it had on Pre-Raphaelite painting: if it is based on another author's ideas the narrative poem becomes a cold exercise, a feeble imitation, rather than personal expression. Stultifying self-expression as it does, the narrative mode is at the opposite pole to the versified fragments of Ruskinian natural observation he was writing at the same time, where Hopkins, alone with Nature, expresses in words what his senses perceive. These fragments are not fitted into a framework, but are vivid pieces of self-expression. Hopkins's objective story-telling, on the other hand, has a fatal flatness to it. In different parts it has the qualities of blandness, the patronising tone, and clumsy logic maladroitly fitted into a poetic form, which characterise many of the explicatory second parts of Hopkins's baroque sonnets.

When we turn to Hopkins's post-1875 poetry we find that these two opposed kinds of poetry have developed and come together into a new kind of poem, the kind to which the three poems we examined

in Chapter One, 'The Starlight Night', 'Spring', and 'The Windhover', belong. The Ruskinian observation has become more personally and emotionally charged and forms the first lines, the mimetic part, of the sonnets, while the narrative has now developed into the last lines, the laudatory and homiletic part, of the sonnets, having exchanged secular stories for fables taken from Christian teaching when, after his reception into the Jesuit order, Hopkins realised that all his poetry had to be written 'Ad maiorem dei gloriam'.

These two quite different kinds of impulse were still present in Hopkins's maturity, and not unified but still distinct. Among Hopkins's mature poems there are occasional ones which are written completely, or largely, in one of the two kinds. There is the occasional one in a completely narrative mode, such as 'Brothers', (61) which by depending too much on the force of its narrative alone at the cost of more intense dwelling on parts, only succeeds in having no emotional tension or genuine pith. 'The Loss of the Eurydice', of which the first half is narrative, was doomed to failure by its author's unfortunate choice of a 'popular' form and rhythm (as was his 'Patriotic Song for Soldiers'). Other poems which partly depend upon a story, like 'The Handsome Heart' and 'The Bugler's First Communion', are noticeably low-keyed and of minor interest compared to the non-narrative mature poems. On the other hand, there is the unfinished mass of

61. Poems^{4r}, p.87.

pieces of detailed natural description, 'Epithalamion', in which the observations so swell out that they allow little place for the main framework--Hopkins originally intended these details merely as a setting, but, uncontrolled, they took over as the main subject. (62)

As further proof that during his maturity Hopkins kept the two sets of values and ways of looking at the world at the same time, I will quote a passage of comment on Millais. In June 1881 Hopkins wrote to Bridges:

I am sure you are very unjust to Millais . . . He has, I have always seen, no feeling for beauty in abstract design and he never designs; but he has a deep feeling, it is plain, for concrete beauty, wild or natural beauty, much as Keats had . . . Do you mean to say the Order for Release is not a noble work? and the Proscribed Royalist? The Huguenot has some splendid 'concrete beauty' in the vegetation and so on. But the Brunswicker I do think bad and ugly. (63)

Hopkins makes clear in several other comments on Millais which have the same combination of praise of his detail and notice of his lack of overall design and unity in feeling that by 'concrete beauty, wild or natural beauty' he refers to detailed accurate portrayal of nature. For example,

62. 'The Loss of the Eurydice', Poems^{4r}, p.72; 'What shall I do for the land that bred me?', described by Hopkins as 'a patriotic song for soldiers' (Letters i 283), Poems^{4r}, p.195; 'The Handsome Heart', Poems^{4r}, p.81; 'The Bugler's First Communion', Poems^{4r}, p.82; 'Epithalamion', Poems^{4r}, p.197.

63. Letters i 132.

'Scotch Firs: "The silence that is in the lonely woods"
 . . . instress absent, firtrunks ungrouped, four or
 so pairing but not markedly . . . a casual install . . .
 but the master shewn in the slouch and toss-up of the
 firtree-head in near background, in the tufts of fir-needles,
 and in everything. (64)

Hopkins has developed a more balanced judgement of Millais than he had in his undergraduate days, showing an awareness now of overall design as well as of detail, and realising that Millais was deficient in this first quality; but he still understood and sympathised with Millais much more than he did with Whistler, a painter who was, as Hopkins realised, deficient in detail but not in overall design.

In 1886 he wrote:

I agree to Whistler's feeling for what I call inscape (the very soul of art); but then his execution is so negligent, unpardonably so sometimes (65) . . . his genius certainly has not come to puberty.

Hopkins was not willing to forego the Ruskinian principle of realism in the execution of fine details, and would not understand Whistler's impressionist intentions, although without realising the cause, he can see the unity that they give to his paintings.

In the second half of the 1881 quotation ('Do you mean to say . . .?') is shown the same kind of admiration for Millais' story-telling as Hopkins showed in 1863. He implies that he thinks that 'The Order of Release' and 'The Proscribed Royalist' are 'noble works'.

64. Journals, p.244.

65. Letters ii 135.

The four paintings he mentions in 1881 come from the same period, of 1852 to 1860, and are of the same style, each with two or three strong and clear-cut human figures claiming almost all the interest in the paintings. Hopkins places them in descending order of his approval--the first example he thinks of to counteract Bridges's unjust criticism of Millais is 'The Order of Release'; then, as a pendant to that, he adds 'The Proscribed Royalist'; then comes 'The Huguenot', which has only partial approval, and then 'The Black Brunswicker', of which he thoroughly disapproves. These four pictures can be put in order on another scale, however, with the different criteria of story-telling at one end of the scale, where the individual interest of the figures is subordinated to a story, and with portraiture at the other end, where the ostensible anecdotal reason for the painting, as given in its title, differs from its actual emphasis on portrait. The places of the four pictures coincide on each scale. Because the paintings are so similar in execution--with the exception of 'The Huguenot', which shows a pair of lovers surrounded by detailed vegetation--it seems that Hopkins's criterion for his scale here is that of anecdotal emphasis, perhaps combined, I should add, with the fact that as this emphasis declines the greater emphasis is placed on non-moral feeling, particularly on a man-woman sexual relationship. In Hopkins's 1881 letter it seems probable that, as in his 1863 one, an unstated

interest in narrative factors still looms large in his criteria for judging paintings. By 1881 Millais had produced many paintings of varied subject-matter, including some where the primary interest was in detailed nature, but it was these four paintings that Hopkins thought of when called upon to defend Millais.

* * * * *

In this chapter I have attempted to show that both Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelite painters did not escape from harmful effects caused by their general acceptance of the Victorian narrative mode. And that the artistic growth of Hopkins, Millais, and Hunt, was largely stunted by the ready-made framework that narrative offered, so that they seldom achieved an organic unity in which, in Pater's words: 'form and matter . . . present one single effect to the "imaginative reason"'.
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...ooOoo...

Chapter Four: Medievalism

In Chapter One I demonstrated that in significant groups of works by Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelite painters there was a noticeable common formal pattern--the artist's vision was one of closely observed fragments of reality, and a ready-made framework was imposed from outside on them, before the artist's mind could work them into a framework of which they were an organic part. In Chapters Two and Three I looked at two ways in which the Victorian age--an age in which there was a general psychological need for satisfyingly unified intellectual frameworks--imposed pressures on Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelite painters which impeded unified organic development in their works of art by suggesting a framework which did not genuinely develop from their artistic impulses. In this chapter I will explore another important aspect of Victorian thought and art, medievalism, and the ways in which it vitally affected the form of Hopkins's poems and Pre-Raphaelite paintings.

Why did medievalism develop into a highly influential force in Victorian culture? What facets of the Victorian frame of mind needed and responded to medievalism? We have already seen in Chapter Two that, according to Professor Houghton,

a basic and almost universal conception of their age which the Victorians held was that it was an age of transition from the past to the future.⁽¹⁾ Houghton goes on to say that

1. Walter E. Houghton, op.cit., pp.1-2.

this 'past' was recognised to be the Middle Ages. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the multitudinousness of the present and future became too overwhelming, the Victorians sought escape from or clarification of their bewildering difficulties by trying to re-enter the world of the Middle Ages. Professor McLuhan has summarised the appeal that the past has always had:

The time discussed is clearly homogeneous. It bears the character of an uninterrupted sequence (2) of occurrences in which everything is in its right place.

As well as those comforting qualities of immobility and immutability which any past period has, the Middle Ages seemed to represent a particularly wholesome kind of security and unity. How attractive must Dante's voice have seemed:

legato con amore in un volume,
 ciò che per l'universo si squaderna;
 sustanzia ed accidenti, e lor costume,
 quasi conflati insieme per tal modo,
 che ciò ch'ico dico é un semplice lume.

[Paradiso, xxxiii, 86-90:

love held bound
 Into one volume all the leaves whose flight
 Is scattered through the universe around;

How substance, accident, and mode unite
 Fused, so to speak, together, in such wise
 That this I tell of is one simple light.] (3)

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2. Marshall McLuhan, The Gutenberg Galaxy (1962), p.58.
 3. Dorothy L. Sayers and Barbara Reynolds (trans.), The Comedy of Dante Alighieri The Florentine, Cantica III, Il Paradiso (1962), p.345.

As C.A. Patrides wrote:

he [Dante] surveys history from the divine standpoint. His is an eloquent testimony that all temporal events, however haphazard they may seem and however tragic they may be, are vital links in the golden chain of history stretching from the creation to the Last Judgement. This truth struck him like a flash of lightning when, from the vantage-point of the Eternal Present, he beheld the 'universal form' of all things.⁽⁴⁾

In contrast to the Victorian age, events in medieval times each had a definite place in the one sequential linear path of the Christian view of history⁽⁵⁾ as seven ages ending in the Last Judgement.⁽⁶⁾ Everything happened sub specie aeternitatis; Providence had total jurisdiction throughout Creation.⁽⁷⁾

It is predictable then that in many fields of Victorian thought

4. C.A. Patrides, The Grand Design of God/ The literary form of the Christian view of history (1972), p.39.
5. David J. DeLaura, 'Matthew Arnold and the Nightmare of History', in Malcolm Bradbury and David Palmer (eds.), Victorian Poetry (1972), p.37, points to the Nestor Episode in Joyce's Ulysses, where Stephen Dedalus, representing the modern rejection of history, says 'History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake', and is countered by Mr Deasy, representing the traditionalist view of the meaning of history, saying 'All History moves towards one great goal, the manifestation of God'.
6. In the last extant stanza of The Faerie Queene, Spenser says of the Seventh Age:

no more Change shall be,
But stedfast rest of all things firmly stayd
Vpon the pillours of Eternity.

 (Canto VIII of the Two Cantos of Mutabilitie, lines 11-13.)
7. C.A. Patrides, op.cit., pp.28 and 38.

where multitudinousness and its consequent disruption of the psyche were apparent the search for a solution seemed inevitably escape-routed towards some neo-medieval organic form connected with Christianity. The main areas, according to Houghton,⁽⁸⁾ in which the modern transition and disruption were most apparent were those of religion (away from orthodox Christianity), economics (away from village agriculture and town guilds), and socio-politics (away from the structure of fixed classes). In religion itself the debate over which form of what religion one should adhere to was so intense, with so many people apparently certain that their own opinion was the same thing as universal right, that it seemed to many to have only one possible solution, that of one historically permanent Church. Newman had learnt:

as a first principle to recognize the limitations of human knowledge, and the unphilosophical folly of trying to round off into finished and pretentious schemes our fragmentary yet certain notices of our own condition and of God's dealing with it . . . and he followed the great Anglican divines in asserting that there was a true authority, varying in its degrees, in the historic Church; that on the most fundamental points of religion this authority was trustworthy and supreme.

The main attraction of Roman Catholicism was that 'in the early and undivided Church there was such a thing as authority',⁽⁹⁾ and even Tractarians who remained in the Anglican Church still 'looked to

8. Walter E. Houghton, op.cit., p.2.

9. R.W. Church, The Oxford Movement (1892), pp.211 and 212.

the medieval Church for interpretation and practice', and 'their first theological appeal had been to primitive Christianity'.⁽¹⁰⁾ Indeed the main attraction of nineteenth-century Roman Catholicism was that it seemed to offer a panacea for all problems by means of a return to the organically unified Middle Ages. Hilaire Belloc, in The Servile State, said (in Raymond Williams's summary of his arguments) that society's economic difficulties

will not be understood if they are regarded as the product of the Industrial Revolution . . . The root of our present evils was in fact the Reformation, and the seizure of the monastic lands. This created a landed oligarchy and destroyed the civilization of the late Middle Ages, where the distributive system of property and the organization of the guilds had been slowly creating a society in which all men should be 'economically free through the possession of capital and land'.

The necessary redistribution of property could only come about by the recovery of the old faith.⁽¹¹⁾

But even to writers who were non- or anti-Catholic, such as Cobbett, Southey, Carlyle, or Ruskin, the Middle Ages offered the attractive notion of an organic society, in opposition to a laissez-faire one, a means of condemning new developments in terms of the old. In spite of also writing works in defence of the present-day Anglican Church Robert Southey, in his Sir Thomas More: or Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society (1829), used the character of More and the nature of the Middle Ages to

10. Raymond Chapman, The Victorian Debate (1968), p.354.

11. Raymond Williams, op.cit., p.188.

denigrate the present:

Throughout the trading part of the [present-day] community every one endeavours to purchase at the lowest price, and sell at the highest, regardless of equity in either case. Bad as the feudal times were, they were less injurious than these commercial ones to the kindly and generous feelings of human nature. ⁽¹²⁾

Cobbett popularised the use of

the monasteries as a standard of social institutions: the image of the working of a communal society as a welcome alternative to the claims of individualism, ⁽¹³⁾

and in Past and Present, with his substantial and literal portrait of the medieval community of Abbot Samson, Carlyle contrasted the deficiencies of early nineteenth-century industrial society.

Burke had been 'the last serious thinker who could find the "organic" in an existing society'.

As the new industrial society established itself, critics like Carlyle and Ruskin could find the 'organic' image only in a backward look; this is the basis of their 'medievalism', and of that of others. ⁽¹⁴⁾

Ruskin looked backward to the idea of a paternally ordered state with each man fulfilling his function, and rejected modern democracy's egalitarianism as based on an untrue reading of the universal design. He even went so far as to found The Guild of Saint George, with himself as Master, but this realisation of his ideas failed because

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12. Robert Southey, Sir Thomas More: or Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society (1829) ii 246.
 13. Raymond Williams, op.cit., p.37.
 14. Raymond Williams, op.cit., p.146.

his society was an image without energy, because the necessary social commitment could not or would not be made. (15)

Perhaps it was partly his realisation that too complete an identification with the Middle Ages might tacitly imply a sympathy for Roman Catholicism that made Ruskin attack some aspects of the Middle Ages on moral grounds. (16) In this attack he shows the fear that many Protestants had (Holman Hunt's consistent claim in his memoirs that true Pre-Raphaelitism was not medievalist is another example) of the close affinity between nineteenth-century medievalism and Roman Catholicism.

What did medievalism offer to the artist? Although its origins were in many respects tied up with the Romantic movement, Victorian medievalism seemed in one important aspect to offer a healthy alternative to the sickly Romantic tendency of morbid introspection. (17)

15. Raymond Williams, op.cit., p.152.

16. We don't want either the life or the decorations of the thirteenth century back again; and the circumstances with which you must surround your workmen are those simply of happy modern English life . . . the designs you have now to ask for from your workmen are such as will make modern English life beautiful. All that gorgeousness of the Middle Ages, beautiful as it sounds in description, noble as in many respects it was in reality, had, nevertheless, for foundation and for end, nothing but the pride of life--the pride of the so-called superior classes; a pride which supported itself by violence and robbery, and led in the end to the destruction both of the arts themselves and the States in which they flourished.

(John Ruskin, The Two Paths [1887 edn.], p.125; quoted in Raymond Williams, op.cit., pp.152-3.)

17. Medievalism as a means for artists to objectify themselves was thus, strangely, a weapon on the same side in that particular Victorian battle as muscular Christianity and the public-school character-building process.

The objectivity made possible by delving into the past enabled medievalist art to be more roundedly, less hesitantly, moral than subjective exploration of modern times could be. Medievalism would obviate the subjectivity and formlessness which were likely results when an artist tackled the present. What was not often stated was that medievalism could thus also easily offer a form of escapism into a Wonderland--almost as certain a way of rejecting the uncontrollable anarchy of the present day without directly facing it as was Lewis Carroll's in his Alice books.

Although today we are likely to find subjective accounts of the modern mind among the most sympathetic parts of Victorian poetry, the most severe Victorian criticism, although sometimes not supported by popular taste, rejected them because they lacked broad objective scope and vigour.⁽¹⁸⁾ A significant and strange example of the rejection of sensitive subjective realism in literature for reasons of inner health is Matthew Arnold's suppression in 1853 of his own 'Empedocles on Etna' which had been first published, by itself, in the previous year. In his Preface to the First Edition of Poems in 1853 Arnold gave his reasons for the omission. The subject-matter was intended

to delineate the feelings of one of the last of the Greek religious philosophers . . . living on into a time when the habits of Greek thought and feeling had begun fast to change, character to dwindle . . . Into the feelings of

18. For a more detailed account of the objective/subjective theories of Victorian art, see Walter E. Houghton, op.cit., pp.334-5, from where I have taken the example of Arnold and 'Empedocles on Etna'.

a man so situated there entered much that we are accustomed to consider as exclusively modern . . . the calm, the cheerfulness, the disinterested objectivity have disappeared: the dialogue of the mind with itself has commenced; modern problems have presented themselves; we hear already the doubts, we witness the discouragement, of Hamlet and of Faust. (19)

Such subjectivity, Arnold continues, tends to destroy a sense of artistic form:

What is not interesting is that which does not add to our knowledge of any kind; that which is vaguely conceived and loosely drawn; a representation which is general, indeterminate, and faint, instead of being particular, precise, and firm.

Here, besides vagueness and looseness Arnold is unfortunately also condemning tentative exploration in favour of more classical qualities of precision and omniscience; and thus he is discouraging artists from tackling the disturbingly formless and fluid immediate present, (20) and throwing them back to the past for subject-matter, for the present is bound to be more intractable than the past.

Arnold continues the Preface by advocating a further artistic principle which might not only dissuade writers from approaching modern subjects but also make them embrace easier medieval ones-- the pleasure principle, which means for him escape from the present. Enjoyment of a work of art is bound up with the movement of the action and its situation within a framework which leads to a solution

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19. This extract and the following ones are taken from the Preface to the First Edition of Poems (1853) in Kenneth Allott (ed.), The Poems of Matthew Arnold (1965), pp.590-607.
20. See Kenneth Allott on Arnold's rejection of subjectivity as 'an active avoidance of the pains of poetic creation', The Poems of Matthew Arnold (1965), p.590.

of its problems, not just a static statement of them.

What then are the situations, from the representation of which, though accurate, no poetical enjoyment can be derived? They are those in which the suffering finds no vent in action; in which a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance; in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done. In such situations there is inevitably something morbid, in the description of them something monotonous.

To Arnold the sense of an omniscient framework is vital; statement without the knowledge of where in time's whole perspective it can be exactly placed is not enough, the lesson must be drawn.

Houghton quotes an article from the Quarterly Review of 1856-7 which attacks 'the whole subjective tendency of modern poetry and fiction' and which

praised the poets of the Middle Ages because they were little addicted to 'dissection of the passions, reflections upon the operations of their own minds, morbid self-anatomy', and thus wrote a dramatic art, far superior to the 'analytic' art of modern Europe. (21)

And Houghton summarises the result of the attack on subjectivity in modern art:

It was that point of view, I suggest, which led Arnold to turn from 'Empedocles' to Sohrab and Rostum and Balder Dead, and Tennyson from In Memoriam and Maud to the Idylls; and which directed the Pre-Raphaelite poets to Greek and medieval legend. (22)

What this essentially medievalist view of Arnold's does not take into account is that there are all sorts of new things that

21. 'Gothic Art--John Ruskin', Quarterly Review vii (1856-7), p.490.

22. Walter E. Houghton, op.cit., p.335.

will happen in the future, even in the immediate future a second ahead of the present, which are unpredictable and completely new and fluid, and that moments in the past were at one time similarly unpredictable and new and fluid. Medievalism could too easily curb processes of exploration and discovery for artists either seeking new ways of self-expression and self-discovery, or for those trying to lead art out of its known capabilities into new areas.

There is a 1749 engraving of a panoramic view of London from the new Westminster Bridge to the Tower of London drawn from 'Mr. Scheves' Sugar House' on the South Bank of the Thames.⁽²³⁾ The artist has purposefully ignored the huge three-dimensional, populated, and constantly changing South Bank scene going on all around him, and has started drawing at the foot of the panorama the river itself, with London on the North Bank above it on the engraving. By ignoring the South Bank he has captured a vast panoramic view of the North Bank in the distance, but because of its distance from the artist it is too small to see more than merely perfunctory guidelines to the nature of the individual buildings,⁽²⁴⁾ too small to see individual

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23. Engraving by S. and N. Buck, published in London, 11 September 1749.
24. In some parts the artist commits himself to detail, but because he cannot clearly see from such a distance he makes mistakes in so doing. The spire of St. Martin's in the Fields, for instance, which was the same then as now, has in the engraving one more tier to it than is shown in a clear photograph of the spire on the cover of Peter Kidson, Peter Murray, and Paul Thompson, A History of English Architecture (1965). Similarly Victorian medievalists from their distance are often guilty of historical inaccuracies in their detail. Cf. the Pre-Raphaelite painters' slapdash use of randomly obtained or manufactured properties to model from, which makes some of their medieval paintings full of anachronisms.

people or actions, and it lacks both movement and the third dimension. The sense of life which we know was going on all around the artist in Mr. Scheves' Sugar House has been sacrificed for the sake of the overall view. The artist who employs medievalism is doing the same kind of thing. He is likely to cut himself off from the mobile, and therefore shapeless, three-dimensional reality going on around him, place the comforting blank river gap of five hundred years or so between the present and his subject-matter and give a satisfyingly complete, apparently omniscient, bird's-eye view of the past--complete, that is, unless you want more vividness, detail, sense of reality, movement, and people. (The North Bank of the Thames looks very calm and grand in the engraving from the South Bank, but if we were physically present on the North Side in 1749, as Hogarth was, in Beer Street and Gin Lane, we would have a very different impression.)

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Medievalism was not a new practice in the Victorian age, but its character, importance, and functions underwent considerable changes in the period from 1800 to 1850, in the years just before the Pre-Raphaelites and Hopkins became culturally active. This was largely due to the influences of Keats, A.W.N. Pugin, and the German Nazarenes, who appear at first sight to represent almost completely different sets of values, but who nevertheless have certain common

features. Before these men clarified medievalism for the early Victorians, it was not very distinct from a more general and miscellaneous delving into the past. Antiquarians had appeared long before the nineteenth century--perhaps, as Kenneth Clark says,

they owe their origin to the Reformation, for they saw monasteries destroyed and libraries dispersed, and were moved to perpetuate their vanishing glories. (25)

In the mid-seventeenth century a small group of antiquarians were centred at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and the Society of Antiquaries was refounded in 1707.

In architecture, building churches and colleges in the medieval way had to some extent continued from the Middle Ages even into the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and in the countryside the Gothic methods were continued in barns and farm-buildings well into the nineteenth century. Country workmen who had never heard of Pugin, Clark says,

followed Pugin's True Principles with a naturalness which he praised but could never attain. (26)

But in the main, medievalism was not a survival but a revival, a conscious literary retrospection to a forgotten past age.

As a literary cult it can be traced back through the Gothic mood to the conscious quaintness of Spenser's The Faerie Queene,

25. Kenneth Clark, The Gothic Revival (1962), p.13.

26. The Gothic Revival (1962), pp.9-11.

Gothic elements in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, and Milton's L'Allegro and Il Penseroso. There were two particularly noticeable medievalist elements in Milton's poems. Firstly there was his flat childish picture of the chivalric Middle Ages as a place to escape to in dreams:

to bed they creep,
By whispering Windes soon lull'd asleep.
Towred Cities please us then,
And the busie hum of men,
Where throngs of Knights and Barons bold,
In weeds of Peace high triumphs hold,
With store of Ladies, whose bright eies
Rain influence, and judge the prise
Of Wit, or Arms, while both contend
To win her Grace, whom all commend.

(L'Allegro, lines 115-24)

And then in Il Penseroso there is the famous passage which describes the essence of earnest but sensuous Gothic religious feeling:

But let my due feet never fail,
To walk the studious Cloysters pale,
And love the high embowed Roof,
With antick Pillars massy proof,
And storied Windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing Organ blow,
In Service high, and Anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into extasies,
And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.

(Il Penseroso, lines 155-66)

The Gothic mood became widespread in the first half of the eighteenth century, as Professor Harding writes, as one facet of the 'non-rational' reaction against the Augustan age's 'compact area of

normality, with a small range of permissible interest and sentiment'.⁽²⁷⁾ Even as eminent a classicist as Pope could show his versatility by writing a Gothic poem, Eloisa to Abelard, in 1717. Gray's The Bard was completed in 1757, yet its action takes place five hundred years before and in some respects anticipates Victorian medievalism. Although a classical scholar, Gray mentally transported himself into the Middle Ages, commenting 'I felt myself the Bard', as opposed to the merely formal transportation of Walpole's Gothic and Chatterton's archaic-seeming orthography, diction, and impersonal artistic world. Gray uses the period of Edward the First not just to portray the standard constituents of the eighteenth-century Sublime--the Heroic, the Savage, the Noble, the Wild--but also to point contrasts between, on the one hand, a set of morally and spiritually superior values sustained in an overall prophetic vision (represented by the Bard himself), and, on the other, a worldly unimaginative powerful military ethic (represented by Edward and his army). As Professor Johnston points out:

While the bard's suicide shows a sublime disregard of personal Christian morality, the poem exemplifies divine providence in historical morality.

It is noteworthy that despite this kind of ethical emphasis and the poem's vision of a new age, Dr. Johnson, the arch-representative

27. D.W. Harding, 'The Character of Literature from Blake to Byron', in Boris Ford (ed.), From Blake to Byron (1957), pp.34 and 37.

of a different set of values, could not see a moral in 'The Bard', and found the poem too obscure.⁽²⁸⁾ Gray is important for our purposes because he prefigures two aspects of Victorian medievalism: the usage of historical myth to say things he did not feel could be said in terms of the present age and conventions, and to point a particular kind of moral contrast--the present seen compared with the past against a backcloth of divinely regulated chronology.

Less important were the productions of the Gothic novelists, because they were neither morally nor aesthetically serious, but romans noirs, dependent upon exploitation of the 'beautiful horrid', and noticeable for their authors' flippancy--The Castle of Otranto was written by Walpole 'as the whim of a dilettante mediaevalist'.⁽²⁹⁾ Gothic novels, like the disastrously flimsy central tower of Fonthill Abbey, the embodiment of eighteenth-century Gothic revivalist architectural dreams, were often pasteboard structures.⁽³⁰⁾ A good

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28. I have benefitted from Professor Johnston's seminars (at Birkbeck College, London) and essays on Gray and 'The Bard': Arthur Johnston, 'Poetry and Criticism after 1740', in Roger Lonsdale (ed.), Dryden to Johnson (1971), particularly p.373; and Arthur Johnston (ed.), Selected Poems of Thomas Gray and William Collins (1967), particularly pp.9-10 and 75-6. The quotation is from Selected Poems, p.76.
29. Mario Praz, introductory essay to Peter Fairclough (ed.), Three Gothic Novels (1968), p.9.
30. The great hall of Fonthill Abbey has been characterised as 'immensely sublime and singularly difficult to heat', and the thin octagonal tower, 230 feet high to the top of its pinnacles and constructed from only lath, canvas and cement, was blown over soon after its erection. (T.S.R. Boase, English Art 1800-1870 [1959], pp.26 and 27-8.)

impression of the miscellaneousness and the lack of one coherent view of the Middle Ages that was typical of the late eighteenth century can be gained from the following description of 'The Monk's Parlour', a room in the house that Sir John Soane built for himself to retire to in 1792:

This room . . . is a 'Gothick' fantasy built round the legendary 'Padre Giovanni', whose 'tomb' and the 'ruins' of whose 'cloister' are seen through the window. Both 'tomb' and 'cloister' are composed of miscellaneous fragments, the latter consisting chiefly of fifteenth-century masonry from the old Palace of Westminster. The Parlour itself is hung with casts, mostly taken from medieval buildings and sculptures; but there are many other objects, including seventeenth- and eighteenth-century furniture, pottery (Peruvian and European), natural curiosities, negro shackles, Flemish wood-carvings, and stained glass. The ceiling is made up of models for sculptural features in some of Soane's buildings. The character of the room is intentionally miscellaneous and grotesque, a reflexion of the eighteenth-century conception of the Middle Ages as gloomy and bizarre.

We can note here the different periods, styles, countries of origin, and kinds of ornament; and also the conception of the Middle Ages as 'gloomy'. Other rooms in the house are called 'The Catacombs' ('originally fitted with wooden box-like niches for the reception of Roman Cinerary Urns'), and 'The Sepulchral Chamber' where Soane installed the sarcophagus of Seti I (1303-1290 B.C.)--further illustrations of the fact that Soane, typically of late eighteenth-century medievalists, only flirted with the Middle Ages. (31)

31. [Sir John Summerson,] A Short Description of Sir John Soane's Museum/ 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.2 [n.d.], pp.4-5. I am grateful to Sir John Summerson for conducting me over the Museum and for discussions.

This kind of extravagant and wayward medievalism led on the one hand to Jane Austen's reaction in Northanger Abbey, but on the other to the serious revivalism of Percy's Reliques and Scott's imaginative--thinking and feeling--reconstruction of several centuries in his novels. Scott's influence was wide in the nineteenth century, its most important feature for us being its popularisation of historically based narrative as a vehicle for colourful romantic escapism. Scott's escapism was contemporary with Keats's, but whereas Scott was considered robust and manly G.H. Ford has shown how remarkably one-sided was Keats's impact on the Victorians. Picturing him as Shelley's Adonais--'a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished' (line 48)--and frequently disapproving of the lack of moral in his poetry, they could not usually see the powerful masculine intellect of his best verse.⁽³²⁾ To Tennyson and to the Pre-Raphaelites, as to most mid-Victorians, Keats was 'a poet of the enchantment of medievalism and of vivid colors and pictorial effects'⁽³³⁾--in other words, the immediate precursor of some non-moral, aesthetic aspects of Victorian medievalism and, later on, as Pater claimed, of the art for art's sake movement.

Keats succeeded in making the Middle Ages appear to be less

32. G.H. Ford, Keats and the Victorians (1944).

33. David Perkins (ed.), English Romantic Writers (1967), p.1121.

gloomy and dusty, and to offer a wider range of sensuous experiences than did the Miltonic sublime or Gothic fantasies. This was one prominent feature of his poetry that made him appear to have a softened intellect, a 'feminine' nature. The other was that his early poetry displayed more distinctly than did that of any of his contemporaries or predecessors a certain Romantic characteristic, that of indulging his emotions over, and emphasizing, the small units in a work of art, as objects worthy of note in their own right, so that the work was noticeable for its individual separate pieces, here and there, rather than for its entirety. This concentration on the small unit encouraged a static clustering of descriptive epithets around each image, a consequent obscuring and demotion in importance of the lines of connection and argument between the images, and an increase in power and significance of the individual image, sometimes to a mystical intensity, where it attained the status of a symbol. In Herbert Read's words,

What the romantic poets and critics assert, from Coleridge to Pound . . . the priority of the verbal symbol, of the expressive phrase, which is spontaneous in origin and therefore does not seek a logical order of words, but is uttered as native, natural speech. (34)

'Spontaneous in origin' implies that the single unit in a work of Romantic art is engendered not by the artist working out its part

34. Herbert Read, The True Voice of Feeling/ Studies in English Romantic Poetry (1947), pp.63-4.

in his already formulated overall plan, but by the strength of his emotional reaction to something in nature simultaneously producing its right artistic expression.

Although if we disregard cultural history there is nothing which seems to make sensuousness or a concentration on small units particularly and intrinsically characteristic of the Middle Ages rather than of any other period, they can justifiably be called medievalist characteristics in the light of Victorian culture, where they came to be compared with, on the one hand, neo-classicism's restraint, intellectual control, and sense of overall shape (which seemed totally opposed), and, on the other, with Gothic revivalist architecture (where there seemed to be much in common). And like Pugin Keats consciously harked back to particular artists and features of the past. He was well attuned to Spenser, who, as I have mentioned above, was one of the precursors of neo-medievalism, and was affected by a similar kind of emotional sympathy with Dante to D.G. Rossetti's (this will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter). Keats also had a belief in and a yearning for a 'pure' English language. He had drawn a distinction between Chatterton, whom he thought 'the purest writer in the English Language', and Milton and Chaucer, who were both artful and full of classical and Gallic corruptions:

I always somehow associate Chatterton with autumn. He is the purest writer in the English Language. He has no French idiom, or particles like Chaucer--'tis genuine English Idiom in English words. I have given up Hyperion--there

were too many Miltonic inversions in it--Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful or rather artist's humour. I wish to give myself up to other sensations. English ought to be kept up. (35)

The penultimate sentence in this paragraph is Keatsian but the voice in the last sentence is more characteristic of Hopkins than of Keats.

Three days later Keats wrote:

The Paradise Lost though so fine in itself is a corruption of our language--it should be kept as it is unique--a curiosity. a beautiful and grand Curiosity. The most remarkable Production of the world--A northern dialect accommodating itself to greek and latin inversions and intonations. The purest english I think--or what ought to be the purest--is Chatterton's--The Language had existed long enough to be entirely uncorrupted of Chaucer's gallicisms and still the old words are used--Chatterton's language is entirely northern--I prefer the native music of it to Milton's cut by feet I have but lately stood on my guard against Milton. (36) [Grammatical peculiarities sic]

The aspects of Victorian medievalism, then, that Keats was directly or indirectly responsible for are, firstly, the particular range of sensuous experience that it seemed to offer--enchantment, colour, pictures; secondly, its tendency to concentrate on intensifying and elaborating single images and units in works of art, on making parts important rather than the whole work, and rather than lines of connection between the small units; and thirdly, the search for aesthetic purity, with both moralistic and nationalistic associations, in the past.

35. Letter to J.H. Reynolds of 21 September 1819, in David Perkins (ed.), op.cit., p.1230.

36. Letter to George and Georgiana Keats of 24 September 1819, in David Perkins (ed.), op.cit., p.1233.

Keats and Pugin broadly represent two opposite poles of emphasis in Victorian medievalism, each attracting its own following, but there is also a certain amount of common ground (sensuousness, symbolism, and concentrated small units are all features of Pugin's architecture). But Pugin's great and influential innovation was that he linked nineteenth-century medievalist art with morality and Roman Catholicism. The links were not plain in England until 1836, when there first appeared Pugin's Contrasts: or a Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages, and Corresponding Buildings of the Present Day, shewing the Present Decay of Taste.

The importance of Pugin for us is five-fold.⁽³⁷⁾ Firstly he claimed that architectural values were bound up with those of society--the better a society, the better would be its architecture. The value of a building depended on the moral worth of its creator, and a building had a moral value independent of, and more important than, its aesthetic value. This could be narrowly interpreted: The Ecclesiologist, for instance, demanded that carpenters in architecture should be of good morals.⁽³⁸⁾ But on the other hand

37. I have drawn my material for this section on Pugin mainly from Kenneth Clark, The Gothic Revival (1962), pp.128-33; Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (1971), pp.148-52; Raymond Williams, op.cit., pp.137-9; and Graham Hough, op.cit., pp.84-9.

38. That holiness of life and thought which, while it is necessary for all their fellow-workers in their several degrees, is to none more becoming than to those in whose occupation He, Whose House they are adorning, did not disdain while on earth, to employ His Sacred Hands.
(The Ecclesiologist i 151, quoted in The Gothic Revival [1962], p.153.)

it led to the general blurring of the demarcation line between aesthetic and moral judgements, of which we have seen the results in the first two chapters, and particularly to the idea that works of art generally were essentially connected with the state of society.

The second important novelty of Contrasts was that it fixed a new conception of the Middle Ages, the ethical conception of which Gray's The Bard was a forerunner, as we have seen, and which was eventually accepted by hundreds of writers and artists. If good art was the product of a good society then society would have to be comprehensively reformed before early Victorian art could rise out of its present aesthetic doldrums. The Middle Ages seemed to present an ideal society, in which its social, economic, aesthetic and moral elements all appeared to be satisfactorily bound together and integrated, whereas these elements in present-day society had become distinct and each seemed to be disintegrating. The integrating factor of the Middle Ages appeared to Pugin to be the Roman Catholic Church, and so a return to Roman Catholicism seemed to him the first step towards society's and art's reformation.

The third important feature of Contrasts was that Pugin's architectural ideas entailed an emphasis on emotions, colour, and symbolism, which came to be considered accoutrements of medievalism in art generally. In this he was not only intensifying the trend which Keats had carried on from Spenser, but was also adding a further link between medievalism and High Church religion.

He was not alone in this. The year of his conversion to Roman Catholicism, 1833, was also the year when the Tractarian movement got off the ground with Keble's assize sermon on National Apostasy. The Tractarians brought back colour and sensuousness into religion, and connected ethics with the most satisfying emotions. The emphasis with them was less on preaching than on forms. This gave Pugin the cue he needed to demand a far more developed symbolic system in architecture. Whereas symbolism was an integral part of both medieval religion and architecture, the Classical styles of architecture owed their origins to a non-Christian civilisation and were based on correct appearance to the eye, rather than on an inherent symbolism of its age. It is easy to see how the 'battle of the styles' was joined, and how one side would appear to themselves to be more Christian and to the other side to be extreme to the point where they could easily be accused of Roman Catholicism. The Camden Society, the pietistic archaeological society of Cambridge University, were ready to provide rules on symbolism, and they became the architectural equivalent of the Oxford Movement. They pronounced Gothic as the only true Christian architecture.⁽³⁹⁾ They published a translation of Durandus, the chief expounder of medieval symbolism, and used his authority to show that correct symbolism was essential to Christian architecture, and was in fact the quality that distinguished old

39. And, like Pugin, preferred not just Gothic, but one particular kind--the Decorated, a taste which Hopkins adopted.

from new churches. Pugin had said that only a restoration of the ancient feeling and sentiments could restore Gothic architecture, and it soon became clear that the architectural doctrines of the Camden Society depended on the revival of full Catholic ritual. The Camden Society were therefore accused, along with the Tractarians, of being Papists.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The power of the revived religious symbolism and of the emotion that visual symbolism draws to itself, was acknowledged by the vehemence of the kind of response it provoked.

But despite its Roman Catholic associations, a medievalist form of art, Gothic architecture, with its attendant symbolism and emotions, gradually became firmly established and classicism given a secondary role as a survival, rather than as a continuing tradition.

John Betjeman describes the take-over suggestively:

The Classic Survival is like a grand after-dinner speech, full of wisdom and elegant oratory. It goes with the port and brandy and the leather arm-chairs and the great velvet curtains of the London and provincial clubs and the station hotel. But the young men are not listening. They have turned from Greece and Rome to their own island, to chancel, screen and organ loft, to reredos and stoup.⁽⁴¹⁾

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40. Kenneth Clark, The Gothic Revival (1962), p.149, quotes a virulent attack, of July 1844, in Weale's Quarterly Papers on Architecture: The matter [of the Camden Society] architecturally not less than spiritually, seems to have originated with certain 'clerkes of OXENFORDE'. As the tracts theological, so have the treatises church-gothical, swarmed upon us; till a public, hitherto ignorant of architecture in any variety whatever, is now crammed to suffocation with a spurious knowledge of it in one variety alone . . . Impotent incipency of a bastard superstition! Hopeless tyranny of English church parsondom, seeking under the banners of architecture to revive not the power of the Pope--but the power of Popery in its own body! 'Popery', the visual trappings of Roman Catholicism, was the red rag here, as so often in post-Reformation history, to John Bull.
41. John Betjeman, First and Last Loves (1969), p.135.

'To their own island' brings us to Pugin's fourth point of importance for us--the association of medievalist art with patriotism. Although most of the people who commissioned buildings from Pugin were 'non-Establishment'--what Robert Furneaux Jordan calls 'English Catholics . . . a small clique of eccentric millionaires',⁽⁴²⁾--Gothic eventually established itself as a particularly English style.

The Parliamentary Commission set up in 1835 to decide on a replacement for the burnt ruins of the old Palace of Westminster decided that designs were to be submitted in 'the Gothic or Elizabethan style', and

The Nation . . . now became aware of itself; it basked in the glow of patriotism. Searching, inevitably, for the myth of its own golden age, it found it in Gothic architecture--the 'English style'.⁽⁴³⁾ That Westminster Abbey, with the tombs of medieval kings, was just across the road, also weighed with the Commission. That both the kings and the Abbey were mainly French could, in the exalted mood of 1835, be easily forgotten. Medievalism as a facet of patriotism was as much in the air as was Gothic as a facet of culture. The decision of the Commission was not, after all, so very astonishing. Indeed it was inevitable, Gothic . . . became the official style of England.⁽⁴⁴⁾

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42. Robert Furneaux Jordan, Victorian Architecture (1966), p.78.
43. On 18 June 1866 Hopkins noted that Tintern Abbey (14th century Gothic) was 'the typical English work and reminding one, as Street led one to expect, of Butterfield' (Journals, p.140). In the notes to this entry (Journals, p.357) Sir John Summerson is quoted as suggesting the similarity between certain Tintern Abbey features and parts of Butterfield's work, including some in Balliol College chapel. It seems that the nationalist line of Gothic architecture from Tintern to Butterfield's neo-Gothic had been impressed on Hopkins's mind in conversation with Street, a Hopkins family friend and a pupil of Butterfield's. In June 1866 Hopkins was at the end of his third year at Balliol and must have spent hundreds of hours in the chapel there, staring in the direction of its altar at the east end. The main similarity Summerson sees between Tintern and Balliol chapel is 'the centre light of the E. window of Balliol chapel'.
44. Robert Furneaux Jordan, op.cit., p.76.

As most Roman Catholics in England did not support Pugin and Gothic, preferring Italianate, Gothic was taken over by the Anglican church and could become an Anglican style.⁽⁴⁵⁾ For fifty years almost every new Anglican church was built in Gothic, which eventually spread even to non-Anglicans throughout the English-speaking world, and became a symbol of England to people outside England. Medievalism had become inseparably associated with patriotic feeling in art.

The fifth main reason why Pugin is important for us in a chapter on how medievalism affected Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelite painters is perhaps the most important because it is the most directly applicable to the formal pattern we noticed in Chapter One. This is the gap between conception and execution in Pugin's architecture, between the feeling and idea behind the work of art on the one hand, and the final product on the other. Pugin's skill in detail was acknowledged even by his severest critics, among them Newman⁽⁴⁶⁾ and Ruskin. Ruskin wrote:

Expect no cathedrals from him, but no one at present can design a better finial. That is an exceedingly beautiful one over the Western door of St. George's, and there is some spirited impishness and twisting of tails in the supporting figures at the imposts.⁽⁴⁷⁾

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45. Robert Furneaux Jordan, *op.cit.*, p.86.
46. Nothing could be further from Pugin's idea of a nineteenth-century church, for instance, than Newman's Catholic University church in St. Stephen's Green, Dublin, a Romanesque basilica.
47. 'Romanist Modern Art', Appendix xii to Stones of Venice i, in E.T. Cook and A. Wedderburn (eds.), The Works of John Ruskin (1903-12) ix 436.

But Pugin's sensuousness so affected him that he would often become carried away with love of detail. Kenneth Clark has pointed out how he could become so preoccupied with the detail of a rood screen, for instance, that it became uncoordinated and gave a 'distressing sense of wasted labour', while the more important parts of the basic structure, the piers and arches, were noticeably flimsy, and the roof extremely mean.⁽⁴⁸⁾ The details he designed were intensely dramatic and rich in themselves, but were uncoordinated and impractical, and were often at the cost of faults in the basic construction. Pugin was a dreamer, a prophet, and a designer, but not a builder--his drawings and etchings are more satisfactory than his finished buildings.⁽⁴⁹⁾

48. Kenneth Clark, The Gothic Revival (1962), pp.157, 121.

49. They were intended to stimulate, not to inform; and on many we can pass no architectural judgement. Even if we discount the unusually fine weather which prevails in architectural drawings, the detail is too sketchy and we are ignorant of the materials employed. Look at the frontispiece to Pugin's Apology. It represents twenty-two churches and chapels, chosen from his work, ranged like a Gothic New Jerusalem before the rising sun. The dramatic effect (largely obtained by the expedient of suppressing cast shadows) is tremendous. Our spirit is exalted by the aspiring pinnacles and soars high above architectural details to the promised land beyond. Were we on earth walking about among these buildings the effect would be less agreeable. And though it may be objected that this plate is an unfair instance, being in intention symbolical and not instructive, the same is true of other designs. Downside Priory and St Bernard's, Leicestershire, are impressive groups of buildings; each is seen from a neighbouring hill in such a way that its magnificent setting is apparent. Unfortunately the detail is invisible.

(Kenneth Clark, The Gothic Revival [1962], pp.118-19.)

He could not plan buildings in three dimensions; there is always the awareness of his stage-set designing origins. It can be seen why he was employed on the new Houses of Parliament to add detailed ornament only, while Barry was chosen to compose the sound basic structure.

As we have seen, Pugin insisted that revival of the Gothic style must depend on revival of the feelings from which it originally sprang. But he laid too great a stress on the moral and religious background of medieval builders, and not enough on the artistic feelings which, connecting their minds and their hands, produced integrated works of art. Pugin failed to realise that only the Gothic ages could produce Gothic works as a natural product. The Victorian age was a utilitarian one and he was purposely opposing the age, escaping from it into idealism--an escape which manifested itself in the unsatisfactory hiatus between his concepts and his executed works. (50)

Architecture was the most prominent and all-pervasive branch of Victorian medievalist art, and other branches frequently took their lead from it. Both Hopkins⁽⁵¹⁾ and the Pre-Raphaelite painters⁽⁵²⁾

50. Kenneth Clark, The Gothic Revival (1962), p.117, says: Victorian Gothic churches were constructed in a manner opposed to utility, economy, or good sense--a very wonderful achievement in the mid nineteenth century.

51. See Appendix: 'Hopkins and Gothic architecture'.

52. Hunt says, op.cit. i 106-7, that in an early discussion of their guiding principles the P.R.B. 'agreed that architecture also came within the proper work of a painter who, learning the principles of construction from Nature herself, could apply them by shaping and decorating the material he had to deal with'.

believed that architecture was intertwined with their own artistic interests. As we have already seen richness of and concentration on detail at the expense of a sense of balance and coordination was a characteristic which they shared.

Here, in order to complete the background and carry us forward to the time when the Pre-Raphaelite painters enter^{on} the cultural scene, I will mention the Nazarenes, whose important influence both on the Pre-Raphaelite painters in particular, and on medievalism in early Victorian art generally, has been emphasised by two recent books.⁽⁵³⁾ Before the Nazarenes were first noticed in England, about 1829,⁽⁵⁴⁾ there had been several paintings portraying medieval scenes, by among others Henry Fuseli and Thomas Stothard, but they were usually flat, distant, literary, and anecdotal. By contrast, this early nineteenth-century group of German painters were earnest, religious, and romantic medievalists. Steegman well summarises their significance for us and shows how they helped to reinforce the moral and religious emphasis of Pugin's medievalism:

Instead of making their lives and their work an active element of the times they lived in, they adopted a deliberate primitivism in their religion, in their painting technique and even in their dress. The 'primitivism' was in fact medievalism, which at that time was often considered as synonymous with the primitive. Clearly, if art and prayer

53. Keith Andrews, The Nazarenes: A Brotherhood of German Painters in Rome (1964), and John Steegman, Victorian Taste (1970), particularly pp.27-48.

54. According to John Steegman, op.cit., p.33, they were noticed about that time by Charles Eastlake, the future President of the Royal Academy.

are to be associated in a ritual way of living, some repudiation of modern conditions will be necessary. If one holds the view that the modern world has gone wrong, and at the same time is impelled by the desire to set it right, it is not illogical to go back to a point in time before that at which error crept in, and to begin afresh from there.

The Nazarenes believed that this point occurred with Raphael. Some of them felt that the Master himself was not actively poisonous, though his example was; others felt that even Raphael must be rejected, and even Perugino, and that Fra Angelico and Dürer were the last of the great Masters; yet others believed that painting had perished with Giotto. All, however, agreed that the Renaissance had ruined painting and the world. It was necessary, therefore, to reject all technical progress since the beginning of the cinquecento. The Romans⁽⁵⁵⁾ laughed at them, and called them derisively not only 'Nazarenes', but also 'Pre-Raphaelites'.⁽⁵⁶⁾

The community of interests between the Nazarenes and early Victorian English medievalism as I have pictured it is very apparent from this passage, but is not so remarkable as the similarity in thought between the Nazarenes and the Pre-Raphaelite painters. The more one learns about the Nazarenes the smaller becomes the area in which the English Pre-Raphaelite painters seem capable of substantiating their claims to originality.

The Nazarenes were admired during the eighteen-thirties and -forties by intellectuals in London, Edinburgh, and at the universities, and Steegman quotes extensively from references to them in the Quarterly Review and The Art-Union of those decades. Their influence

55. They first established themselves as a school in Rome, but later moved to Düsseldorf.

56. John Steegman, op.cit., p.29.

in England was particularly helped by Prince Albert, by the leading painters William Dyce and Daniel Maclise, and by Charles Eastlake. Dyce visited the Nazarenes in Rome in 1828, studied their methods and kept close affinities with them in his paintings, which were highly praised by the leading Nazarene, Overbeck. The commission set up under Albert to select pictorial decorations for the new Houses of Parliament interviewed Peter Cornelius, another prominent Nazarene, about the suitability of fresco painting, a medieval process they had revived, and although the idea favoured by many of importing a German artist for the paintings themselves was not patriotic enough to come to fruition, most of the designs eventually selected by the commission show Nazarene influence.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Particular facets of the Nazarenes' combination of morals, religion and art had further influence. Their repudiation of Raphael's followers and advocacy of Fra Angelico influenced English painters, particularly, of course, the Pre-Raphaelites themselves. They forged further links between painting and architecture, strongly appealing to, for instance, Butterfield and Street, two of the most prominent architects who followed Pugin in the Gothic Revival. Clark says:

Fra Angelico became for them the greatest figure in art, their patron saint, as Raphael was the patron saint of the classical party. That innocent sensualist must have been a relief after the severities of Gothic architecture, though the revivalists themselves confessed to very different

57. Jeremy Maas, op.cit., pp.25-8.

motives. 'Foremost among those', writes the younger Street in his biography of his father, 'whose works breathe a spirit of purity and devotion stands Fra Angelico, and so strongly did my father feel the exalted nature of his work, that he made a proper appreciation of it a test of his own moral state'.⁽⁵⁸⁾

Street's mentor, William Butterfield, was so enthusiastic about the Nazarenes that he employed William Dyce⁽⁵⁹⁾ to paint frescoes in the Nazarene manner in All Saints, Margaret Street, London, the church, started in 1849, which was meant to embody the principles of the Camden Society.⁽⁶⁰⁾ The influence of the Nazarenes' principles

58. Kenneth Clark, The Gothic Revival (1962), p.203.
59. It seems certain to me that Dyce's influence on the development of Victorian art has been seriously under-estimated. He seems to have a finger in more cultural pies than anyone else in early Victorian England except Ruskin and the Eastlakes. He had an important official position as Superintendent of the Schools of Design set up by the State in 1836, and besides the activities I have mentioned was a leader of the High Church movement, a composer of church music, and wrote on ecclesiastical architecture. He was the connecting link between the key cultural figures of the Nazarenes, Prince Albert, Charles Eastlake, Ruskin, and the Pre-Raphaelites; between the countries of Germany and England, and with Continental schools of art generally; and between the institutions of the Royal Academy, the committee for decorating the new Houses of Parliament, schools of art training, the Oxford movement, and the Camden Society.
60. This church played a large part in Hopkins's early life and cultural development. Before his conversion to Roman Catholicism he and his family used to worship there, and his sister Millicent became an Anglican nun attached to it. Street was a sidesman there, was a personal family friend of the Hopkinses', and Gerard knew him well enough to consult him over the design of an ecclesiastical bottle and stopper for Bridges (see Letters i 4-5, 8, 10-14, 16). Its architecture was frequently discussed by Hopkins in his Journals (see Appendix), and Butterfield, as a result, became his favourite architect. (Street was the next most frequently mentioned architect.)

can also be demonstrated from Lord Lindsay's Sketches of the History of Christian Art (3 vols., 1847), which was the subject of an article in the Quarterly Review by Ruskin, who was so enthusiastic about the book that he founded, with Lindsay and others, the Arundel Society in 1848. 'The objects of the Society', Steegman writes,

were to preserve some record of early paintings, chiefly Italian frescoes, and to diffuse a knowledge of them, in the hope that 'greater familiarity with the severe and purer style of earlier Art would divert the public taste from works that were meretricious and puerile, and elevate the ⁽⁶¹⁾tone of our national School of Paintings and Sculpture'.

It can be seen that this authoritative protest against the state of modern art and call for a new medievalist national school came just at the right time for the Pre-Raphaelite painters. The Pre-Raphaelites not only highly exaggerated their claims to originality but could even be said to be largely cyphers put onto the treadmill of Victorian painting history, whose course was already largely programmed by all these medievalist influences. There were several other factors which show how, rather than choosing their course, they were urged onto it by the current trend of medievalist art. The early P.R.B. paintings, for instance, were far more directly influenced by the Nazarenes and their English contemporaries than they admitted. One of the winning painters in the Houses of Parliament competition was the Nazarene-influenced John Rogers Herbert, whose

61. John Steegman, op.cit., p.73.

1847 Royal Academy painting 'Our Saviour Subject to His Parents at Nazareth' is astonishingly close in subject-matter to Millais' 'Christ in the House of His Parents' and in treatment to Rossetti's 'The Girlhood of Mary Virgin', both of which were painted within the following two years. Although it is usual to say that William Dyce's paintings after 1850 show the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites, it seems to me that the obvious similarities (I have already mentioned his 'Gethsemane') are due more to the fact that, knowing the Nazarenes' work more intimately, probably, than any other man in England, he passed his knowledge on to the P.R.B. There are the facts to support this that, like the Nazarenes, he had an extensive knowledge of the early Italian masters long before the P.R.B. had acquired their meagre crumbs of information, and he was also a friend of Ruskin's. It was he who persuaded Ruskin to look twice at Millais' 'Christ in the House of His Parents' at the 1850 Academy exhibition.⁽⁶²⁾ The formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was urged on by the coincidence in 1848 of three factors: a group of publicity-conscious young artists wanting a direction for their energies; their chance discovery in the same year as the Arundel Society was founded of a volume of Engravings of the Benozzo Gozzoli Frescoes in the Campo Santo at Pisa by Carlo Lasinio, and their connection of the two; and the fact that Rossetti became a pupil of Ford Madox Brown, who in 1845 had journeyed abroad, become familiar with the works of the Nazarenes there, and had started painting in a similar manner.

62. Timothy Hilton, op.cit., pp.126-8.

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John Betjeman, in the quotation I used above, noted that medievalism was the preoccupation of keen young Victorians, whereas classicism seemed to suit their more relaxed elders, and the artistic careers of Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelites all started with bursts of youthful enthusiasm for medievalism. As we have seen in Chapter Two the early Pre-Raphaelite manifesto The Germ is more noticeable for the lack of definition in and lack of cohesion of its ideas than for a clear statement of the P.R.B. aims, which, as W.M. Rossetti wrote in the first issue, were to adhere to 'the simplicity of Nature'. John Tupper advocated contemporary subjects for paintings, while F.G. Stephens praised earnestness and wholesomeness in art. Here are three different emphases, none of them advocating medievalism, and Tupper is positively opposed to it. Holman Hunt continually emphasises in his memoirs that 'the simple principle of Pre-Raphaelitism' is 'the unending study of Nature . . . an eternal principle';⁽⁶³⁾ 'all our circle knew that deeper devotion to Nature's teaching was the real point at which we were aiming';⁽⁶⁴⁾ or again, 'we were intending to stand or fall by the determination to cut away from all conventions not endorsed by further appeal to unsophisticated Nature'.⁽⁶⁵⁾ But the fact remains that the Pre-Raphaelite painters

63. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. ii 268.

64. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. i 93.

65. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. i 159.

were seldom accepted on Hunt's terms by anyone except Hunt, and were generally understood by friends and enemies alike to be medievalists. I have already quoted the letter from Thomas Dixon to W.M. Rossetti in which he praises the pictures and essays in The Germ because they

produce on the mind such a vague and dreamy sensation, approaching as it were the Mystic Land of a Bygone Age . . . there is [in] them the life which I long for, (66) and which to me never seems realizable in this life.

'Dreamy', 'sensation', 'Mystic Land', 'Bygone Age', and desire for escape into the past away from the present, are all, as we have seen, recognisably medievalist attributes and effects.

The first two works exhibited at the Royal Academy which were painted according to P.R.B. principles were 'Isabella' and 'Rienzi', and the Athenaeum review of 1849, discussing them together, emphasises two characteristics--their medieval quality and their draughtsmanship:

. . . so much that is obsolete and dead in practice . . . both are a recurrence to the expression of a time when art was in a state of transition or progression rather than accomplishment . . . such pictorial form of expression as, seen through the magnifying medium of a lens, would be presented to us in the mediaeval illumination of the chronicle or the romance. Against this choice of pictorial expression let the student be cautioned. He may gain admirers by it among those whose antiquarian prejudices may be gratified by the clever revival of the merely curious, but he will fail to win the sympathy of those who know what are the several integral parts necessary to making up the great sum of truth. (67)

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66. Letter of 10 January 1859, reprinted in W.M. Rossetti (ed.), Ruskin, Rossetti, Praeraphaelitism (1899), p.221.
67. Quoted in Millais Exhibition (1967) Catalogue, p.26.

This charge of antiquarianism hurt Hunt, and fifty years later he refuted it:

Antiquarianism in its historic sense was being instructively pursued in connection with Art, and in its proper place it did good service, leading to the presentation of ancient story in a strictly historic mould. In determining the character of costume and accessories in historical pictures it was of modern introduction and great value towards the realisation of the story, and with intelligent people this tended to break down some of the prejudice against modern Art, but antiquarianism as to manner of design and painting was quite foreign to our purpose. (68)

Hunt was conscious that the charge of antiquarianism had had sufficient currency over the previous fifty years to still need refuting.

To Punch, the recorder of average middle-class taste, the one quality for which it satirised the Pre-Raphaelite painters was medievalism. Punch's ideal artist was W.P. Frith, who painted modern subjects from 1852 onwards. Scenes from modern life were at that time, Frith reported,

quite a novelty in the hands of anyone who could paint tolerably. When the picture was finished, Leech [the Punch artist] came to see it, and expressed his pleasure at an artist leaving what he called 'mouldy costumes', for the habits and manners of everyday life. (69)

It is significant that Frith, the painter of 'Derby Day', 'Railway Station', and 'Ramsgate Sands', and Leech, the 'backbone of Punch', were good friends (Frith wrote a biography of Leech in 1891), because Punch, as Steegman says

68. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. i 120.

69. Neville Wallis (ed.), A Victorian Canvas/ The Memoirs of W.P. Frith, R.A. (1957), pp.171-2.

enormously admired Frith's 'Ramsgate Sands' of 1854, because it was frankly contemporary, and not medievalist. Pointing in the same direction, Punch showed a drawing, about two years later, of a young artist who has painted 'a modern Subject from Real Life', and sold his picture; while two rather moth-eaten rivals, 'very high-art men, who can't get on without medieval costume and all the rest of it', find their own pictures unsold. (70)

When Millais departed from medieval subjects he became a favourite of Punch's, and well-known pictures of his were used as the basis of serious cartoons in the 1870's and 1880's (for example, 'The North-West Passage' was turned into a cartoon by Swain on 5 December 1874, 'It can be done, and England means to do it', to show Disraeli and Britannia together concerned with a new Polar expedition, and it is captioned 'Respectfully dedicated to J.E. Millais, R.A.'). (71)

Hopkins's interest in the P.R.B. as a body was aroused in 1864, when an entry in his diary reads 'Notes for essay on Some aspects of Modern mediaevalism', (72) and in the next few pages he makes several notes on the P.R.B. (73) and the French and German Pre-Raphaelites. (74) As late as 1866, he still characterises the P.R.B. as 'our medievalists'. (75) Hunt's denial of the P.R.B.'s medievalism involves him in some strained

70. John Steegman, op.cit., p.268.

71. Reproduced in Mr. Punch's Victorian Era/ An Illustrated Chronicle of Fifty Years of the Reign of Her Majesty the Queen (1887), p.299.

72. Journals, p.26.

73. Journals, pp.30 and 31.

74. Journals, pp.31 and 32-3.

75. Journals, p.144.

explanations. In the following passage he tries hard to explain the term 'Pre-Raphaelitism' and deny its most obvious connotations:

. . . the name adopted by us negated the suspicion of any servile antiquarianism. Pre-Raphaelitism is not Pre-Raphaelism . . . The artists who . . . servilely travestied the failures of this prince of painters [Raphael] were Raphaelites . . . [the successors of Raphael] were lethal in their influence, tending to stifle the breath of design. The name Pre-Raphaelite excludes the influence of such corrupters of perfection, even though Raphael, by reason of certain of his works, be in the list.⁽⁷⁶⁾

Hunt seems to object to the charge of Pre-Raphaelite medievalism for three main reasons. If it stuck, it would make D.G. Rossetti and F.M. Brown, obvious medievalists and hated by him, permanent associates of his; it would, so he thought, lend justification to the frequent charge that the P.R.B. was tinged with Roman Catholicism; but, above all, it would lessen their claim to originality.

Throughout his book Pre-Raphaelitism, therefore, whenever an opportunity arises, Hunt indignantly contradicts 'commentators [who] have declared that our real ambition was to be revivalists and not adventurers into new regions'.⁽⁷⁷⁾ The Nazarenes, according to Hunt, who called them 'Overbeckians' or the 'Early Christian School', were revivalists, or 'narrow medievalists'. They had been introduced into England by 'Herbert, Dyce, Maclise, Cave-Thomas and others' and then adopted by Ford Madox Brown.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Overbeckianism he called 'that

76. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. i 94.

77. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. i 93.

78. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. i 120.

Continental dogma which was one of the principal enemies we originally committed ourselves to destroy'.⁽⁷⁹⁾ It had been taken up by 'vapid imitators of archaic design'. The aims of these new medievalists

were to avoid giving any offence in this direction, for they loved only that which five centuries since was (satisfying,⁸⁰ but which now expressed only the peace of the tomb.

These modern medievalists, Hunt said, would please the Reverend E.

Young who wrote in a book published as an answer to Ruskin's

Pre-Raphaelitism, 'All I ask is that heaven-born realists would at

least abstain from Scripture subjects'. Hunt replies by putting the

emphasis on the modernity of the Pre-Raphaelites:

he had no cause to fear that the artists of his choice would offend in their works by showing advance in critical understanding. If our reverend critic meant that we were Realists he certainly did not understand much of Art, yet he was right in concluding that we should design nothing of Scripture subject without⁽⁸¹⁾ the interpretation of modern thought and intelligence.

Modernity involved 'thoroughness'. Having to explain the undoubted

fact that Rossetti's 'The Girlhood of Mary Virgin' had 'PRB' painted

on it, Hunt contrasts the two qualities, pernicious Overbeckian

medievalism versus praiseworthy Pre-Raphaelite modern thoroughness:

It turned out, however, that the picture was completed and realised with that Pre-Raphaelite thoroughness which Brown's mediaeval supervision would not have⁽⁸²⁾ instilled, so it appeared with our monogram, P.R.B.

79. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. i 159.

80. and 81. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. i 295.

82. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. i 120.

Apart from thus tendentiously slanting his evidence Hunt is guilty of ignoring the plain fact that the Nazarenes had been the first to be called Pre-Raphaelites,⁽⁸³⁾ and that most of the P.R.B.'s earliest exhibited paintings had been deliberately retrospective in style and subject-matter, if not immediately recognisable as medievalist. It seems to me that Hunt is also guilty of falsely denying the Nazarenes' influence on his own work, on the evidence of his 1847 painting 'Christ and the Two Marys', which is straightforwardly derivative of the Nazarenes, and could be mistaken for a painting of Dyce's or Ary Scheffer's.⁽⁸⁴⁾ This was of course painted before the P.R.B. came into existence, but qualities in Pre-Raphaelite paintings proper of child-like simplicity, lack of chiaroscuro, vivid colours, plein-air brightness, and use of symbolic objects and gestures, were considered to be medievalist, whether historically originating in the Middle Ages or not.

The middle-class public had its own ideas of what medievalism was. The Pre-Raphaelites had repudiated Raphael and so must have embraced medievalism. Medievalism also meant Romanism, and an early way of criticising their paintings was the invocation of this fashionable prejudice--in terms such as Mariolatry, hagiolatry and Romanism. The connection was fashionable because in 1850 Pope Pius IX

83. John Steegman, op.cit., pp.176-7.

84. See no.8 (p.21), and Plate 5 of the Hunt Exhibition (1969) Catalogue. I am thinking of the pronounced similarity between Hunt's Christ, for instance, and Scheffer's in Scheffer's 'Christ Tempted by Satan' (in the reserve collection of the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, and no. 48 in that Gallery's 1970 exhibition, 'The Taste of Yesterday').

revived the Catholic Hierarchy in England, and the religious controversies centred twenty years earlier around the Oxford Movement were revived. Ruskin, writing in defence of the Pre-Raphaelites in 1851, showed himself aware of both this popular prejudice and also the possibilities of a genuine connection:

If their sympathies with the early artists lead them into medievalism or Romanism they will of course come to nothing. But I believe there is no danger of this, at least for the strongest among them. There may be some weak ones whom the Tractarian heresies may touch; but if so, they will drop off like decayed branches from a strong stem. (85)

Steegman, who quotes this passage, notes that one of the original Brotherhood, James Collinson, was in fact converted to Roman Catholicism, and this 'cast the suspicion of heresy on the whole group'. (86) Collinson is interesting because he shows the way the common P.R.B. tendencies of moralising and medievalism could have affected other members of the group if they carried them further--his personal principles so affected his paintings that they have no life or colour or force. He became a Jesuit for a short time, left and took up painting again, portraying religious legends or other medieval subjects almost exclusively. Ruskin did not sympathise with that part of medievalism which was concerned with religion, because, like Holman Hunt, he was (at the time of the early P.R.B. paintings, that is)

85. Ruskin letter in The Times, 13 May 1851.

86. John Steegman, op.cit., pp.170-1.

an ardent Protestant, and, as I have already noted, feared the medievalist/Romanist connection. He even criticised Millais' 'Mariana', in an otherwise complimentary letter to The Times (the same letter of 13 May 1851), for its Romanist props, saying sarcastically that he was glad to see that Millais' 'lady in blue' was 'heartily tired of painted windows and idolatrous toilet table' (there are a miniature altar, devotional images, and a burning candle on the dressing-table in the picture, and its stained-glass windows were painted from some in Merton College, Oxford).

Many common aspects of Pre-Raphaelite paintings are in the Victorian medievalist tradition. In common with much contemporary literature (Tennyson's Idylls of the King, and Arnold's Tristram and Iseult, for example) many Pre-Raphaelite paintings have subjects remote in time and with a romantic heroic conflict.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Hunt's 'Rienzi' has a heroic subject, for instance, with Rienzi and the knight on the left of the picture, Adrian, in conventional heroic attitudes--Rienzi looks earnestly towards heaven, with his fist clenched while he vows justice, and Adrian adopts an exaggerated look of tender concern with his hand clasped to his breast.⁽⁸⁸⁾ The awkwardness of these gestures is a common Pre-Raphaelite characteristic, and is partly due to overstatement of the heroic, so that the heroic

87. John Steegman, op.cit., p.173, remarks that 'if Tennyson had been also a painter, the background of his pictures round about 1850 would have been extremely Pre-Raphaelite'.

88. Hunt Exhibition (1969), no.12.

idea has nearly always become demoted to the melodramatic before it is expressed in paint--Hunt's 'Valentine rescuing Sylvia from Proteus', Rossetti's 'How they met themselves', and Millais' 'Christ in the House of His Parents' are prime examples.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Sometimes Millais is capable of far more sensitive gestures in his paintings--Mariana's languid stretching, for instance, has often been noticed--but throughout his career he could always overdramatise ('The Boyhood of Raleigh' and 'Ferdinand Lured by Ariel' are further examples).

It is noticeable that Shakespearean subjects, such as 'Ferdinand Lured by Ariel' and 'Valentine rescuing Sylvia from Proteus', are often turned into quite unShakespearean Victorian medievalist heroic tableaux, with each character playing a part which has been translated into terms of a melodramatic ritual. This type of the heroic is dependent for its effect on the artist's use of symbolic gestures and properties, not on the original text. The heroic also distances the characters of the paintings so that they look too clean and effete to be true. There is no comparison between the reality of 'Rienzi's battlefield and one in a Goya or Delacroix painting. This lack of realism caused by the heroic is emphasised by the purposely bright colours the Pre-Raphaelites used and their preference for clear-cut lines and definite statement rather than shadow or suggestion, making

89. Bearing in mind the great difference between these heavy Pre-Raphaelite gestures and the French subtlety and ease in making the rhetorical point apparent in Hogarth's paintings, I think that the other large factor is the post-Hogarthian Dutch influence in English painting.

the medievalist world that of an illustration to a child's book, rather than a time which actually existed. Milton's 'L'Allegro' flat dream world is the backcloth and Victorian melodrama is at the front of the stage in these paintings. It is only very rarely in Pre-Raphaelite paintings that real feeling, as opposed to the conventional expression, the literary idea, of a feeling, comes obviously and genuinely onto the canvas. The desire to portray moral feelings, whether religious or more generally didactic or heroic, combined with the medievalist/escapist desire for the comfort of synthesis (expressed in the narrative frameworks of their paintings) to produce the typical early Pre-Raphaelite painting; these factors were part of the artist's inheritance just as much as paint and canvas, and similarly imposed their own limitations on each painting before the artist decided its subject and treatment, preconditioning that painting so that the important artistic quality, the building-up of expressions of feeling into an overall organic unity in the picture, was doomed before birth.

The fact that so much of their art expresses non-artistic aspects of the Victorian frame of mind shows how much the Puginesque idea of a work of art being intrinsically connected with the moral state of the society which produced it had affected the Pre-Raphaelite painters. Their early earnestness combined with their usual retrospection showed their implicit agreement with Pugin also in his conception of the Middle Ages as an ethical one. We have seen

how, although the charge was usually difficult to substantiate, the Pre-Raphaelites were accused of being Romanists because they were medievalists--another piece of Puginesque logic. And we have seen in Chapter Two and this chapter that Hunt considered that Art should be a vehicle for patriotism, and to go back to the Middle Ages was to find a purer strain of Englishness--very much a tenet of the English Gothic Revival architects. There is not a comparable overt jingoistic note in other Pre-Raphaelite painters, but in so many of their paintings to escape from the modern industrial world 'seared with trade, smeared with toil' into the medieval world meant a portrayal of a Franciscan joy in the natural world in terms of a very detailed look at the English countryside, with common English trees, flowers and grasses painted so that they could be models for a botanist. Natural conservation is a very patriotic act. (90)

Earlier in this chapter I showed that certain aspects of Pugin's medievalism overlapped with some of Keats's--the interest in details, emancipating them from more than token allegiance to the overall shape of the work of art, and expanding their importance by concentrating interest and craftsmanship on them until they achieved the status of symbols in their own right. The Pre-Raphaelite painters similarly concentrated on details, as we have seen, either from a Ruskinian desire for minute accuracy of representation (as in most

90. Mr. Duncan Sandys, whose political views are, I think, generally acknowledged to belong to the flag-waving right wing of the present British Conservative party, is a strong activist in The National Trust movement.

of their natural scenes), or to emphasise the symbol (as Hunt did, for instance, in his modern moral paintings, or in the grotesque sprawl of the drunken porter in 'The Eve of St. Agnes'). This concentration on detail was aided by new techniques (which will be more fully discussed in the next chapter), such as painting over a wet white ground, and the use of new bright aniline dyes. Both these techniques heightened the colours, which as I have said were not usually shaded off to overlap the next patch of colour, so that a jarring patchwork effect was created.

The Pre-Raphaelite painters were influenced, however, in other ways by Keats's medievalism. Sometimes this was shown in paintings whose subjects were directly taken from Keats's poetry. Keats was a favourite with Hunt and Millais, but the contact with Rossetti was of a different nature. Besides being attuned to Spenser, Keats was much affected by a similar kind of aesthetic sympathy with Dante to Rossetti's--Robert Bridges remarked that Keats imitated Dante's inflections but not the main substance of his thought.⁽⁹¹⁾ Keats, like Rossetti, was particularly enamoured of Canto V of the Inferno, where Dante meets and tells the story of Paolo and Francesca. Rossetti's water-colour painting, which I have mentioned above, has, in Virginia Surtees' description,

Francesca and Paolo . . . in the left compartment in the act of kissing; Dante and Virgil crowned with laurel

91. Robert Bridges, 'A Critical Introduction to Keats', in Collected Essays and Papers iv (1929).

and bay-leaf in the centre panel look compassionately towards the lovers in the third compartment locked in each other's arms, floating in eternity through the flames of Hell. (92)

Keats wrote in a letter to George and Georgiana Keats:

The fifth canto of Dante pleases me more and more--it is that one in which he meets with Paolo and Francesca-- I had passed many days in rather a low state of mind and in the midst of them I dreamt of being in that region of Hell. The dream was one of the most delightful enjoyments I ever had in my life--I floated about the whirling atmosphere as it is described with a beautiful figure to whose lips mine were joined as it seem'd for an age--and in the midst of all this cold and darkness I was warm--even flowery tree tops sprung up and we rested on them sometimes with the lightness of a cloud till the wind blew us away again-- I tried a Sonnet upon it. (93)

Soon afterwards in the same letter there follows the sonnet 'On a Dream', which concludes:

But to that second circle of sad hell,
Where 'mid the gust, the whirlwind, and the flaw
Of rain and hail-stones, lovers need not tell
Their sorrows. Pale were the sweet lips I saw,
Pale were the lips I kiss'd, and fair the form
I floated with, about that melancholy storm. (94)

Particularly striking is the similarity between firstly, the wholeheartedness of Keats's and Rossetti's empathy, both identifying themselves with Dante's scene to a Romantic excessiveness, and secondly, their ignoring of the moral substance and background of Dante's thought.

92. Rossetti Exhibition (1973) Catalogue, p.35.

93. Letter of 14 February-3 May 1819, printed in David Perkins (ed.), op.cit., pp.1221-6.

94. In David Perkins (ed.), op.cit., p.1181

Because of these two factors Rossetti was the only major Pre-Raphaelite painter whose pictures totally and directly benefited from medievalism. Instead of providing a framework which distanced and falsified his emotions, as we have seen that medievalism could do, for Rossetti it became not a means of escape from true expression but the provider of a framework which could emblazon and yet contain his passions. The moral and story-telling frameworks which were the artistic conventions of the day would not allow him direct expression of his abnormally strong emotions. Religion and sexual love were not as far apart in medieval times as they were in Victorian, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti found sanction in his namesake, Dante. Kenneth Clark shows how the two medieval ideas of courtly, worldly love and religious love could come together in the Middle Ages and its art:

I suppose one must admit that the cult of the Virgin had something to do with it. In this context it sounds rather blasphemous, but the fact remains that one often hardly knows if a medieval love lyric is addressed to the poet's mistress or to the Virgin Mary. The greatest of all writings about ideal love, Dante's Vita Nuova, is a quasi-religious work, and in the end it is Beatrice who introduces Dante to Paradise.

For all these reasons I think it is permissible to associate the cult of ideal love with the ravishing beauty and delicacy that one finds in the madonnas of the thirteenth century. Were there ever more delicate creatures than the ladies on Gothic ivories?⁽⁹⁵⁾

The obliqueness of the medieval framework made Rossetti's pictures sufficiently distant from the present, on the one hand, to lull his audience into accepting his strong emotions (compare the way in which

95. Kenneth Clark, Civilisation: A Personal View (1969), pp.64-5.

the nude in Victorian paintings 'slipped through the clutches of middle-class morality' by being clothed in respectably distant names like Andromeda or Psyche),⁽⁹⁶⁾ and sufficiently distant, on the other, to enable him to synthesize--to formulate and transfer his emotions onto canvas, instead of his being completely swamped and incapacitated by them as he so often was.

Hunt had claimed that Pre-Raphaelite paintings that had pictured past ages related that past to the present. Rossetti found that Dante's legends with comparatively few complications enabled him to withdraw from the actuality of prosaic common experience and yet express his real poetic emotions. Although the superficial subject of his Dante paintings is romantic love, Rossetti transcended the banality which, we feel, would have been the inevitable result of any other Pre-Raphaelite painter's attempts at the same subject, by choosing to illustrate particularly dramatic moments of the Vita Nuova, significant meetings, dreams and visions, most of which proved to be

96. See Ronald Pearsall, The Worm in the Bud/ The World of Victorian Sexuality (1969), pp.148-50. Obvious examples are Leighton's 'Perseus and Andromeda', and Etty's nudes, such as 'Eurydice' and 'Aurora and Zephyr', which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1845, and of which Thackeray wrote on that occasion:

It must be confessed that some of these pictures would not be suitable to hang up everywhere--in a young ladies' school, for instance. But how rich and superb is the colour.
(Jeremy Maas, op.cit., p.165). Sir Edward John Poynter's nudes are often distanced by country (e.g., Egypt in 'The Fortune-Teller'), and those of Albert Moore--with the notable exception of Etty's the most exotic in Victorian painting--are usually distanced by a vague classicism (e.g., 'A Summer Night'), seen in draperies and pillars; but Moore's are noticeably nearer to unpretentiousness than are other painters'.

moments of change in the lives of the characters pictured, and by his own peculiar technique. This technique is described by John Gere:

During these years he virtually abandoned painting in oil, and turned to the less taxing medium of water-colour, in which he developed an entirely individual technique. His water-colours can only in the strict sense be called drawings: they are really paintings, in which minutely hatched and stippled layers of intense colour, sometimes strengthened by the addition of bodycolour or gum, were applied with an almost dry brush. In contrast to the other Pre-Raphaelites, who either treated everyday life in transcendental terms or subjects from history and literature with the greatest possible historical accuracy, he developed a vague, poetic mediaevalism, or romantic archaism, in his water-colours of this period. (97)

Rossetti had the Pre-Raphaelite delight in colours, but also had an innate sense of design, so that these colours were contained within decorative shapes which formed an overall synthesis. In a typical painting of this period, 'Dante's Dream at the Time of the Death of Beatrice', (98) there are Pre-Raphaelite characteristics of detailed flowers, poppies and hawthorn, painted in particularly bright colours, together with their symbolism, and several Gothic architectural details. But they are unified in the painting because, firstly, there is an overall device of design into which they all fit--the shadowy interior is contrasted with 'the bright sunlight shining upon the mediaeval town of Florence, seen through the arched openings on the left and right'; (99) and secondly, because none of

97. Rossetti Exhibition (1973) Catalogue, p.12.

98. and 99. Rossetti Exhibition (1973) Catalogue, no.101, p.36.

the Pre-Raphaelite characteristics seems to be put in at the expense of anything else--the total picture was of primary importance to the artist, not the execution of particular details.

Rossetti's development subsequent to his Dantean period of the 1850's shows a decline in powers. His religious paintings of the 1850's are noticeably smaller in scope, and in them he concentrates on single themes like romantic lovers and fallen women. Once he had become associated with William Morris many of his paintings show a too obsessive interest in the Middle Ages, or rather in medieval objects arranged into patterns, and a lessening of emotional involvement with the subject. In the words of the 1973 exhibition catalogue:

He uses mediaeval dress, heraldic devices, armour and weapons to create exciting geometric patterns which are often contrasted with the organic form of women's hair and the graining of wood. Sources such as illuminated manuscripts, rolls of arms, Dürer prints, chronicles and ballads were important during this period. He shared these interests with his new friends, William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, whom he met in the New Year of 1856. (100)

Morris influenced Rossetti in the 1860's to the extent that he over-encouraged Rossetti's instinct for decoration and design which tended towards making his paintings into two-dimensional semi-abstract decorative objects. Rossetti's water-colours, Gere says, 'are less successful as they are more abstract'.

From the 1860's onwards he had become increasingly addicted to a

100. Rossetti Exhibition (1973) Catalogue, p.41.

long series of half or three-quarter-length pictures of languidly voluptuous women, in settings of richly embroidered stuffs, jewels and flowers . . . William Rossetti partly blames the taste of his brother's patrons for this development, but the relatively few elaborate figure compositions of this later period . . . by comparison with earlier ones lack the 'fundamental brainwork' that he himself insisted upon as essential to a work of art.

His 'monstrous brooding women' are 'inhuman icons of narcissistic, obsessive sensuality'. (101)

The medieval framework had, in the case of his Dante paintings, allowed Rossetti to express his emotions within a framework provided by his instinctive fascination for decorative design; he had achieved Coleridge's ideal of a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order. But after his Dantean period the two elements had separated into, on the one hand, emotional over-indulgence, and, on the other, flat, almost abstract, still lifes. Both these styles however influenced the development of art away from, as T.S. Eliot said of Tennyson's poetry, its mid-Victorian state of being 'almost wholly merged into [its] environment'. (102) Millais only very rarely and Hunt never escaped from this moral, self-evasive, environment into a painful groping more aesthetic world of self-dependence.

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In his chapter on Hopkins in The Disappearance of God Professor Hillis Miller writes:

101. Rossetti Exhibition (1973) Catalogue, pp.13, 14, 15.

102. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays (1951), pp.319-20.

There is one possible mode of harmony and only one. By gradually extending the empire of this principle Hopkins puts the world together, escapes his isolation, and conquers that proximity to God for which he longs.

The poet's conversion to Catholicism does not give him overnight all that he wants. Even if he had permitted himself to write poetry just after his conversion the decade of slow construction recorded in the journals, letters, and early papers would have been necessary to the explosion of "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and the great nature poems. The putting together of the all-embracing harmony which makes these poems possible is like certain of Hopkins' meticulous landscape drawings. In these it is not a question of sketching rapidly a composition which is filled in with details later. Hopkins can work only through the gradual ordering of minute details, each one of which is another tiny area conquered from chaos and blankness. This habit of microscopic vision is a basic characteristic of his mind, and exists in tense opposition to his desire to have a vision of the whole. Not with universals but with individuals must he begin, for he is confronted at the beginning with a world of unrelated particulars. Only at the very end will the harmony of the whole be revealed. (103)

There are several points here important for an exploration of Hopkins's medievalism and for his work as a whole. Hopkins was an isolated person who felt himself different and who had a need for the one possible mode of harmony. Having a conservative nature he believed that that kind of organic unity was possible and he became converted to Roman Catholicism during the particular wave of conversions which followed the publication of Newman's Apologia Pro Vita Sua in 1864. But Hopkins's early journals show him working 'through the gradual ordering of minute details', and this 'habit of microscopic vision' exists 'in tense opposition to his desire to have a vision of the

103. J. Hillis Miller, The Disappearance of God (1963), pp.276-7.

whole'. This tense opposition is well diagnosed by Professor Miller, but, like many writers on Hopkins, he follows it with a too neat conclusion, and ignores many other pieces of data.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ The 'all-embracing harmony' in the poems is not the happy conclusion to Hopkins's 'slow construction' of details, but is, as I have shown in Chapter One, a false, premature conclusion, forced by Hopkins's desire for harmony, but not genuinely worked for. A second point about Professor Miller's description of the connection between Hopkins's character and his writings is that he treats Hopkins in isolation from his age (again, like many writers, particularly Roman Catholic ones),⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ ignoring the two obvious relationships between Hopkins's microscopic vision and Ruskin's, and between Hopkins's and his age's desire for the one clear light. If these two characteristics of Hopkins's are put into the perspective of his age, then the clash between his psychological need and his actual way of proceeding can be seen as a Victorian characteristic, unique only in its details.

104. Father W.A.M. Peters's Gerard Manley Hopkins (1948), for instance, follows brilliant observation with a too neat thesis, into which he then makes everything in the poems fit,

105. There are many examples: W.A.M. Peters, op.cit.; D.A. Downes, Gerard Manley Hopkins/ A Study of his Ignatian Spirit (1960); and the most recent, which is almost a parody of non-historical scholarship, James Finn Cotter, Inscape: The Christology and Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1972); for an expanded criticism of this kind of Hopkins scholarship see my review of Cotter's book in Victorian Studies xvi, no.4 (June 1973).

Macaulay's writings, for instance, are said to have

worked by a psychological mechanism of repression that compelled him to proclaim a formal structure of values and attitudes totally at odds with the promptings of his inner nature. (106)

The need in Hopkins's nature for everything to fit into one overall schema is noticeable in nearly all his poetry written after he became a Jesuit. By embracing Roman Catholicism he was provided with one overall philosophical view to which all things were referable, but a conflict was set up by his conversion. To be justifiable to his Jesuit eyes his poetry had to be 'Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam', had to proclaim God's glory somehow, but his Ruskinian mind-process of scientific exploration by minute observation and description, although, no doubt, ultimately leading to a discovery of God through Nature, did not lead to quick or general conclusions even about the external form of Nature, let alone about its cosmic implications. Description was not enough, was a secular exercise if it remained undeveloped, even if it was combined with expression of Hopkins's emotional reactions to Nature. His constant artistic problem was how to encapsulate his material unnaturally quickly.

The gap between Hopkins's observation of what happens around him (Ruskinian exploratory statement), and the framework into which he knows it must fit (assertion of Christian dogma), shows itself in many ways which we can see today from the evidence of the

106. Professor Eric Stokes, 'Great Tom', review of John Clive, Thomas Babington Macaulay (1973), New Statesman, 29 June 1973, p.963.

poems, journals and letters. But in Hopkins's lifetime Bridges was the only person who realised the extent and results of the gap in Hopkins. There is a series of letters in the Bodleian, Oxford, some of which have been published by Professor Ritz, ⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ in which Robert Bridges writes after Gerard's death to Kate Hopkins (G.M.H.'s sister) and Mrs. Catherine Hopkins (his mother). Bridges, who it must be remembered was medically qualified, ⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ had noticed Gerard's odd state of mind. In an unpublished letter to Mrs. Hopkins he wrote

I always considered that he was over nervous about himself, and exaggerated his symptoms. Which I think he did. In fact I think his mental condition was of this sort. ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

He is more precise in a letter to Kate written just before the poems were first published:

You will remember that the poems will disclose the fact that Gerard suffered dreadfully from a sort of melancholy--and I do not think there wd. be any advantage in not recognising this--besides I shd judge it a good thing to tell the truth about, & show that medievalizing does not always produce complete ease of mind. ⁽¹¹⁰⁾

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107. Jean-Georges Ritz, Robert Bridges and Gerard Hopkins/ 1863-1889/ A Literary Friendship (1960).
108. I think many scholars today coming across early twentieth-century references to 'Dr. Bridges' might imagine that the doctorate was probably honorifically conferred for his literary services. But Bridges graduated M.B. in 1874 from St. Bartholomew's Hospital. See Edward Thompson, Robert Bridges/ 1844-1930 (1944), pp.6-8.
109. Letter dated 28 May 1890, Bodleian MS. Eng.lett.d.143 (ff.7-11). Dr. William Sargant, who is in charge of the department of Psychological Medecine at St. Thomas's Hospital, London, and author of works on the psychology of religion (Battle for the Mind [1959], and The Physiology of Faith [1968]) has written to me that Hopkins seems to have been a manic depressive of a cyclothymic kind, and compares his temperament with Goya's. I hope soon to publish the results of some research on Hopkins's states of mind.
110. Letter dated 18 February 1918, and published in Jean-Georges Ritz, Robert Bridges and Gerard Hopkins (1960), p.163.

To Bridges Gerard's conversion and living the life of a Jesuit was in itself a medievalism, and Hopkins's disturbed state of mind was due to the clash between an observant alert modern mind and the medievalist framework within which it had to act.⁽¹¹¹⁾

This is perhaps an over-simplification because Gerard's poetry and letters show a development in ideas and poetic techniques--in at least one of which, the development of a 'more Miltonic style', Bridges was largely instrumental--in spite of the ever-present Jesuit Catholic framework. In many of his attitudes however Hopkins was constant throughout his adult life, and in many of these he shows significant similarities to Victorian medievalists in general and to the Pre-Raphaelite painters in particular. A by-product of the early Victorian religious controversies, for instance, was a new outburst of bigotry on the part of both Protestants and Catholics, which it would be reasonable to call neo-medieval.⁽¹¹²⁾ Hunt's and Ruskin's Protestant narrownesses are counterbalanced by the instances of Catholic bigotry in Hopkins--his reference in 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' (stanza 20) to Gertrude, a Catholic saint, and Luther, the Protestant leader, for instance:

But Gertrude, lily, and Luther, are two of a town,
Christ's lily and beast of the waste wood.

111. Bridges's son, the late Lord [Edward] Bridges, privately suggested to me that this was R.B.'s estimate.

112. Living in Ireland, I am very conscious of the connection between religious bigotry and a society which dwells in the romantic past.

There are numerous other examples such as the occasions when a criticism of an author is based on his not being an orthodox Catholic-- about Whitman ('a great scoundrel'), Milton ('a very bad man'), Swinburne and Hugo ('those plagues of mankind'), and Goethe and Burns (who 'spoke out of the real human rakishness of their hearts'),⁽¹¹³⁾ and there are others. And a recently discovered letter to the Bishop of Liverpool has a most unpleasant odour to it. In this Hopkins petitions for the legality of a marriage between Thomas Murphy and Mary Hennessy, two parishioners of his. Murphy had previously been married in a Protestant church to a Protestant girl Ellen Smith, whom he had made pregnant. The petition was on the technical Catholic grounds that the Protestant marriage was null and void, and was granted. It was not considered relevant, by either Hopkins or the Bishop, that poor Ellen Smith/Murphy was left without support holding the baby.⁽¹¹⁴⁾

Gilbert Scott, looking back on the architectural manifestations of medievalism, called the Gothic Revival 'in part religious, in part patriotic'.⁽¹¹⁵⁾ Holman Hunt's patriotism, which we have already remarked as a feature common in medievalists, was shared by Hopkins, in whom it was intensified by his being Roman Catholic and (in his

113. Letters i 155, 39; ii 25.

114. Letter of 12 August 1881, ms. in the Lancashire Record Office at Preston, and published in The Hopkins Research Bulletin, no.2 (1971), pp.3-5.

115. Gilbert Scott, Recollections (1878), p.372.

last five years) by his being posted to Ireland. In the early nineteenth century Roman Catholics had had to fight to obtain equal rights with members of the Church of England. As Thomson says:

Both in formal enactment and in popular prejudice Papists were still, after Waterloo, regarded as too dangerously disloyal to be admitted to any post of power or responsibility. (116)

There was a common prejudice, to which many English Roman (note the paradoxical sound) Catholics were sensitive, that 'a servant of Rome was not quite an Englishman'. (117) In their exchanges of 1864-5 Kingsley accused Newman of having 'turned round upon his mother-Church (I had almost said . . . mother-country)'. (118) There is a frequent sense of over-compensation for this exclusion about later nineteenth-century English Catholics in general, and about Hopkins in particular. Father Thomas says that during Hopkins's noviceship in 1868-70:

National pride seems to have contributed something to the Rector's choice of certain days for special walks as these entries from the Porter's Journal make clear:

Wednesday, Oct. 13th. [1869]. Feast of St. Edward . . . Three [novices] . . . went to visit Westminster Abbey on occasion of the day's feast but were not able to gain admission to the Saint's Chapel.

Saturday, April 23rd. [1870]

This afternoon Father Rector sent all out to take a walk in honour of St. George.

Hopkins would have enjoyed keeping English feasts in this way. (119)

116. David Thomson, England in the Nineteenth Century/ 1815-1914 (1950), p.59.
117. K.S. Inglis, Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England (1963), p.311.
118. Wilfrid Ward (ed.), Newman's Apologia Pro Vita Sua (1913), p.36.
119. Alfred Thomas, S.J., Hopkins the Jesuit/ The Years of Training (1969), p.55.

Hopkins's references to England, and in particular his desire for her conversion, as expressed in 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' ('Our King back, oh, upon English souls!', stanza 35) and in letters, are passionately patriotic. When he was in Dublin a note for a meditation point reads 'Wish to crown him [Christ] King of England, of English hearts'.⁽¹²⁰⁾ His 1885 sonnet 'To seem the stranger' expresses the alienation he feels in Dublin in contrast to his intimate connection with England (he uses the sexual metaphor only for his connections with England and with his poetry--this latter in 'To R.B.'):⁽¹²¹⁾

England, whose honour O all my heart woos, wife
 To my creating thought, would neither hear
 Me, were I pleading, plead nor do I: I wear-
 Y of idle a being but by where wars are rife.⁽¹²²⁾

These lines convey the anguish of the rejected patriot and nearly all Hopkins's Irish poems deal with either rejection or patriotism. Hopkins's patriotic feeling also frequently shows in his letters from Ireland.⁽¹²³⁾

We can compare in addition the naive militarism of knights in Pre-Raphaelite paintings, acts of heroic bravery, and Millais' soldiers (such as 'The Black Brunswicker'), with Hopkins's heroic tars in his shipwreck poems, his swinging jingoistic 'recruiting song for soldiers'

120. Sermons, p.255.

121. Poems^{4r}, p.108.

122. Poems^{4r}, p.101.

123. For example, Letters i 231 and iii 366-8.

'What shall I do for the land that bred me?',⁽¹²⁴⁾ and his late poem '(The Soldier)', where Christ says, presumably with an unconscious tinge of blasphemy, 'Were I come o'er again . . . it should be this', that is, in the guise of a redcoat.⁽¹²⁵⁾

Another, associated, characteristic of medievalists was, as we have seen, a dislike of democracy, and a romantic approval of kings and hierarchies. As a Roman Catholic Hopkins was predisposed to believe in hierarchies, and his intense dislike of Gladstone⁽¹²⁶⁾ is due mainly to Gladstone's opposition to hierarchies, religious and political--Gladstone is reported as having said:

The papacy is a tyranny all through--a tyranny of the Pope over the bishops, of the bishops over the priesthood, of the priesthood over the laity.⁽¹²⁷⁾

Hopkins was a Platonist, believing in an Aristocracy of the Wise.

The under-privileged masses of Ireland needed not democratic equality but guidance from above, wise but essentially patronising hierarchical government.⁽¹²⁸⁾ Hopkins shared with Ruskin and Millais the view

124. Poems^{4r}, p.195.

125. Poems^{4r}, p.99.

126. See for example Letters i 210, 257 ('the Grand Old Mischief-maker loose, like the Devil, for a little while and meddling and marring all the fiercer for his hurry'), 300 ('the grand old traitor'); iii 171 ('but do not let us talk politics, it kills me, especially under the present Prime Minister'), and 257 ('ought to be beheaded on Tower Hill').

127. S.L. Ollard, G. Crosse, and M.F. Bond (eds.), A Dictionary of Church History (1948), p.243.

128. See especially the two recently discovered letters from Ireland published in Studies lix, no.233 (Spring 1970), pp.19-25.

which has been called 'Tory Socialism', an interest in, and sympathy for the poor, a desire to see their lot bettered, and a general recognition that shameful poverty existed. But they lacked the final sympathy that would make all equal. Millais' unfinished 'The Poacher's Wife' is a fairly realistic picture of a downtrodden family; there is a recognition of despair and lack of hope as causes of crime, and the hard work of the woman is shown by her brawny arms, but some pictorial qualities in the picture are emphasised to the exclusion of social ones--the rags are too picturesque, and there is an air of exhibitionism rather than of statement.⁽¹²⁹⁾ Hopkins has a similar sympathy with people below the bread-line, an external one; he recognises the wretchedness of people's looks in Liverpool, but has no real sympathy.⁽¹³⁰⁾ In the 'crib' letter accompanying 'Tom's Garland' he admits that he believes in Plato's type of Commonwealth and talks of 'the fools of Radical Levellers'.⁽¹³¹⁾ The description of Tom and Dick in 'Tom's Garland' is an external, picturesque one, as is that of 'Harry Ploughman'. The last line of 'Tom's Garland', where Hopkins describes 'packs' of unemployed as

129. City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham; Millais Exhibition (1967), no.60.

130. See Letters i 127-8:

While I admired the handsome horses I remarked for the thousandth time with sorrow and loathing the base and bespotted figures and features of the Liverpool crowd. When I see the fine and manly Norwegians that flock hither to embark for America walk our streets and look about them it fills me with shame and wretchedness. I am told Sheffield is worse though.

131. Letters i 273.

'infesting the age', now seems peculiarly venomous and with its motivation insufficiently expressed.⁽¹³²⁾ Something of the vague benevolence that had gone into portraying humans in the narrative reconstructions of the historical or fictitious events that we looked at in Chapter Three was lost when medievalists were faced with present-day problems. With the exception of Ford Madox Brown's 'Work' and 'The Last of England' even the modern moral subjects of the Pre-Raphaelites are escapist--instead of truly facing the social problems they depict they show a yearning for lost innocence ('The Awakening Conscience' and 'Found' are strong examples).

The further the medievalist delved back into the past the more innocent the times seemed to be, in contrast to the painful and perhaps evil present. One form of escapism that Hopkins's medievalism took was the Romantic escape into the countryside from the city, from other people, and from the sense of the present--with the exceptions of the passage in 'Tom's Garland' which we noticed above, and the Dublin desolate sonnets, Hopkins's emotions are not highly charged unless he is in the countryside. His poems about other people can seldom be called satisfactory--perhaps 'Harry Ploughman' is the only one. In the true countryside there is no sense of time, unless it is the eternal time of 'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves'. In 'Duns Scotus's Oxford' there is a glimpse of modernity, industrialism's 'base and brickish skirt', which has the souring effect of a 'graceless growth',

but the weeds and waters and walls make Oxford still seem an integrated part of the countryside because they are the same as they were in Scotus's Middle Ages.⁽¹³³⁾ 'Graceless growth' here is significant. Religion and the countryside seem to fuse together in the 'spiritual'. The countryside represents the last hope of saving 'spiritual values' which are now being destroyed by and in the unspiritual city.⁽¹³⁴⁾ Grace belongs to the innocent and natural. Most of the things which Hopkins considers beautiful in his poetry are morally innocent and he would like to stop time advancing and altering them for the worst; they should remain in some sort of past, in their primary beauty, beauty that was God's first will. This artistic arrest process can be seen in nature poems:

What is all this juice and all this joy?
A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden.

'Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet' (note the 'yet');
'heavenfallen freshness'; and

O but I bear my burning witness though
Against the wild and wanton work of men.⁽¹³⁵⁾

Nature is present in many Pre-Raphaelite paintings and is similarly always young, fresh, morally innocent, and brilliantly coloured, never decayed or malevolent. Retrospective sentimentality, one of

133. Poems^{4r}, p.79.

134. See Walter E. Houghton, op.cit., p.80.

135. Poems^{4r}, pp.67, 89, 199, 197.

the basic feelings of medievalists, was shared by Hopkins and many Pre-Raphaelite paintings. (136)

Another Utopian aspect of medievalism, another way of contrasting calm moral innocence with the present-day tension of persistent evil, is shown in the manner of the frequent portrayals of children by the Pre-Raphaelite painters and Hopkins. Raymond Chapman writes:

The threat to innocence in a hostile and evil world is a common [Victorian] theme and has sexual origins. It is frequent in Dickens, with *Oliver Twist*, Pip, Nell, Little Dorrit and others, it appears in *The Water Babies* and, less frighteningly but clearly, in the *Alice* books. Growing to maturity seems to be dangerous, liable to involve a sullyng of purity. The happiest are those who come through to new knowledge but remain essentially children. (137)

On the one hand there are Lewis Carroll's obsessive photographs of pre-adolescent girls; (138) and on the other hand there are Richard Dadd's neurotic paintings of a haunted, deranged universe where young people are surrounded by 'vile creatures--grotesque elves, oafish

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136. The degenerate lovers' situation in Hunt's 'The Hireling Shepherd' is unsuccessfully portrayed because the countryside is made to look so attractive and idyllic at the same time as it is meant to be ensnaring.
137. Raymond Chapman, op.cit., pp.352-3.
138. The examples in most books of the photographs of Edith, Lorina, and Alice Liddell are invariably charming, but somehow Dodgson's photographs of children naked are seldom seen, and although the post-adolescent Alice Liddell was quite beautiful and photogenic the extant photographs of her were not taken by Dodgson, who had lost interest in her, but by Julia Margaret Cameron. See Graham Ovenden, Pre-Raphaelite Photography (1972), plates 51, 52, 55-8, 64-8. Hopkins's 'The Vision of the Mermaids' is innocent enough escapism, but a poem of the same genre, Zadel B Gustafson's 'The Rune of the "Vega's" Rudder', in Harper's Magazine, vol.70, no. 416 (January 1885), pp.211-15, has sweet, but decidedly erotic illustrations by Jessie Curtis Shepherd of 28 detailed naked little girls.

and sinister yokels, self-possessed nymphs with bulging breasts'.

A young man in a Dadd painting of 1853 is surrounded by

monstrous leaves with edges sharp as knives which threaten his head and writhing malevolent roots which seem to send out tentacles to entrap him. Seated foursquare on the bench with his fez beside him, he looks out at us unperturbed by the violence which encloses him.

And yet this picture is 'soft and dreamy', and, with its details picked out with Pre-Raphaelite precision, is, in Peter Conrad's description, a 'demonic version of Pre-Raphaelite nature'.⁽¹³⁹⁾

The Pre-Raphaelite painters' frequent portrayal of children, always picturesque and charming, is paralleled by Hopkins's poem 'The Bugler's First Communion', and by the English children in 'To what serves Mortal Beauty?'; and the philosophy behind this is expanded in 'On the Portrait of Two Beautiful Young People',⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ which in elegiac tone is very similar to Millais' 'Autumn Leaves'.⁽¹⁴¹⁾ The explanation of Hopkins's peculiar remark to Bridges on 'The Bugler's First Communion'--'I am half inclined to hope the Hero of it may be killed in Afghanistan',⁽¹⁴²⁾--lies in his desire to arrest beauty and goodness before it can turn bad. Perhaps a similar benevolent motive lies behind Hopkins's strangely frequent references to female martyrs--Saint

139. Peter Conrad, review of David Greysmith, Richard Dadd: The Rock and Castle of Seclusion (1973), in New Statesman, 29 June 1973, p.964.

140. Poems^{4r}, pp.82, 98, 196.

141. City Art Galleries, Manchester; Millais Exhibition (1967), no.53.

142. Letters i 92.

Thecla, Margaret Clitheroe, Saint Dorothea, and Saint Winefred, the last three of whom suffered violent death as a consequence of protecting their virginity⁽¹⁴³⁾ (although an alternative motive could be found if these are connected with the several sado-masochistic references to other details of violence--Saint Lawrence's roasting in 'The Escorial',⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ various pupils' misfortunes,⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ and the reference to the flogging in R.H. Dana's Two Years Before the Mast.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ There is certainly a similar element in Hopkins's reaction to the death of Digby Dolben, the undisciplined handsome young religiose convert:

143. Poems^{4r}, pp.175, 182, 222 (St. Thecla); 181-3 (Margaret Clitheroe); 19-20, 35-7 (St. Dorothea); 178, 187-93, 215, 218 (St. Winefred).

144. Poems^{4r}, p.3, stanza 3:

For that staunch saint still prais'd his Master's name
While his crack'd flesh lay hissing on the grate;
Then fail'd the tongue; the poor collapsing frame,
Hung like a wreck

145. See Michael W. Murphy, 'Violent Imagery in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins', Victorian Poetry vii, no.1 (Spring 1969), pp.1-16, for a very thorough documentation from the letters and the poetry. Murphy concludes:

There is, then, a distinct 'poetic line' of violence in Hopkins' work . . . This poetic line, whatever its cause--a sado-masochistic personality, an extreme sensitivity to pain, the influence of other writers, his own poetic ideal, or a combination of all of these--runs quite consistently through all of his poems.

This article should be compulsory reading for those critics who do not acknowledge that Hopkins's delights were not necessarily untortured by desires and Dark Angels.

146. A thoroughly good [book] and all true, but bristling with technicality--seamanship--which I most carefully go over and even enjoy but cannot understand: there are other things though, as a flogging, which is terrible and instructive and it happened--ah, that is the charm and the main point.

(Letters i 279.) That is all Hopkins said about the book; the italics are his. See also the early poem 'Easter Communion' (Poems^{4r}, p.20), particularly ll.1-5, with its 'striped in secret with breath-taking whips'.

You know there can very seldom have happened the loss of so much beauty (in body and mind and life) . . . Some day I hope to see Finedon and the place where he was drowned too. Can you tell me where he was buried?⁽¹⁴⁷⁾

Hopkins had the essential basic psychological need of the Victorian medievalist for the one possible harmony, and to achieve this he submitted himself to the ultimate medievalism open to a Victorian, becoming a member of a Roman Catholic order. Other aspects of his mind fit into this constant tendency towards seeking relatedness in things, which could most satisfactorily be achieved by a sentimental retrospection. But he was also a Victorian in his desire to deal with the sensuous world of unrelated particulars; and it is the clash between these two Victorian aspects of Hopkins that creates what Professor Hillis Miller called the 'tense opposition' in his mind. I will now examine certain areas of his work in which more detailed debts to Victorian medievalism can be demonstrated.

Hopkins's journals contain the fullest record we have of the period between 1862 and 1875 when his aesthetic tastes were largely formed by a process of exploring different aspects of Victorian medievalism, and then developing away from derivative medievalism into his own baroque poetic style. It is not usually recognised that the branch of the arts which occupies most space in these journals is Gothic architecture. It is the only branch of Victorian medievalist

147. Letters i 17.

art, in fact, in which we have a full record of Hopkins's developing taste; and it is therefore of considerable and unique importance to us, especially as we have seen that the architect Pugin, in particular, and architecture in general, played large parts in establishing important basic tenets of Victorian medievalism. As there is far more material available in these journals concerned with architecture than there is with painting or poetry, I have examined two small areas of the architectural entries in an Appendix to this thesis in order to enlighten us about Hopkins's general aesthetic development. These areas are those of the Gothic works of the Middle Ages, and the works of Hopkins's favourite Victorian Gothic Revivalist architect, William Butterfield. I have shown in the appendix that in his journals Hopkins's interest in Gothic, both genuine Middle Ages Gothic and that of the Victorian revival, is absolute, and based on Pugin's theories. His reaction to a work of the Middle Ages depends largely on whether it is in the Decorated style or not, whether it has unjustified extraneous features, and the quality of its detail. In modern architecture his taste develops from, in his adolescence, his being attracted to bright colours and other garish qualities for their own sake, to, in maturity, a calmer liking for more lasting, less immediately noticeable, qualities, such as shape, harmony of parts, and solid, masculine, 'quarried' development, as opposed to merely sensuous picturesque decorations. His adolescent concern is almost entirely with detail at the expense of a sense of

the whole, while in maturity this changes to a two-fold concern for overall constructive sense as well as for quieter detail.

I will connect Hopkins's development in architectural taste to his development in literary taste by quoting from the mature Hopkins, from a passage in which he criticises a play of Bridges's in architectural terms:

It strikes me that these two kinds of action and of drama thence arising are like two kinds of tracery, which have, I dare say, names; the one in which the tracery seems like so much of a pattern cut out bodily by the hood of the arch from an infinite pattern; the other in which it is sprung from the hood or arch itself and wd. fall to pieces without it. It is like tapestry and a picture, like a pageant and a scene. And I call the one kind of composition end-hung and the other centre-hung and say that your play is not centre-hung enough. ⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

In this letter of 1885 the mature Hopkins is stressing that Bridges's play is composed of pieces which are too strong in themselves and not dependent enough on the whole structure of the play. Hopkins's criterion is overall organic unity, not concentration on the parts. Individual features should prove their worth by being necessary to the construction of the whole--the architectural theory, although not the practice, of Pugin.

This is a strikingly similar development to that of Hopkins's poetry, where his style altered, for 'The Wreck of the Deutschland', from an indulgent medieval Keatsian one of 'romantic suggestivity

and vagueness of outline' (149) to a more mature one, with affinities with Ruskin's modern way of looking at Nature, based on solid and close reaction to details, and then finally, in the last years of his life, to a form-conscious style which, following Keats's distinction which we noted earlier, he called 'Miltonic'. The change in poetic style and outlook from a 'feminine' medievalist to a 'masculine' modern one is summed up by Hopkins in a letter to Dixon, where he discusses Burne-Jones:

Now this is the artist's most essential quality, masterly execution: it is a kind of male gift . . . the begetting one's thoughts on paper, on verse, on whatever the matter is; the life must be conveyed into the work and displayed there, not suggested as having been in the author's mind: otherwise the product is one of those hen's-eggs that are good to eat and look just like live ones but never hatch. (150)

The same opposite criteria can be seen in Hopkins's references to Keats. He was noticeably more sensitive to Keats than most Victorian writers were, realising as few did that the poems show development, and that the Odes could not be tarred with the same brush as the early poems:

The Cap and Bells is an unhappy performance, so bad that I could not get through it; senselessly planned to have no plan and doomed to fail: but Keats would have found out that. He was young; his genius intense in its quality; his feeling for beauty, for perfection intense; he had found his way right in his Odes; he would find his way right at last to true functions of his mind.

149. Robert Preyer, "'The Fine Delight that Fathers Thought': Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Romantic Survival", in Malcolm Bradbury and David Palmer (eds.), Victorian Poetry (1972), p.178.

150. Letters ii 133.

Hopkins was writing to Patmore, who represents a more usual Victorian view of Keats--'in Shakespeare the sensuality seems the accident, in Keats the essence'. In reply Hopkins admits part of the conventional criticism of Keats but counteracts by emphasising Keats's potential as 'masculine', a view directly contrary to that of most Victorians:

he lived in mythology and fairyland the life of a dreamer. Nevertheless I feel and see in him the beginnings of something opposite to this, of an interest in higher things and of powerful and active thought . . . His mind had, as it seems to me, the distinctively masculine powers in abundance, his character the manly virtues, but while he gave himself up to dreaming and self indulgence of course they were in abeyance. (151)

By 'masculinity' both Hopkins and Patmore understood a combination of solid thought and morals, as opposed to sensuality and impressionism. Hopkins's criticisms of other poets are quite often based on masculine criteria, such as his dislike of the too woolly allegories of Yeats's Mosada: A Dramatic Poem (152) and R.W. Dixon's 'Fallen Rain'. (153)

In the same letter Hopkins writes:

It is impossible not to feel with weariness how [Keats's] verse is at every turn abandoning itself to an unmanly and enervating luxury. It appears too that he said something like 'O for a life of impressions instead of thoughts!' (154)

But Hopkins later qualifies this by noting of Lamia:

151. Letters iii 382.

152. Letters iii 374.

153. Letters ii 20.

154. Letters iii 384.

The story has a moral element or interest; Keats was aware of this and touches on it at times, but could make nothing of it; in fact the situation at the end is that the sage Apollonius does more harm than the witch herself had done-- kills the hero; and Keats does not see that this implies one of two things, either some lesson of the terrible malice of evil which when it is checked drags down innocence in its own ruin or else the exposure of Pharisaic pretence in the wouldbe moralist. But then if I could have said this to Keats I feel sure he wd. have seen it. In due time he wd. have seen these things himself. (155)

Because the Victorians did not tend to evaluate highly artistic compositions which were not directly didactic, Hopkins, who, as we have seen above, has perceptively recognised Keats's intellectual potential, is seen in this last extract trying to force onto Keats at the same time a potential for the desirable Victorian moralising. This results, in the passage above, in the same kind of naivety and artistic insensitivity that the Pre-Raphaelite painters were guilty of when they tried to force black and white morality into a work of art--'lesson of the terrible malice of evil which when it is checked drags down innocence in its own ruin' is very close to the scenario of a Holman Hunt modern morality painting, although there is an endearing naivety about the priest-like penultimate sentence ('But then . . .').

Because, then, of this insistence on narrow moral content, Hopkins, despite his recognition of Keats's potential masculine qualities considerably modifies Keats's direct influence in the poetry written after he became a Jesuit. After 1868 Keats remains for him part of

the medievalism he abjures, part of the world of 'a dreamer', 'unmanly and enervating luxury', and impressionism. Certain features of Pre-Raphaelite paintings occupied parts of the same world, and Hopkins similarly modified his earlier high estimate of Millais and developed instead an intense admiration for Millais' friend Frederick Walker.⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ From praising Millais over-enthusiastically--in 1863 he had written 'I see that he is the greatest English painter, one of the greatest in the world,'⁽¹⁵⁷⁾--Hopkins develops a discrimination between Millais' lack of inscape, on the one hand ('he has . . . no feeling for beauty in abstract design and he never designs'),⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ and his Keatsian feeling and Ruskinian accuracy in depiction of natural beauty, on the other. In 1881 he praised Millais for his 'deep feeling . . . for . . . wild and natural beauty, much as Keats had', and noted in 'A Huguenot' 'some splendid "concrete beauty" in the vegetation and so on'.⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ Similarly in 1874, when his taste had matured, he praises Holman Hunt's 'The Shadow of Death' for its details of anatomy and drapery ('most realistic anatomy of arm and leg' and 'clever added folds of the white cloth'), but criticises it for having 'no inscape of composition whatever--not known and if it

156. Hopkins's mind needed a succession of enthusiasms, so that even if his intellectual principles matured so that he rejected an early enthusiasm, he still had to have a new enthusiasm which appeared to fit in with his new matured principles.

157. Letters iii 201.

158. and 159. Letters i 132.

had been known it could scarcely bear up against such realism'.⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ Interestingly Hopkins is acknowledging that realistic details can work against overall inscape, whereas as we saw in Chapter Three on most occasions before the 1880's he does not see that the two impulses are opposed in much nineteenth-century art and that this opposition constitutes one of its main problems. Hopkins's new interest in Fred Walker was based on the combination he saw in Walker of a feminine Keatsian 'sense of beauty',⁽¹⁶¹⁾ and the masculine technical perfection of his drawing and inscape.⁽¹⁶²⁾ Walker had the additional qualities that would be admirable to Hopkins of producing 'characteristic English work',⁽¹⁶³⁾ and of dying young ('he was cut off by death like Keats and his promise . . . in painting [was] as brilliant as Keats's in poetry').⁽¹⁶⁴⁾

So it is in the early poetry of Hopkins that Keats's medievalist influence is seen everywhere on the surface. Keats's was one of eight portraits which Hopkins listed to be taken with him when he first

160. Journals, p.248.

161. Letters ii 133.

162. Perhaps Millais noticed the same combination in Walker:

Fred Walker, the famous artist . . . was also a most intimate friend of Millais . . . In my father's estimation he was the finest water-colour painter of the century, a genius of the highest order, intensely alive to the poetry of Nature, and supreme in his power of expressing it.

(J.G. Millais, op.cit. i 435.)

163. Journals, p.237.

164. Letters ii 133.

went up to Oxford as a student.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ His school-prize poem, 'The Escorial' (1860)⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ is, as Gardner points out,⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ mainly an exercise in poetic technique, pieces of early Keats inlaid into a framework of Spenserian stanzas. His second (chronologically, that is) extant poem, 'A Vision of the Mermaids' shows, as Gardner says, 'the luscious quality of his Romantic imagery':⁽¹⁶⁸⁾

Plum-purple was the west; but spikes of light
 Spear'd open lustrous gashes, crimson-white;

 And thro' their parting lids there came and went
 Keen glimpses of the inner firmament:
 Fair beds they seem'd of water-lily flakes,
 Clustering entrancingly in beryl lakes.⁽¹⁶⁹⁾

Here we have a delight in the visual, in word-painting, a dwelling on detailed pictures--a tendency in his poetry right through his life (despite his late Miltonic style) which could develop into an overlong lingering--a certain sensuousness and colour, all obviously stemming from certain characteristics of Keats's and the Pre-Raphaelites' medievalist style. There are several archaisms in this poem which perhaps owe something of their affected medievalism to Keats--'withouten', 'argent', 'languent', 'satin-purpled'. After 1876, the year of

165. Journals, p.9.

166. Poems^{4r}, p.3.

167. W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins ii (1949), p.52.

168. W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins ii (1949), p.54.

169. Poems^{4r}, p.8, lines 7-8 and 11-14.

'The Wreck of the Deutschland', Keats's influence is much less direct. But Hopkins retains his predisposition for word-painting, and for certain traits which he shared with Keats, such as the use of participial modifiers ('Cuckoo-echoing, bell-swarmèd, lark-charmèd, rock-racked, river-rounded'), compounds rather than single words, adjectives more prominent than verbs, active participles as adjectives, and the -y form of the adjective.

There is also a more sustained characteristic of Hopkins's poetry which it shares with Keats's--the search for a pure language. There is more than a casual connection between philology and some characteristics of medievalism. The subject-matter of J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings--a 'hoard of epic, legend, saga, romance, poetry, archaeology, art'--has been described as

high (if selected) passions, ideal characters, decorative adventures, courage, sacrifice, love of the good, and--ultimate heresy--even responsibility.

Both Tolkien and Jakob Grimm, besides being spare-time authors of fairy-tales, were professional philologists.⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ We have already noticed in this chapter Keats's preference for 'pure English', the native words, over imported foreign loan-words, a preference which entailed retrogression. In his desire to return to the native sinews of pure English diction, Hopkins can also be linked to the nineteenth-century

170. Anonymous lead review-article on Paul H. Kocher, Master of Middle-Earth/ The Achievement of J.R.R. Tolkien (1973), in T.L.S., 8 June 1973, pp.629-30. I am grateful to my colleague Peter Lucas, of University College, Dublin, for suggesting the additional example of Grimm.

philologists and historians who challenged the alien influences on the language of Latin and Romance elements. They preferred clumsy native compounds to learned and abstract words. F.J. Furnivall, a founder of the Early English Text Society, wrote Forewords and Afterwords, instead of Prefaces and Appendices. Another founder, R.C. Trench, published lectures on 'English as it might have been if the Normans had not invaded', and proposed, as a synonym for 'impenetrability' 'unthoroughfaresomeness'. Hopkins's similarly formed compounds are numerous--'wanwood', 'bloomfall', 'trambeam'. He knew Barnes's dialect poems and Speechcraft (that is, Grammar), and said of it

It makes one weep to think what English might have been . . .
no beauty in a language can make up for want of purity . . .
He calls degrees of comparison pitches of suchness: we
ought to call them so, but alas! (171)

He started learning Old English in 1882. At most stages of his life before he went to Dublin Hopkins, like Keats, preferred the 'Teutonic' word--Gardner gives the proportion in a sample of his work as 79%, compared with an average of only 74% in six other poets. (172) He is noticeably fond of what Robert Freyer calls 'county words': (173)

This ruck and reel which you remark
Coils, keeps, and teases simple sight. (174)

171. Letters i 162-3.

172. W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins i (1948), p.113 fn.

173. Robert Freyer, op.cit., p.188.

174. Poems^{4r}, p.31.

He constantly notices words which seem more 'authentic' than others, and, like many people of his age, was interested in some aspects of Celtic culture for this quality.⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ He collected Hiberno-English words for Wright's English Dialect Dictionary. From his earliest etymological entries in the journals right through to the alliteration in his last poems, he was always fascinated by the patterns formed by similar-sounding words,⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ a harking back to the Middle Ages and before, when binding words together could almost appear to be an acknowledgement of the unity of God's world.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ He attempted, in his Author's Preface of 1883, to justify sprung rhythm in terms of its early and therefore honourable origins:

It is found in nursery rhymes, weather saws, and so on . . . the old English verse seen in Pierce Ploughman [sic] are in sprung rhythm, [but] it has in fact ceased to be in use since the Elizabethan age, Greene being the last writer who can be said to have recognised it.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾

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175. See letters from Dr. John Rhys, published in Appendix III, Letters iii 266-70.
176. See 'On the Origin of Beauty' (Journals, p.112):
Then let us see the parallelisms individually: first there is 'more false than fair', heightened of course by the alliteration, always an aid in that way.
177. The traditional combination of philology and piety was continued in the nineteenth century by, among others, Henry Bradley, whose note-books record that he studied, among other things, lists of words peculiar to the Pentateuch or Isaiah, Hebrew singletons, the form of the verb to be in Algerine Arabic, bardic and cuneiform lettering, Arabisms and Chaldaisms in the New Testament, with vocabularies implying that he was reading Homer, Virgil, Sallust, and the Hebrew Old Testament at the same time. (Robert Bridges, Three Friends [1932], p.155)
178. Poems^{4r}, p.49.

But by 1885 Hopkins's plain style was established by the so-called 'desolate' sonnets. Writing to Bridges from Dublin in the thick of his period of depression which produced those sonnets he said:

I hold that by archaism a thing is sicklied o'er as by blight. Some little flavours, but much spoils, and always for the same reason--it destroys earnest: we do not speak that way; therefore if a man speaks that way he is not serious, ⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ he is at something else than the seeming matter in hand.

The contrast in language between the poems in Hopkins's plain style, the style which he developed after 1880, and those in his baroque is most marked, the two most different characteristics being the 'philological cruises' and the resulting obscurity of the line of argument in the baroque compared with the lack of imagery and consequent improvement of argument-line in the plain. After consultation with Bridges Hopkins had decided to go no further with his baroque style, but to develop a plainer, 'more Miltonic' one; and this he did, making more use of Miltonic inversion than Keatsian medievalist cluster and alliteration. A regressive linguistic theory based on the importance of individual words and the single image had been replaced by one based on inter-connected larger units:

In imagery he is not rich but excels in phrasing, in sequence of phrase and sequence of feeling on feeling. Milton is the great master of sequence of phrase. By sequence of feeling I mean a dramatic quality by which what goes before seems to necessitate and beget what comes after. ⁽¹⁸⁰⁾

179. Letters i 218.

180. Letter to R.W. Dixon of 13 June 1878, Letters ii 8.

What Hopkins is doing, although he does not express it in so many words, is to renounce that Romantic characteristic we noticed earlier in this chapter, which is (to repeat Herbert Read's words):

the priority of the verbal symbol, of the expressive phrase, which is spontaneous in origin ^(and) therefore does not seek a logical order of words. ⁽¹⁸¹⁾

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Victorian medievalism, then, was a large and important element in the intellectual make-up of both Hopkins and the Pre-Raphaelite painters. It made the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood almost an inevitability in Victorian cultural history and was largely responsible not just for its foundation but also for many aspects of the paintings it produced. The concentration on detail encouraged in works of art by medievalism became combined with Ruskinian natural descriptive habits to form one of the two parts in the structure that we demonstrated in Chapter One to be typical of certain Pre-Raphaelite paintings; and the combination of artistic and moral values which was nearly always an essential part of medievalist art helped to create the narrative framework of moral earnestness, which we noticed in Chapter One formed the second, opposed, part of a typical Pre-Raphaelite painting.

Hopkins also fitted in with the Victorian medievalist frame of mind to a large extent, both in small enthusiasms and in more

181. Herbert Read, op.cit., pp.63-4.

comprehensive ways. Needing a comforting framework to put the pieces of the world together he became a Catholic and a Jesuit, and so made a moral framework for his poems a necessity, as he thought. But his mind was, at the same time, Victorian in another way--he also attempted to find God by the opposed method of trying to work up to discovery of total truth by Ruskinian concentration on its minutest natural details, and so made inevitable the clash we saw in Chapter One. In the next chapter, I will examine this concentration on detail which we have seen is characteristic of many of Hopkins's poems and of the Pre-Raphaelites' paintings.

...ooOoo...

Chapter Five: Detail

As we have seen in the previous chapter, many of the characteristic medievalist features of Pre-Raphaelite paintings and of Hopkins's poems were prefigured by the Nazarenes, by Keats, and by Pugin. For their most conspicuous common feature however, their particular kind of attention to minute detail, they are strongly indebted to Ruskin. Ruskin appeared to make attention to detail a neo-medievalist quality by attacking in Modern Painters the classical doctrine of the Grand Style through its origins, which could be traced to Raphael. He made a connection between the Augustan mode of generalisation (as represented in painting by Reynolds) and the substitution by Raphael of 'an elegant convention for the sincere depiction of actualities':⁽¹⁾

Whatever [people] could have fancied for themselves about the wild, strange, infinitely stern, infinitely tender, infinitely varied veracities of the life of Christ, was blotted out by the vapid fineries of Raphael: the rough Galilean pilot, the orderly custom receiver, and all the questioning wonder and fire of uneducated apostleship, were obscured under an antique mask of philosophical faces and long robes . . . Raphael ministered with applause to the impious luxury of the Vatican, but was trampled under foot at once by every believing and advancing Christian of his own and subsequent times; and thenceforward pure Christianity and 'high art' took separate roads, and fared on, as best they might, independently of each other . . . and to this day, the clear and tasteless poison of the art of Raphael infects with sleep of infidelity

1. Graham Hough, op.cit., p.6.

the hearts of millions of Christians . . . A dim sense of impossibility attaches itself always to the graceful emptiness of the representation; we feel instinctively that the painted Christ and painted apostle are not beings that ever did or could exist; and this fatal sense of ⁽²⁾ fair fabulousness and well-composed impossibility . . .

Here Ruskin opposes 'infidelity' (i.e., to Nature, but there is a clever ambiguity about the word so that his argument acquires a religious application and sanction simultaneously), 'impossibility', 'fabulousness', and 'emptiness' of depiction, which are the fruit of Raphael's sophisticated 'vapid fineries', 'antique mask', grace, fairness, and concentration on composition, against 'infinitely varied veracities' (again, Ruskin is unfairly loading his argument by using the example of the life of Christ), 'questioning wonder and fire', and beings that 'did or could exist'--in short, variety, exploration, wonder, and truthfulness in depiction of Nature are his essential criteria, and they have not just aesthetic but also moral importance.

This is not to say that that way of looking at Nature which we might term 'Ruskinian'--concentration on the features of the earth, involving both a curiosity about appearance and structure and an aesthetic admiration for objects of nature--originated solely with Ruskin. His concern with expression of detailed fact was symptomatic of a change in society as a whole. The change from a society where story-telling and the imagination were predominant to the Victorian

one of facts and documentation can be well illustrated from unpublished accounts (in my possession) of their childhood in the 1820's and 1830's written by Hopkins's mother and her brothers and sisters.

These are a few relevant extracts:

My grandmother kept watch and ward over us from the breakfast room window . . . There were some bookcases in this room but I never recollect anyone taking down a book . . . Books were little accounted of in the household generally. On no table in the house was there anything like the literary litter of books and papers and magazines most people affect now [i.e., the 1880's].

By some odd chance which I never could understand a little back room at the side of the house was called 'The Library'. It was the cruellest misnomer. I don't think there was anything in it which by the extremest courtesy deserved the name of a book. Memoranda, washing books or bills, a stray newspaper, nothing higher.

The books I read were 'The Arabian Nights' (of course in the charming old incorrect translation from the French), 'Paul and Virginia', 'Exiles of Siberia', and 'My Uncle Cliver'. These are all I remember. The first were my mainstay, nothing rivalled their fascination. . . . When we were very small my father used to take two or three of us on his knee, throw a large silk handkerchief over our heads, which he called our tent, and dramatise for us 'Morgiana and the forty thieves' alternately with 'Bluebeard'.

[My grandmother] was a clever and lively woman, and my father [born 1792, and a quite eminent doctor in the 1830's and 1840's] of whom she was very fond, used to speak of her as very amusing and full of anecdote--with a strong touch of superstition. He offended her deeply by laughing at some of her ghost stories--she always believed she had seen her husband's ghost.

In her chapter 'Ruskin and "The Pure Fact"' of The Science of Aspects, Dr. Ball shows that 'the trend of the time roughly from 1820 to 1850 was in general sympathy with [Ruskin's] devotion to fact':

The history of the various editions of Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes is relevant here. Having begun its career in 1810 as an introduction to a set of undistinguished drawings of the Lakes, it lost these in 1820 in favour of the author's poems. But in 1822 it was published on its own, a descriptive guide accepted without other aids or associations. Then in the editions of 1842 and 1853 there were added . . . 'a mass of technical accretions'. 'Outline diagrams' of the mountains replaced the picturesque engravings of thirty years before and where once Wordsworth's poems had appeared stood lists of plants and shells connected with the area, and 'Letters on the Geology of the Lake District' by Professor Sedgwick. These later editions enjoyed very large sales. (3)

Devotion to observable fact, to science, did not appear in early Victorian England to necessitate breaking with religious belief, but could conveniently combine with it. It is not coincidental, however, that in the passage from Modern Painters quoted at the start of this chapter it is not religion as a whole but Protestantism which is allied with natural fact. Whereas Roman Catholic scholasticism traditionally paid more attention to universals, classes, and abstractions, Protestantism had been more concerned with empiricism, particulars, with concrete objects of sense-perception. Ian Watt has shown, for instance, how the novel form arose out of anti-Catholic, empirical impulses:

the novel arose in the modern period, a period whose general intellectual orientation was most decisively separated from its classical and medieval heritage by its rejection . . . of universals.

Modern realism, of course, begins from the position that truth can be discovered by the individual through his senses . . . its method has been the study of the particulars of experience

3. Patricia M. Ball, The Science of Aspects/ The Changing Role of Fact in the Work of Coleridge, Ruskin and Hopkins (1971), p.53.

by the individual investigator, who, ideally at least, is free from the body of past assumptions and traditional beliefs. (4)

Until 1859, as John Burrow says, God could seem an indispensable hypothesis to a scientist, for

evidence of purpose seemed irrefutable in all the ingenious contrivances, the exquisite adaptations of structure to function, so apparent in nature. How could they be explained other than by the assumption of a benevolent almighty contriver, who had created each species individually as described in the first book of Genesis, and had made all subservient to the needs of man, the image of the Creator and his special care. (5)

And (the other side of the coin) natural history even became an approved clerical hobby:

To pursue in any detail the pleasing evidences of harmony and divine purpose in the Newtonian heavens required some rather abstruse mathematics; to trace the same evidences in each leaf, stamen and antenna was well within the scope of any country clergyman with a collecting basket. To follow the workings of nature was to explore the mind of its Creator and to receive renewed assurances of his benevolence. The proudly displayed 'collection' was almost the equivalent of a Bible laid open on a table. God was sought, not in mystical exercises in one's chamber--that would have been 'enthusiasm', which was both morbid and ungentlemanly--but at the bottoms of ponds and in the midst of hedges. Natural history became something of a craze in the first half of the nineteenth century and works on it outsold popular novels. (6)

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4. Ian Watt, op.cit., pp.12-13; John Bayley's article, 'Self-awareness and beyond', T.L.S., 27 July 1973, p.853, shows the 'parallel diagram' in philosophy--'Hegel's emergent geist, cut off by the dialectic of alienation from identity with the tribe . . . Novels became Hegelian "organic unities", and ever more so, because the form gets its being from the single unit of self-awareness'.
 5. J.W. Burrow (ed.), The Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection, Or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life. By Charles Darwin (1968); introduction, p.17.
 6. J.W. Burrow (ed.), op.cit., pp.18-19.

Edmund Gosse's father, Philip, an ardent botanist, zoologist, and member of the Plymouth Brotherhood, returned from Newfoundland in 1839 to England with the 'resolute purpose' of spreading 'a knowledge of the truth in religion as well as in science',⁽⁷⁾ and, sternly and exclusively, brought up his son to those twin truths, so that the only books he was allowed were scientific or religious:

No fiction of any kind, religious or secular, was admitted into the house . . . [Edmund's mother] had a remarkable impression that to 'tell a story', that is, to compose fictitious narrative of any kind, was a sin. She carried this conviction to extreme lengths . . . Nor would she read the chivalrous tales in verse of Sir Walter Scott, obstinately alleging that they were not 'true'.⁽⁸⁾

The younger Gosse reports in Father and Son how the two interests were peculiarly intermingled in the daily life of the household, sometimes with bizarre results:

We had all three been much excited by a report that a certain dark geometer-moth, generated in underground stables, had been met with in Islington. Its name, I think, is 'Boletobia fuliginaria', and I believe that it is excessively rare in England. We were sitting at family prayers, on a summer morning, I think in 1855, when through the open window a brown moth came sailing. My Mother immediately interrupted the reading of the Bible by saying to my Father, 'O! Henry, do you think that can be "Boletobia"?' My Father rose up from the sacred book, examined the insect, which had now perched, and replied: 'No! it is only the common Vapourer, "orgyia antiqua"!', resuming his seat, and the exposition of the Word, without any apology or embarrassment.⁽⁹⁾

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7. The Hon. Evan Charteris, K.C., The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse (1931), pp.1-2.
 8. Edmund Gosse, Father and Son (1949 edn.), p.20.
 9. Edmund Gosse, op.cit., p.27.

Its bizarre quality indicates that this incident is of more than anecdotal significance--that somewhere in this alliance of scientific and religious attitudes there was an incongruity. This incongruity was brought to the surface by the publication in 1859 of Darwin's The Origin of Species. There had been disquiet for some time before--In Memoriam, with its 'Nature, red in tooth and claw', had been published in 1850, and in 1851 Ruskin had written in a letter:

If only the Geologists would let me alone, I could do very well, but those dreadful Hammers! I hear the clink of them at the end of every cadence of the Bible verses. (10)

Ruskin, however, did not feel the full effect of Darwin, but for diehard literalists like Philip Gosse, whose twin heroes were God and Darwin, the reasoning behind The Origin of Species caused a crisis:

through my Father's brain . . . there rushed two kinds of thought, each absorbing, each convincing, yet totally irreconcilable. There is a peculiar agony in the paradox that truth has two forms, each of them indisputable, yet each antagonistic to the other. It was this discovery, that there were two theories of physical life, each of which was true, but the truth of each incompatible with the truth of the other, which shook the spirit of my Father with perturbation. . . . My Father, after long reflection, prepared a theory of his own, which, as he fondly hoped, would . . . justify geology to godly readers of 'Genesis'. It was, very briefly, that there had been no gradual modification of the surface of the earth, or slow development of organic forms, but that when the catastrophic act of creation took place, the world presented, instantly, the structural appearance of a planet on which life had long existed.

The theory, coarsely enough, and to my Father's great indignation, was defined by a hasty press as being this--that God hid the fossils in the rocks in order to tempt geologists into infidelity . . . He offered [the theory]

10. Quoted, without source, in J.W. Burrow (ed.), op.cit., p.20.

with a glowing gesture, to atheists and Christians alike.⁽¹¹⁾
 This was to be the universal panacea; this the system of
 intellectual therapeutics which could not but heal all
 the maladies of the age. But, alas! atheists and Christians
 alike looked at it, and laughed, and threw it away.⁽¹²⁾

Of the two conclusions which the readers of The Origin of Species
 imagined were its most novel and iconoclastic, one, that man was
 first cousin to the apes, Darwin had deliberately not stated, but the
 other destroyed at one blow 'the central tradition of recent English
 Protestant apologetics--Natural Theology':

All the beautiful and ingenious contrivances in nature
 which Rational Christianity had explained as evidence of
 the benevolent design of an Almighty Clockmaker, Darwin's
 theory explained by the operation of natural selection:
 the struggle for life resulting in the preservation of
 certain random variations in offspring.⁽¹³⁾

Nature, according to Darwin, was 'the product of blind chance and a
 blind struggle, and man a lonely, intelligent mutation, scrambling
 with the brutes for his sustenance'. If people accepted Darwin's
 theory, then they were part of 'a cold passionless universe' and
 'nature held no clues for human conduct':

The whole earth no longer proclaimed the glory of the
 Lord. Paradoxically, in revealing the closeness of man's
 links with the rest of creation, Darwin seemed to have
 cut the emotional ties between man and nature.⁽¹⁴⁾

* * * *

In a letter of 1874 Ruskin wrote down reasons for his rejection
 of Darwinism:

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11. It was published in London in 1857 as Omphalos: An Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot.
 12. Edmund Gosse, op.cit., pp.74, 76, 77.
 13. J.W. Burrow (ed.), op.cit., p.40.
 14. J.W. Burrow (ed.), op.cit., pp.43, 42.

I got your happy letter to-day, but am a little provoked with you for talking nonsense about Darwinism, even in play. Of course you might just as well say that grass was green because the cows selected the flowers, or that moths were brown because sparrows catch the conspicuous ones. Nature shows and conceals exactly as she chooses. It is true that we have only sparrows because we shoot the kingfishers; but God makes gentians gay and lichens grave as it pleases Him, and by no other law, no other reason. Do you suppose a gnat escapes a trout because it is grey, and that dragon-flies are blue because salmon like red ones--if they do! (15)

There is no real discussion of Darwin here, but an emotional assertion of the traditional view of God's place in nature. Ruskin, like Hopkins, was typical of many people who rejected Darwin's conclusions. Their emotional, journalistic distortions of Darwin's views when they argued against him showed that they had never intended to look at him objectively, and their cast of mind remained as if Darwin's books had not been written. Before Darwin, for those people who possessed what Geoffrey Grigson has called the 'power of wonder and joy' in responding to nature, such a response

still led, 'naturally', or normally rather, to theology, to the still apparently valid or inescapable centre. (16)

To Ruskin and Hopkins it still did after Darwin.

Some of Darwin's habits of observation and thinking, however, were peculiarly close to Ruskin's, and indeed to the early Victorian Protestant clergyman with his collecting basket. As Burrow perspicaciously notices, besides being a revolutionary, even brutally

15. Letter to Dawtrey Drewitt of 12 September 1874; I have taken this from Kenneth Clark, Ruskin Today (1964), p.71.

16. Geoffrey Grigson, 'A Kind of Martyrdom', New Statesman, 15 August 1969.

materialistic, heavily documented piece of scientific theorising,

The Origin of Species has another aspect: we can look on it as:

the work of a gentleman naturalist in the tradition of Gilbert White of Selborne, a man who had watched birds and shot them, collected beetles and bred pigeons and walked in a tropical forest with a sense of intoxicated wonder. The Origin has a scope and sweep which an age of specialists can scarcely hope to recapture; it is a vast panorama of the natural world written by a polymath in the biological sciences: geologist, zoologist, palaeontologist, botanist and pigeon fancier.

This passage already gives some sense of the wider and non-scientific side of Darwin which he shared with Ruskin, a side which gives The Origin of Species a dimension and a charm not usually found in purely scientific works:

Darwin's children laughed at him for the naive enthusiasm of his descriptions, seizing particularly on his account of a larval cirripede 'with six pairs of beautifully constructed natatory legs, a pair of magnificent compound eyes, and extremely complex antennae', which they said sounded like an advertisement . . . this enthusiasm, an almost childlike sense of wonder at the amazing contrivances and interrelations of the natural world . . . (17)

The basis of Ruskin's drawings, writings, and philosophy of Nature, as Patricia Ball has said, is the early nineteenth-century scientist's

17. J.W. Burrow, op.cit., p.13; I have come across another unusual juxtaposition, a peculiarly unscientific poem by Mrs. T.H. Huxley, 'Spring in April', in The English Illustrated Magazine x, no.115 (April 1893), p.478, which includes the following passages:

Gorse of bright gold,
 With nutty fragrance strewing the cool air,
 Gold daffodil,
 In spears of greenery stoled,
 And primroses--with dewy eyes, most fair,
 My heart's cup you do fill
 With gladness, so unplucked you shall remain in cavy fold.

.

Oh heavenly Spring!
 Quicken my soul's desires, that they may bloom
 In loveliness.

collection, classification and close scrutiny of phenomena . . .
 a science concerned with detail--animal, mineral and vegetable--
 and Ruskin's taste for descriptive analysis was fostered by it. (18)

He had received a certain amount of scientific training at Oxford from, among others, Dr. William Buckland, the geologist, at whose breakfast-table, Ruskin said, 'I met the leading scientific men of the day, from Herschel downwards'. (19) When he travelled to Switzerland in 1835

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18. Patricia M. Ball, op.cit., section 2, 'Ruskin and "The Pure Fact"', pp.48-102; this quotation, p.53. Dr. Ball emphasises that this kind of wondering dilettante scientific outlook belongs to the first half of the nineteenth century, but there is plenty of evidence in late Victorian periodicals to show that it flourished at least until the 1880's. For instance, The Gentleman's Magazine for the second half of 1882 employed W. Mattieu Williams, F.R.A.S., to write regular 'Science Notes', which included side by side the following motley subjects-- 'An Improvement on the Channel Tunnel', 'The Birth of the Moon', 'The Philosophy of Manuring', 'Fairy Rings', 'The Colours of Water', 'The Utility of Drunkenness', 'A Visit to the Goodwin Sands', 'Regelation and Welding', 'The Voice of Waters', 'Warming Houses from Below', 'Monkey-Pigs', 'The Effects of Strong Winds on Trees'. (ccliii, July to December, 1882, pp.112 et seq., 242 et seq., and 373 et seq.)

This last note makes an interesting comparison with Hopkins's nature notes, particularly the discussion of the chestnut in 'On the Origin of Beauty' (Journals, p.87). This is an extract from Williams: The digitate leaf of the horse-chestnut, as my readers may have observed, is divided into seven radiating leaflets, and has a long, petiole or leaf-stalk fixed to the stem by a hoof-shaped attachment, showing the ranks of imaginary nails of a horse-shoe when it is detached, from which the name of the tree is probably derived.

During the gale which blew so pertinaciously on the 29th of April last, I watched the writhing gyrations of these outspread fans as they were tortured by the wind, and wondered at the possibility of their remaining on their stems, the strain upon their attachments being so great. A few were actually blown off, others indicated partial dislocation by drooping abnormally. A few days later these drooping leaves were withered at their edges, as though scorched or frost-bitten. This was the case on the windward side of all the exposed trees.. [op.cit., p.375.]

19. Praeterita i, para.231.

he took:

a 'cyanometer' to measure the blue of the sky, a notebook for geological observations and sketchblock, square rule and foot-rule for architectural drawings.⁽²⁰⁾

Ruskin's early diaries show him occupied in close study of natural detail, exercising his

'remarkable curiosity', pursuing the truth and beauty of fact by means of 'the most objective kind of observation'. He was working 'almost with the eye of a prospective botanist or geologist, and awakening to the 'beauty of form' by this minute scrutiny.'⁽²¹⁾

In Modern Painters Hopkins had probably read⁽²²⁾ that for painters a 'thorough knowledge of the lowest details is necessary, and full expression of them right'. Art, Ruskin said, had been led off the right track by

the remarks of historical painters on landscape. Accustomed themselves to treat their backgrounds slightly and boldly, and feeling . . . that any approach to completeness of detail therein injures their picture by interfering with its principal subject, they naturally lose sight of the peculiar and intrinsic beauties of things which to them are injurious, unless subordinate. Hence . . . the frequent advice given by Reynolds and others, to neglect specific form in landscape, and treat its materials in large masses, aiming only at general truths; the flexibility of foliage, but not its kind; the rigidity of rock, but not its universal character. In the passage more especially bearing on this subject . . . we are told that 'the landscape painter works not for the virtuoso or the naturalist, but for the general observer of life and nature'. This is true, in

20. Patricia M. Ball, op.cit., p.54.

21. Patricia M. Ball, op.cit., p.57.

22. In his diary for February-March 1865, Hopkins wrote a list of books to be read, which includes Modern Painters; and in his journal for 14 September 1871, he quotes from Modern Painters, pt.v, chap.ii, 'Of Turnerian Topography' (Journals, pp.56, 215, and 413-14).

precisely the same sense that the sculptor does not work for the anatomist, but for the common observer of life and nature. Yet the sculptor is not, for this reason, permitted to be wanting either in knowledge or expression of anatomical detail; and the more refined that expression can be rendered, the more perfect is his work. That which to the anatomist is the end, is to the sculptor the means. The former desires details for their own sake; the latter, that by means of them he may kindle his work with life, and stamp it with beauty. And so in landscape; botanical or geological details are not to be given as matter of curiosity or subject of search, but as the ultimate elements of every species of expression and order of loveliness. (23)

A comparison between their diaries shows the huge degree to which Ruskin influenced Hopkins. (24) When he was aged twenty-four, for instance, a month before he entered the Jesuit order in 1868, Hopkins went on a walking-tour of Switzerland with his Oxford friend, Edward Bond. He took the opportunity of making much fuller nature notes than he had been accustomed to, and they largely took the form of descriptive pieces on the natural sights that Ruskin had seen and commented on in his diaries on his tour of 1835. Both men chose for comment the Rhône Glacier, the Handeck waterfall, the Guttanen granites,

23. Modern Painters, preface to 2nd edn., pp.31, 27.

24. Roman Catholic critics of Hopkins usually seem to try and minimise, sometimes to the point of not even acknowledging the existence of, the obvious influence Ruskin had on Hopkins. Professor Cotter, for instance, in a book whose subject as expressed by its title, Inscape, should lead, one might reasonably expect, to at least a chapter on Ruskin, mentions Ruskin only once, and then dismissively, saying 'throughout the journal . . . the eye of the beholder owes more to Pythagoras than to Ruskin'. Ruskin's name is not mentioned in Father W.A.M. Peters' book (op.cit.), or in the Jesuit symposium, Norman Weyand, S.J. (ed.), Immortal Diamond: Studies in Gerard Manley Hopkins (1949).

the Matterhorn and its surroundings, and the Giessbach Falls. (25)

A comparison between two descriptions of mountain-peaks can show the similarity and differences of approach. Ruskin wrote of the peaks of the Bréven at Chamouni:

This projecting ridge was formed by nearly vertical folia of firm rock, but the top of it, getting broader as it retired towards the mass of the hill, was loaded as high as it would hold, with an enormous and sharp ridge, apparently of débris, b, c, fig. 2 last page, but with this great peculiarity, that all the stones in it were thrown one way, as if it had been crushed aside and broken at once by some enormous weight. It lay sloping upward towards aiguilles rouges, bearing to the firm rock below a good deal of the relation that the bruised end of a stick or piece of wood, with which anything has been beaten, bears to the firm fibre of it. The ridge of the Bréven seen from this point has all the same battered and bruised look, all its ends being bent hither and thither, chiefly, I think, however, concave to aiguilles rouges, as at a fig. 2 opposite. (26)

Hopkins's description of the Matterhorn reads:

Up the Riffel from which, the point of view somewhat changing, the Matterhorn looks like a sea-lion couchant or a sphinx, and again like the hooded-snake frontal worn by the Egyptian kings . . . the Little Matterhorn couples the two inscapes, being a sharpened bolt rising from a flattened shoulder; in the Great Matterhorn the Shoulder--not what is specially so called, which rises to within a little of the summit, but a much lower ridge--is unimportant, the stem of the mountain edged and sharpened to an unparalleled degree--a mere fang--, but still lancet-shaped, convex: the range on the other side of Zermatt and skirting the Zermatt valley are concave, cusped; they run like waves in the wind, ricked and sharply inscaped. (27)

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25. Respectively: Journals, pp.178, 178, 177, 180, 183 (Hopkins); and for Ruskin, Joan Evans and John Howard Whitehouse (eds.), The Diaries of John Ruskin (1956), i 56, 48, 47, 420, and E.T. Cook and A. Wedderburn (eds.), op.cit., xviii, p.xli.
26. Joan Evans and John Howard Whitehouse (eds.), op.cit. i 501.
27. Journals, p.180.

Ruskin gives a much firmer, three-dimensional description, as though he is wanting to create in the reader's mind a solid relief model of what he looks at. Hopkins's account is much more idiosyncratic, exciting, and uncertain. The metaphors he uses tell us more about Hopkins's immediate response to the mountain than about its actual nature, and the account as a whole is subjective⁽²⁸⁾--even architectural terms like 'lancet', 'cusped', 'concave', and 'convex', which should be immediately translatable by the mind's eye into definite shapes

28. In Journals, p.364, there is an interesting, slightly pained and frustrated, note by a professional botanist, Mr. J.S.L. Gilmour, on Hopkins as a botanist:

GMH looked at plants with the eye of an artist rather than of a botanist. He possessed remarkable powers of close observation from his own very personal angle, but as this 'angle' was far removed from the normal botanical one, and as the language he used in his descriptions was highly individual, it is not always easy to be sure of what plant--or what part of a plant--he had before him. A botanist cannot help wishing that he had had more botanical knowledge as a background to his genius for minute analysis of shapes and patterns--the combination would undoubtedly have resulted in taxonomic work of a very high order.

Appendix III to Journals, 'Philological Notes' by Alan Ward, is another survey by a specialist into whose preserves Hopkins the amateur had blundered; but Mr. Ward is far more sensitive than Mr. Gilmour to Hopkins's temperament and purpose, and does not judge him from a high-priest's position:

It seems probable that in most cases his purpose in jotting down these lists was not primarily to record or guess at etymological connexion, but simply to record groups of words whose similarity in form and meaning had interested him. Many of the lists could be considered as verbal exercises, sense-variations on a formal theme; some even as miniature poetic compositions in which the meaning or idea common to the individual words forms the subject of the composition, which is given shape by the similarity in form of each word to the other.

In attempting to interpret the entries, we must remember that Hopkins wrote them down for his own private use only. It was not intended that they should be intelligible to anyone but himself, or should appear consistent. [Journals, p.499.]

See also footnote 102 in this chapter, for W.S. Rockstro's and Sir Robert Stewart's opinions on Hopkins's musical compositions.

have an uncertainty about them because Hopkins insists on putting two or more expressions side by side as alternative descriptions of the same natural object--'the range . . . are concave, cusped . . . like waves . . . ricked', and 'the stem of the mountain . . . a mere fang . . . lancet-shaped, convex'. His mind will not work slowly towards an exact description and then fix it, but moves from one experiment in word-painting of the natural object to another and then to another, no picture appearing to organically modify another but rather to completely replace it. His mind naturally works in jerks of inspiration rather than empirically. Whereas with Ruskin we can, particularly when aided by his cross-referenced drawings, often picture what Ruskin was looking at, with Hopkins there is the constant difficulty of penetrating through his personal reactions and idiosyncratic forms of expression to what lies beneath. The effect is that there does not seem to be a connecting factor, a key to the whole thing in reality, and it is the several dissimilar individual pieces in Hopkins's description that stand out, not the whole. Like Victorian Gothic architecture's Hopkins's artistic method is to pile up excrescence after excrescence around a central structure whose exact shape and nature is amorphous and very difficult to determine. With Ruskin, as with a Claddical building, there is a comforting solidly-defined central structure, from which any accretion is essentially organic, and not to any disturbing degree changing

the still centre.⁽²⁹⁾

Hopkins is attracted by irregular small units that stand out in opposition to their natural background ('pied beauty'), rather than by smoother features or larger areas. He used Ruskin's methods of looking at the world around him as a starting-point in his diaries, but the greater his emotional engagement with what he is looking at, the further removed from Ruskin he becomes. For instance, as John Piper writes in 'Hopkins's Drawings', Appendix I to Journals:

Rarely do the drawings pretend to be anything but analytical descriptions of things he was at the time looking at closely . . . His drawing reaches what he would have called a Parnassian level in poetry . . . Hopkins's and Ruskin's drawings in fact have the same explanatory urgency.⁽³⁰⁾

His drawings are, Hopkins admits, derivative; he purposely sketched 'in a Ruskinese point of view'.⁽³¹⁾ Sketches that I have noticed to particularly resemble ones of Ruskin's are of clouds,⁽³²⁾ architectural detail,⁽³³⁾ individual trees,⁽³⁴⁾ rocks,⁽³⁵⁾ and cliff strata.⁽³⁶⁾

29. The fact that aesthetically, if not functionally, the Houses of Parliament are satisfying is because while Barry did not go beyond the structural design to try his hand at detail, Pugin did not go beyond detail to try his hand at structure. The beneficial qualities of the Classical and Gothic frames of mind are thus combined in the Parliament buildings without clashing, and without the bad characteristics of each.

30. Journals, pp.454-5.

31. Letters iii 202.

32. Journals, fig.25; Evans and Whitehouse, op.cit. i, plates 12 and 17.

33. Journals, figs.1-4; Evans and Whitehouse, op.cit. i 331.

34. Journals, fig.22, plate 18; Evans and Whitehouse, op.cit. i, plates 24,10.

35. Journals, plate 11; Evans and Whitehouse, op.cit. i, plate 43.

36. Journals, plate 14; Evans and Whitehouse, op.cit. i 7 and 38.

A Hopkins sketch of hedgerow leaves and branches can be compared with Ruskin's 'Moss and wild strawberry', and a Hopkins drawing of a sunset and a Ruskin one of a dawn show a similar long, horizontal, layered, skyscape. (37) In the art at which he was a Parnassian, only a good amateur, he imitated Ruskin and could not achieve more than analytical description. It is only when his medium is words that his 'present fury' can produce more than description, and in words he cannot but go beyond mere description. As Dr. Ball points out, (38) in his letters to Nature ('a scientific publication devoted to the service of fact'), in describing the changes he saw in the appearance of the sky and particular sunsets, (39) Hopkins does not merely record, but employs other literary talents of his:

A bright sunset lines the clouds so that their brims look like gold, brass, bronze, or steel. It fetches out those dazzling flecks and spangles which people call fish-scales. It gives to a mackerel or dappled cloudrack the appearance of quilted crimson silk, or a ploughed field glazed with crimson ice. (40)

Within a Ruskinian context Hopkins is nevertheless being himself. Although his treatment of the subject is different, in his choice of features to observe Hopkins is Ruskinian, as W.H. Gardner points out:

37. Journals, plate 16; Evans and Whitehouse, op.cit. i, plate 49.

38. Patricia K. Ball, op.cit., pp.115-16.

39. An interest in sunsets was shared by Hopkins with Ruskin. There are 56 entries under 'Sunset' in the Journals index; and a letter from Ruskin's father of 28 May 1844 (Modern Painters i, pp.xxii-xxiii) reads: '[Ruskin] has just gone from a hurried dinner, to the sunset, which he visits as regularly as a soldier does his evening parade'.

40. Letter in Nature, 3 January 1884; reprinted in Letters ii 162.

With the eye of a Ruskin, and the same power of using words as pigments, he glances from heaven to earth, noting the varied forms and changing moods of nature and recording every significant detail. (41)

In his practice he shows he has made a similar vow to that of Ruskin's:

I shall then investigate the truths of specific form and colour, in the four great component parts of landscape-- sky, earth, water, and vegetation. (42)

In his journals Hopkins records his impressions of natural objects-- flowers, leaves, branches and trees, clouds and weather-signs in the sky, and water in streams, pools and falls, and natural effects on other objects--a flag blowing in the wind, patterns of ice on urinals, and the miniature drama taking place on the surface of a hot chocolate drink. He remarks on texture, colour, shape, and movement, and is particularly concerned, as Ruskin was, with the contrast-patterns of filigree and dapple. There is the odd word noticeably used in natural description by both Ruskin and Hopkins, but not apparently used with the same sense or frequency by other writers, like 'fretted' (used to describe filigree), which shows a more detailed debt. (43)

Once we have acknowledged that Hopkins owes to Ruskin the foundation of his observation process--his choice of what to look at and how to look at it--his greatest debt is, curiously enough, in

41. W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins i (1948), p.11.

42. Modern Painters ii 253.

43. Ruskin's diary for 23 June 1844 has 'the sky above is fretted with spray of white compact textured cloud', and Rouen Cathedral has a 'fretted front' (Modern Painters i, i 3); the word describes clouds on six occasions in Journals (pp.27, 155, 160, 179, 207, and 216), according to the index.

that area in which he is commonly supposed to be most original, in 'inscape'. Alison Sulloway has recently argued that there are similarities between the three steps prescribed in Modern Painters for the artist to take, and Hopkins's idea of the artistic process:

The first step is to see what is before him, and to see it quietly, and accurately, that is to say, 'innocently'. The second step is to respond, and the third is to reproduce what he sees. (44)

It is in the second stage of this process that there is a most striking similarity. Of an engraving Ruskin once wrote:

I feel assured . . . that the engraver has spared no pains . . . because he felt and liked his subject in itself--and enjoyed the dwelling upon it. It is one of those portraits which--even to those like myself who are unacquainted with the original--have an internal evidence of fidelity, a vitality that can result from resemblance only. (45)

If the first stage be performed with sufficient involved concentration, then something more than just cold realism will result. While Ruskin was writing the early parts of Modern Painters he 'read a little bit of Plato very accurately each day', and he absorbed the Platonist doctrine of 'ideas' as archetypes and patterns. In the Preface to the second edition (p.27) he wrote:

There is an ideal form of every herb, flower, and tree, it is that form to which every individual of the species has a tendency to arrive, freed from the influence of accident or disease. Every landscape painter should know the specific characters of every object he has to represent, rock, flower, or cloud; and in his highest ideal works all their distinctions

44. Alison G. Sulloway, Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper (1972), chapter 2, "'Heaven's Sweet Gift": Hopkins, Ruskin, and the Plenitude of God', p.69.

45. Unpublished Ruskin letter, not dated or addressed, in my possession.

will be perfectly expressed, broadly or delicately, slightly or completely, according to the nature of the subject, and the degree of attention which is to be drawn to the particular object by the part it plays in the composition.

Hopkins's idea of 'inscape' seems to correspond almost exactly to this 'ideal form' of Ruskin's. The most detailed and complete documentation of his quest for such an ideal in a particular natural species is given in his journal for 11 July 1866:

Oaks: the organisation of this tree is difficult. Speaking generally no doubt the determining planes are concentric, a system of brief contiguous and continuous tangents, whereas those of the cedar would roughly be called horizontals and those of the beech radiating but modified by droop and by a screw-set towards jutting points. But beyond this since the normal growth of the boughs is radiating and the leaves grow some way in there is of course a system of spoke-wise clubs of green-sleeve-pieces. And since the end shoots curl and carry young and scanty leaf-stars these clubs are tapered, and I have seen also the pieces in profile with chiselled outlines, the blocks thus made detached and lessening towards the end. However the star knot is the chief thing: it is whorled, worked round, a little and this is what keeps up the illusion of the tree: the leaves are rounded inwards and figure out ball-knots. Oaks differ much, and much turns on the broadness of the leaf, the narrower giving the crisped and starry and Catherine-wheels forms, the broader the flat-pieced mailed or shard-covered ones, in which it is possible to see composition in dips etc on wider bases than the single knot or cluster. But I shall study them further. See the 19th.

And on 19 July he completes the investigation:

I have now found the law of the oak leaves. It is of platter-shaped stars altogether; the leaves lie close like pages, packed, and as if drawn tightly to. But these old packs, which lie at the end of their twigs, throw out now long shoots alternately and slimly leaved, looking like bright keys. All the sprays but markedly these ones shape out and as it were embrace greater circles and the dip and toss of these make the wider and less organic articulations of the tree. (46)

Mrs. Sulloway is wrong, however, when she tries to attribute the origin of Hopkins's concept of 'instress' to Ruskin. She confuses 'instress' with a more general, Wordsworthian, natural theology conclusion shared by Ruskin and Hopkins and others. (47)

In a well-known passage of Praeterita Ruskin says

A snowdrop was to me, as to Wordsworth, part of the Sermon on the Mount.

And in another part he says

The first sight of the Alps had been to me as a direct revelation of the benevolent will in creation. (48)

Similarly, in his journal for 18 May 1870 Hopkins wrote:

I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our Lord by it. (49)

A flower had been a direct revelation of God in the minds of both Ruskin and Hopkins. But this is not the same as instress, whose elements are the object itself, its inscape, and the perception of and acknowledgement by the onlooker of that inscape. What is unRuskinian about instress is that its essence is a particular kind

47. Compare Cowper's

Not a flow'r

But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,
Of his unrivall'd pencil.

Natural theology itself presumably goes as far back as the most ancient oracle of Greece, Dodona, which spoke through a grove of oaks: The sound of the wind through the trees, accentuated by brazen vessels hung on the boughs, was regarded as the voice of the god, its message elucidated by priests or, later, priestesses.

(Donald Davie [ed.], The Late Augustans/ Longer Poems of the Later Eighteenth Century [1958], p.128; note to Cowper's 'Yardley-Oak'.)

48. Praeterita i, xii, p.220, and ii, iii, p.288.

49. Journals, p.199.

of relationship between the object and the onlooker's mind, Hopkins combining, as Dr. Ball says, Ruskinian scrutiny of the object with a

highly developed Romantic awareness of identity, with its emotional force and sense of relationship.

Hopkins reconciles 'objective fidelity to the fact with subjective awareness'.⁽⁵⁰⁾ A good example of this combination is in Hopkins's remarkable description of bluebells from his journal of 9-11 May 1871, where he describes them and uses several of his senses to bring himself to a state of acute awareness of them:

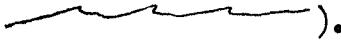
The bluebells in your hand baffle you with their inscape, made to every sense: if you draw your fingers through them they are lodged and struggle with a shock of wet heads; the long stalks rub and click and flatten to a fan on one another like your fingers themselves would when you passed the palms hard across one another, making a brittle rub and jostle like the noise of a hurdle strained by leaning against; then there is the faint honey smell and in the mouth the sweet gum when you bite them. But this is easy, it is the eye they baffle. They give one a fancy of panpipes and of some wind instrument with stops--a trombone perhaps. The overhung necks--for growing they are little more than a staff with a simple crook but in water, where they stiffen, they take stronger turns, in the head like sheephooks or, when more waved throughout, like the waves riding through a whip that is being smacked--what with these overhung necks and what with the crisped ruffled bells dropping mostly on one side and the gloss these have at their footstalks they have an air of the knights at chess. Then the knot or 'knoop' of buds some shut, some just gaping, which makes the pencil of the whole spike, should be noticed: the inscape of the flower most finely carried out in the siding of the axes, each striking a greater and greater slant, is finished in these clustered buds, which for the most part are not straightened but rise to the end like a tongue and this and their tapering and a little flattening they have make them look like the heads of snakes.⁽⁵¹⁾

50. Patricia M. Ball, op.cit., pp.108-9, 114.

51. Journals, p.209.

We have already seen how Hopkins's descriptive prose can become too full of quickly succeeding ideas at a high pitch of emotion for there to be easy comprehension by the reader. When we come to the poetry the difficulties are likely to be increased because the verse-form usually imposes limits on Hopkins which have the effect of making him, in order to load every rift with ore, omit many words which he would include in a prose version of the same thoughts. As a result the poems are more concentratedly rich in images than the prose, but the logical framework within which they are placed becomes more obscure--we know that one image must be connected to the one next to it but we do not easily find out how. Connecting-words are often cut out so that the valuable space they occupy within the limited verse-framework can be filled by something richer, with more carats of poetic gold (hence the incomprehensibility of 'Tom's Garland' without its 'crib' letter--'But no way sped', in line 12, can be paraphrased 'But the curse of our time is that many do not share in the Common weal', but not until you have read Hopkins's prose version). At the same time the verse-form can be expanded to accommodate the overflow of Hopkins's imagery when its pressure bursts it out beyond the limits of the normal verse-form; it can do this either in the length of line, by increasing the usual number of feet ('Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves' has eight in each line), or by adding on lines or half-lines in the middle or at the end of a conventional verse-form (the 'sonnets' 'Harry Ploughman', 'Tom's Garland', and 'That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire'), or in the

number of syllables in a line (the theory of 'sprung rhythm').

It can be seen how this simultaneous dual process of expansion of form to include more images and contraction and concentration of meaning makes for richer single images and less unity throughout the poem. We can add to this the fact that poems of the pattern we have been discussing, that can be divided into two parts, mimetic and explanatory, are likely to be even more noticeably split in two by styles--by the fact that images ask to be condensed to better fulfil their function in the mimetic part, and the moral lesson in the didactic part is told more plainly if its number of words is increased rather than lessened. The style of the first part of the poem is likely to be able to be characterised by a row of different sized dots, while the second part by continuous lines (a line of poetry in the mimetic part might be symbolised: "x" "o" "p" "q" "r" ; while one in the explanatory part might be ).

The fact that there is no equivalent of 'instress' in Ruskin's diaries after 1840 is important. In March of that year he made a decision to split his diary into two sections, one for 'feeling' and one for 'intellect', and it is here that the main difference lies between his and Hopkins's writing on Nature. As Dr. Ball says:

Coleridge could never have conceived any such division in his notebooks. To him, intellect and feeling were collaborating in the exploration of the self and external phenomena. Together they revealed the relationships binding the universe in a profound unity. And for him, the poetic act is precisely that which unites fact, thought and feeling. Ruskin, inheriting the simplified assumption that poetry

rates feeling and idea higher than fact, tries in his adult poems to achieve that weighting. Yet his instincts oppose the effort. He wishes to dwell on fact, to exhibit and study it, not relegate it to a supporting role. The swift transition from the physical to the psychological is a development he is reluctant to admit and he does not see the world of feeling as an enriching context, but rather as a hindrance to the due honouring of phenomena as such. The proper tribute in Ruskin's view is not possible if the observer is more concerned with his reacting self, his emotional response, or with ^{any} other centre which seems to deprive the object of t⁽⁵²⁾ull attention it merits in its independent existence. (52)

Ruskin later developed, in Modern Painters, his theory of the 'pathetic fallacy', arguing that:

the greatest poetic work is marked by an impersonal quality, by its ability to see clearly with no confusion of emotion and object and no imposition of self on scene or situation.

He became less interested in writing poetry and more in describing, and forming a theory around, pure facts; poetry would have involved 'moving away from the fact to the feeling'. (53) The problem arose, however, in more concentrated form, of how to apply natural theology; where did an invisible God, whom you perceived by faith in your mind rather than by sensuous observation, enter into this world of fact? Ruskin never appeared to solve this problem satisfactorily on paper. Although he had said 'All great Art is Praise', as Dr. Ball says,

in his writing he made only a loose emotional connection between the thing seen and the idea of God, breaking out into a rhetorical coda of generalized prayer after his ^{such} more precisely concentrated presentation of the object. (54)

52. Patricia M. Ball, op.cit., p.55.

53. Patricia M. Ball, op.cit., p.58.

54. Patricia M. Ball, op.cit., p.110.

The equation could, in fact, only be made by rejecting some parts of science, and in particular its empirical method. This rejection is the cause of one of Ruskin's many inconsistencies:

Flowers, like everything else that is lovely in the visible world, are only to be seen rightly with the eyes which the God who made them gave us; and neither with microscopes nor spectacles. These have their uses for the curious and the aged; as stilts and crutches have for people who want to walk in mud, or cannot safely walk but on three legs anywhere. But in health of mind and body, men should see with their own eyes, hear and speak without trumpets, walk on their feet, not on wheels, and work and war with their arms, not with engine-beams, nor rifles warranted to kill twenty men at a shot before you can see them. The use of the great mechanical powers may indeed sometimes be compatible with the due exercise of our own; but the use of instruments for exaggerating the powers of sight necessarily deprives us of the best pleasures of sight. A flower is to be watched as it grows, in its association with the earth, the air, and the dew; its leaves are to be seen as they expand in sunshine; its colours, as they embroider the field, or illumine the forest. Dissect or magnify them, and all you discover or learn at last will be that oaks, roses, and daisies, are all made of fibres and bubbles; and these again, of charcoal and water; (55) but, for all their peeping and probing, nobody knows how,

Both Ruskin and Hopkins are uneasily poised between science and fact, on the one hand, and God on the other, being committed to both. Traditionally, as I have said, Christianity was less concerned with particulars than with species and laws. The theological thinking of the Society of Jesus was, in Hopkins's time, based on the mind of the Dominican, Aquinas. 'With an orderliness and completeness which its supporters claim as the great merits of St. Thomas's system', but which, as Mrs. Duncan-Jones points out 'are likely to have been

55. Praeterita ii, para.200.

in a way repugnant to Hopkins',⁽⁵⁶⁾ Aquinas held that in the relation of the individual to his species, the 'matter' individuates, while the 'form' is generic: or that the individuals of a species reproduce their common original pattern. Natural theology as practised by early Victorian Protestants took the first stage in opposition to this, towards making Nature the starting-point for a discovery of God, rather than having God as the primary source and Nature as a dependent secondary thing. And both Hopkins and Ruskin were helped by this natural theology. Ruskin did not bridge the remaining gap, but remained inconsistent. Hopkins was fortunate to find Scotus, a Franciscan, whose teaching, and methods, in some ways were directly opposed to Aquinas's. Scotus acknowledged that each individual has a distinctive form, a haecceitas or 'thisness', as well as a generic quidditas or 'whatness'. As Gardner puts it,

underlying individuality and the specific nature is the Universal Nature . . . which expresses the unity of all created things . . . [individuality] is the real relation between the creature and God.⁽⁵⁷⁾

Scotus therefore became for Hopkins the ecclesiastical authority he was looking for to sanction his approach to and reactions to Nature, and thereby the one who 'of all men most sways my spirits to peace' ('Duns Scotus's Oxford'). A Franciscan monk has said to me that Hopkins would have had a much more congenial life if he had chosen that order rather than the Society of Jesus.

56. Elsie Elizabeth Phare, The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1933), p.84.

57. W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins i (1948), p.23.

But Scotus left too many loose ends in his philosophy, and was of the Middle Ages, not having to cope with Darwinism. The frame of Hopkins's mind had many Victorian aspects; and the Victorian need for a secure emotional framework combined with the Thomist prescription of a 'finished and finite dogmatism' to oppose the Scotist part of him, 'the intuitionist, the mystic, the dreamer',⁽⁵⁸⁾ so that in his poetry, which he feels has to contain a completed statement, the two parts seldom cohere. As with the Pre-Raphaelite painters, the form of his completed works of art echoes the same kind of clash of ideas that we find in much Victorian thought, and particularly in one of its chief typical figures, Ruskin.

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The most consistent and informed critical antagonist of the Pre-Raphaelite painters is Geoffrey Grigson. His essay 'The Preraphaelite Myth' is, as Professor Fredeman says, 'an open accusation of fraud'.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Their real importance, Grigson says, has been distorted by their journalistic instincts, which caused them to surround themselves 'for posterity, with a set of gigantic magnifying-glasses'. He adds:

they were the bad boys of art, doing everything they should never do . . . The subject decided on, they looked for the requisite bits of nature and fitted them together--mice,

58. W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins ii (1949), p.328.

59. William E. Fredeman, op.cit., p.36.

snails, ivy-leaves, moss, lilies, old boots, sheeps' heads. Their eyes never took in a sun-illuminated, sun-modified impression at a glance, and gave it translated perfection on canvas. (60)

This assertion seems to me a just summary of a large number of typical Pre-Raphaelite paintings. The gawkishness in composition implied by 'fitted them together', and the clumsy attempt to make up for their lack of deeply felt artifice described in 'the subject decided on, they looked for the requisite bits' corresponds, I would think, to most people's observations on seeing Millais' 'Ophelia' or Hunt's 'The Awakening Conscience'. When Elizabeth Rothenstein replied to Grigson's charges by saying

there is none the less a profound sense of the universal inherent in the particular things or imaged by them,

she does not carry conviction, and her arguments do not have force when one is confronted with the paintings themselves. Miss Rothenstein makes it clear further on in her article that she is basing her opinions largely on what the Pre-Raphaelites said about themselves, rather than on her own objective eye clearly focussed on their paintings, and she is thus falling a victim of the 'gigantic magnifying-glasses', particularly, I think, of Hunt's. (61)

As we have seen, The Germ insisted, vaguely, on 'an entire adherence to the simplicity of Nature', and this principle usually took the form in practice of painstaking attention to detail. It

60. Geoffrey Grigson, 'The Pre-Raphaelite Myth', in The Harp of Aeolus and Other Essays on Art, Literature, & [sic] Nature (1947).

61. Elizabeth Rothenstein, 'The Pre-Raphaelites and Ourselves', Month n.s.i (March 1949), pp.180-98.

is impossible to disbelieve that Ruskin was a primary influence here, although J.G. Millais' biography of his father and Hunt's autobiography are both at pains to proclaim the originality of the P.R.B.:

Mr. Ruskin held that Art should be a great moral teacher, with religion as its basis and mainspring; but Millais, while agreeing with much of that critic's writings, was never quite at one with him on this point. He certainly held that Art should have a great and abiding purpose, giving all its strength to the beautifying or ennoblement of whatever subject it touched either sacred or secular; but though himself at heart a truly religious man, he could not harp on one string alone, nor would his impulsive originality, absolutely untrammelled by the opinions of others, allow him to paint pictures in which he had no heart at the dictation of any man, however eminent.

Holman Hunt, too, painted his religious pictures on the Ruskin lines really as the outcome of the high ideals he had set up for himself from the outset. 'Truth and the free field of unadulterated Nature' was the motto of these originators. ⁽⁶²⁾

But the first volume of Modern Painters had been published in 1843 and Ruskin found that the aims of the Pre-Raphaelite painters were the same as his, not just in the rather vague 'beautifying or ennoblement of whatever subject it touched either sacred or secular' but also, more precisely, in their detailed truth to nature and their seeking of inspiration in Italian art of the fifteenth century. Later in his book John Guille Millais does in fact connect the Pre-Raphaelites' closeness to the principles of Modern Painters with Ruskin's approval of their paintings:

[Modern Painters, volume 1] insisted that 'that only is a complete picture which has both the general wholeness

and effect of Nature and the inexhaustible perfection of Nature's details'; and, pointing to 'the admirable, though strange pictures of Mr. Millais and Mr. Holman Hunt' as examples of progress in this direction, [Ruskin] added, 'they are endeavouring to paint, with the highest possible degree of completion, what they see in Nature, without reference to conventional or established rules; but by no means to imitate the style of any past epoch. Their works are, in finish of drawing and in splendour of colour, the best in the Royal Academy, and I have great hope that they may become the foundation of a more earnest and able school of Art than we have seen for centuries'.⁽⁶³⁾

J.G. Millais has to admit here that they conform to Ruskin's ideas of 'inexhaustible perfection of Nature's details', and the crucial place of fact, particularly natural fact, in art. There is no need here to reiterate from their paintings the evidence for this, which I have set forth in Chapter One. But there is an interesting discrepancy to note between the attitude towards detail of Hunt and that of other painters. Millais, as we have seen, was usually casual about the theories behind Pre-Raphaelitism, and it seems plain that he was willing to characterise the movement by their detailed factual depiction of Nature. J.G. Millais says, of a series of letters to his father from Hunt, that they were 'Pre-Raphaelite in detail',⁽⁶⁴⁾ and in another part of his biography, more significantly, takes praise for his father's scientific accuracy in depiction of natural detail as 'perhaps the greatest compliment ever paid to "Ophelia"':

63. J.G. Millais, op.cit. i 111-12.

64. J.G. Millais, op.cit. i 129.

Perhaps the greatest compliment ever paid to 'Ophelia', as regards its truthfulness to Nature, is the fact that a certain Professor of Botany, being unable to take his class into the country and lecture from the objects before him, took them to the Guildhall, where this work was being exhibited, and discoursed to them upon the flowers and plants before them, which were, he said, as instructive as Nature herself. (65)

And Millais' son explicitly connects Pre-Raphaelitism with natural detail in a discussion of his father's 'The Woodman's Daughter':

Of all the pictures ever painted, there is probably none more truly Pre-Raphaelite in character than one--'The Woodman's Daughter'. It was painted in 1850 in a wood near Oxford, and was exhibited in 1851. Every blade of grass, every leaf and branch, and every shadow that they cast in the sunny wood is presented here with unflinching realism and infinite delicacy of detail. (66)

In the early days of the P.R.B. attention to minute details was, however much Hunt denied it, an essential tenet of theirs. John Brett, a close associate of the P.R.B. around the time of its inception, even accompanied Ruskin on a tour in order to closely imitate Ruskin's style of painting Nature; and Rossetti, the least tractable of the group, in his modern moral subject painting 'Found', according to Brown's diary, was

getting on slowly with his calf. He paints it in all like Albert Durer, hair by hair, and seems incapable of any breadth. (67)

And Hunt quotes an 1853 letter, which would be most uncharacteristic of its sender after that year, written to him by Rossetti, engaged

65. J.G. Millais, op.cit. i 145.

66. J.G. Millais, op.cit. i 109-10.

67. Ford Madox Brown's diary in W.M. Rossetti (ed.), Ruskin, Rossetti, Praeraphaelitism (1899), p.21.

on painting 'Found', which said:

Have you or Christina any recollection of an eligible and accessible brick wall? I should want to get up and paint it early in the mornings, as the light ought to be that of dawn. (68)

Hunt's attitude towards naturalistic detail suffers as did most of the attitudes published in his memoirs from rationalisation after the event. Thus, knowing that the most common charge, apart from that of medievalism, that had been laid against the Pre-Raphaelite painters was that they were merely botanical illustrators and advocates of literalism at any cost, (69) Hunt is most careful to emphasise that the detail was always subordinated to a larger cause. Generalisation by itself produced 'deadness' but a mere 'external likeness' was also dangerous:

a danger to the artist, to the purpose of his work, and to the work itself, lurks in delight of the idea alone without care for the fulness and beauty of the form in which this is presented; all appeals to the strong emotion demand representation of truth and beauty in the expression of its outward form; without consummate treatment in this respect the work gives only the ghost of a thought, for it may truly here be said, 'The blood is the life'. The Greek Church in its art [i.e., presumably in icons] has proved how deadness follows the pursuit of the mere

68. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. ii 348; Rossetti's letter of 30 September 1853.

69. His qualification of the virtues of minute realism was caused by such misconceptions, as Hunt saw them, as the following:

Mr. Leigh, the head of a popular school in London, chatting with his elder student class, said: 'Holman-Hunt is so superlatively conscientious that were he painting a picture in which everton toffee [sic] had to be introduced, he would never be satisfied unless he went to Everton to paint it, in order to make sure of representing the purest example of the article under best local conditions'. Such comments were harmlessly amusing.

(W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. ii 200 and 202)

exaltation of a starved truth; but in recognising this peril we must not ignore a no less certain danger which must overtake us when we abandon our ideal ambitions to make instead merely an external likeness of a fact; a danger none the less sordid when it is decked in sensuous splendour. (70)

More explicitly and emphatically he says:

Despite differences, we both [Hunt and Millais] agreed that a man's work must be the reflex of a living image in his own mind, and not the icy double of the facts themselves, for we were never 'Realists'. I think Art would have ceased to have the slightest interest for either of us had the object been only to make a representation, elaborate or unelaborate, of a fact in nature . . . Art dominated by such a spirit, takes us esteem the world as without design or finish. (71)

This passage shows that Hunt was capable of subordinating detail to 'design' in his theorising. His practice, however, as we have seen, was different--he would get lost in the details.

Hunt's theories of realism contain other contradictions. He had postponed what seemed like an eminently successful career to go East especially to paint the unadulterated truth about Christ's background. Yet in order to 'raise' his subjects from the debasement he thought the natives had undergone since Christ's day he transformed their base features to correspond more closely with current banal English ideals. His justification for this is as follows:

It must not be supposed that an artist in honestly using his model does not obey the principle of selection, he has to eschew all marks of degradation unsuitable to the character he is depicting, exercising the same fastidiousness in this selection as in the theme itself.

70. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. ii 334.

71. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. i 105-6.

Some painters who have since worked in the East on Scriptural subjects do not appear to have considered the gulf between the common men and women to be found in a degraded society and the great leaders of thought, whose lives were passed in an atmosphere of heavenly communion. The fact that Abraham was a nomad, that David was a shepherd, that Jesus was a carpenter, and that His first disciples were fishermen, makes it valuable for artists and authors to examine people following such occupations under the same sun, but seeing that it was not because the founders of the religion of the most advanced races were peasants that we want to know about them, the representation of uninspired peasants of this day will not satisfy a just thinker as the presentment of the leaders of men, who are worshipped and loved. (72)

An excellent example of this transformation in practice is provided by the sketch of the Fellah girl that Hunt drew from life, a literal representation, (73) compared with the wider-eyed, less negroid-lipped courting couple in the finished painting 'A Street Scene in Cairo: The Lantern Maker's Courtship', (74) which was completed about the same time. Most of Hunt's finished paintings of Eastern people similarly bewilder because you know that he was looking at strange incomprehensible foreigners, and yet what appear in his paintings are cosily unstartling English-seeming people in fancy-dress and make-up. By not copying Nature in its details Hunt achieved banality; he might just as well have stayed at home. In drawing a contrast between mere Realists and true Pre-Raphaelites Hunt wrote:

72. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. ii 22.

73. Reproduced in W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. i 285.

74. Hunt Exhibition (1969), no.28; and reproduced, opposite the sketch mentioned, in W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. i 284.

The dull man does not discern the image of the Celestial in earthly things, his work may be deservedly admired for its care and delicacy, but the spectator passes by and forgets it. (75)

By ignoring Nature Hunt, instead of achieving the image of the celestial, had painted mere pap that would appeal to the same kind of taste that had made Dean Milman very unpopular for calling Abraham a sheik. (76) When Hunt followed Nature faithfully his pictures were composed of discordant details, and when he departed from Nature he only achieved blandness.

The individual details in many Pre-Raphaelite paintings, as we have seen, stood out from the painting as a whole even more when they carried a symbolic meaning; making a piece of the painting into a symbol gave it an additional individual weight and cut it off even further from the neighbouring piece of the painting. The Pre-Raphaelite painters' practice shows that they were incapable of extending a mere statement of a symbol in one small part of the painting into a more generalised feeling which would suffuse the whole painting with unity. Symbolism could have been their unifying and saving grace, saving them from what Hopkins called, echoing R.W. Dixon, an 'impotent collection of particulars' or 'minute upholstery description'. (77) But because they would not see its proper use it became instead an additional discordant force.

75. W. Holman-Hunt, op.cit. ii 298.

76. J.W. Burrow, op.cit., p.20.

77. Letters ii 74.

Symbolism, of the religious iconographic kind, seems to me to be also the cause of the failure of 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' as a unified work. The Wreck has, uniquely among Hopkins's major poems (although it is intensively used in his minor devotional poems, particularly in 'Rosa Mystica'), a large number of religious symbols whose suggestivity is meant by Hopkins to be self-evident but which is too limited to add power to the poem as a whole. (78)

As Professor Sulloway notices, Hopkins repeatedly uses in this poem

numerical facts, such as the number of souls on board, as part of a mythological symbolism, in imitation of the apocalyptic numerology. (79)

In stanza 12 numbers start assuming the air of a significance which they have not earned--'Two hundred souls . . . of a fourth the doom to be drowned . . . the million of rounds of thy mercy'. And the fact that the nuns were five in number assumes a too large significance in stanza 22, where Hopkins attempts to resolve his difficulty of how to make the event of the wreck into something more than just one of a number of maritime disasters that The Times reported on in detail that year--into an event of portentous significance for the spiritual welfare of the people of England. Five is such a common number that Chance must insert it into millions of events every

78. The only other instance I can find outside his sermons and explicitly devotional poems of Hopkins's language being heavily steeped in this kind of traditional Catholic symbolism is in a priggish self-righteous letter to his father at the time of his conversion:

If even now you wd. put yourselves into that position wh. Christ so unmistakeably gives us and ask the Mother of sorrows to remember her three hours' compassion of the cross, the piercing of the sword prophecied by Simeon, and her seven dolours, and her spouse Joseph, the lily of chastity. [Letters iii 94.]

79. Alison G. Sulloway, op.cit., p.227.

day, and so there must be thousands of coincidences of two of those number fives every day. So Hopkins's excitement and intensity of feeling at the coincidence of there being five nuns and five stigmata of Christ is quite disproportionate. It is the more so when we see in his 1866 diary the following:

Coincidence from a correspondent of the Pall Mall Gazette.
Louis Philippe ascended the throne in

1830	1830	1830
His birth	His wife's birth	His marriage
1	1	1
7	7	8
7	8	0
3	2	9
<hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0;"/>	<hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0;"/>	<hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0;"/>
1848	1848	1848

when he abdicated.

A similar coincidence, over Louis Napoleon, is then quoted.⁽⁸⁰⁾

Hopkins has not done more with these much stranger coincidences than merely note them as such. It is only because that kind of coincidence, of simple numbers, is common in religious tradition that Hopkins uses it in the Wreck, and he fails to see how it does not carry enough weight outside the tradition of religion when it is judged by other, aesthetic standards. Gardner seems to me to go into the realms of wishful thinking when he says of this stanza:

we have an amazing 'metaphysical' digression--a musical fantasy, like a piece of elaborate ornamentation by Mozart, on the fortuitously mystical theme of Five . . . can we blame the poet for making the most of his opportunities?

80. Journals, p.73.

I think we can. Gardner says that he finds a 'unifying harmony which more than justifies the means employed', and concludes his account of the passage, strangely, with

Neither Donne nor Crashaw has shown greater skill in that intellectual alchemy which transmutes the factitious into the fundamental. (81)

Unfortunately for Professor Gardner's metaphor alchemy never succeeded in transmuting baser metals into gold, and Hopkins did not succeed here. The inharmonious part stands out from the whole.

Professor Sulloway also points to Hopkins's usage in the Wreck of the symbolic colours of the Apocalypse, red, white, and gold, (82) but these do not seem to have too much weight wished onto them. My main argument with 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' is over its pivotal point, the nun's cry and its interpretation by the poet as a miracle. As Professor Schneider says, unless we can acknowledge Hopkins's success in this vital point in the thought-structure,

the structure of the whole falls apart: lines and stanzas of an otherwise inexplicably feverish intensity float loose from either rational or poetic moorings, (83)

and, I would add, the statement of the disaster is not broadened in significance. Hopkins's interpretation of the cry as a symbol seems to me to fail. He makes it an arbitrary change from the cry in its physical reality to the cry as a valuable symbol, and,

81. W.H. Gardner, Gerard Manley Hopkins i (1948), p.63. I am grateful to Professor K. Allott for drawing my attention to this stanza.

82. Alison G. Sulloway, op.cit., p.187.

83. Elisabeth W. Schneider, op.cit., p.31.

seeming to half-realise this, therefore tries to force the reader to accept its truthfulness by employing the device of aposiopesis in stanza 28 ('But how shall I . . . make me room there', and the rest). The editors of Poems^{4r} say 'the effect of hysteria is probably deliberate',⁽⁸⁴⁾ but it seems to me something less than honest. It is a rhetorical device brought in to strengthen Hopkins's symbolical reading of the Wreck, and hence the unity of the whole work. But the symbol does not succeed, and the intensifying effects therefore only make that part of the poem stand out further from the rest.

A parallel can be drawn here with Hopkins's intensification of small parts of his poems by means of his shockingly different words, compound phrases, and neologisms, techniques which stand out, new and emphatic. Further means of emphasising the individual part rather than the whole of a painting were similarly provided by new techniques used by the Pre-Raphaelite painters. The modernity which is so vigorously protested in Pre-Raphaelite memoirs⁽⁸⁵⁾ seldom seems to be adequately substantiated by their paintings, but it is to some extent justified by their practices of painting on a wet white ground and using the new brilliantly coloured

84. Poems^{4r}, p.261.

85. For example, one aim of Pre-Raphaelitism, according to Hunt (op.cit. i 229), was expressed in this passage from Tennyson's 'Golden Year':

The fair new forms
That float about the threshold of an age,
Like truths of science waiting to be caught,
Crying, 'catch me who can', and make the catcher crowned.

aniline-based dyes. Neither of these techniques was completely new--Wilkie had used the wet white ground technique, and Samuel Palmer, before the Pre-Raphaelites, sometimes used colour with a peculiarly intense enamelled effect which broke the painting up into separate vivid parts, like a stained glass window (I am thinking of his 'Coming from Evening Church', painted in 1830, which is suggestively hung in the Tate Gallery among Pre-Raphaelite paintings).⁽⁸⁶⁾

The Pre-Raphaelite use of vivid purples and greens, and to a lesser extent, of reds and blues, served little function except that of throwing into relief that particular part of the painting. The onlooker's eyes seem to be assailed by chemical colours rather than by painters'--acidic viridian (rather than green), henna dye (rather than orange), trisulphide of arsenic (rather than yellow), and livid cobalt (in place of blue). This colour was further heightened

86. This strange painting has a medieval 'keeping' (as Hopkins would say)--a gothic church, darkness, caves, vivid 'pure' colours in medieval dress of people walking from the church; trees frame the picture so that it looks like a religious object. A much later (1864) Palmer, 'A Dream in the Apennine', also in the Tate, seems to me to be much closer to P.R.B. paintings, particularly to Hunt's. Its goats are similar to Hunt's Scapegoat, and its sky (probably painted at sunset), of extremely vivid pinks and blues, is similar to Hunt's in his 'May Morning on Magdalen Tower'. Palmer's early pastorals, although intensely observant of natural phenomena, successfully adjust Nature to fit in with the transcendental nature of Palmer's vision--a unified process conspicuously lacking in P.R.B. paintings. But his later ones have the broken-up Pre-Raphaelite techniques. A similarly successful combination of close vision of Nature with overall vision is the early nineteenth-century German painter Caspar David Friedrich, who, as Robert Melville said, 'was a landscape painter but never felt at home in the world and stared it into presentiments of another' ('Godscapes', New Statesman, 15 September 1972).

by the Pre-Raphaelite habit of eschewing chiaroscuro--a habit which tended to encourage in paintings the look of childish illustrations by flattening perspective and by making every single part appear to vie with every other for attention.

The Pre-Raphaelite painters did not have the ability to see in what directions the new modes of scientific thought could push the frontiers of painting. Although they had utilised Ruskin's concentration on scientific details they were still trying to use them within the old frameworks, within the limits imposed by the conventions of Victorian earnestness, story-telling, and medievalism, and so there is a clash between the two. This clash is symptomatic of and part of a larger, philosophical and temperamental, one, the clash between the old conservative world of people who believed implicitly in biblical Christian values, and the new world of empirical scientific method and discoveries. The Pre-Raphaelite painters, just like Hopkins, were unable to keep plastic, and alter, their basically conservative frame of mind to fit in with those parts of the new world which they were able to absorb and utilise. And so their artefacts show this clash in their lack of harmony and unity.

The larger philosophical clash of which the artistic one is part cannot be documented with regard to the Pre-Raphaelite painters, who were noticeably lacking in both verbal fluency and mental depth and complexity. Hopkins, however, had a subtler mind and was, of course, to some extent a professional philosopher, and an account

of his reactions to the most obvious manifestation of the new thought, Darwinism, can be partially constructed, and should be instructive.

* * * *

As a Roman Catholic priest Hopkins believed in

the superintending providence of God in the natural world, and the unique and privileged position of the human race as the centre and raison d'être of the creation. ⁽⁸⁷⁾

Whereas some Protestants learned to fit in these most cherished Christian ideas with Darwinism, the Roman Catholic Church had historically always been at a much greater distance from science, if not diametrically opposed to it. Bertrand Russell wrote that the two most important ways in which modern philosophy differs from that of the medieval period are

the diminishing authority ⁽⁸⁸⁾ of the Church, and the increasing authority of science.

Hopkins was by his faith and profession radically opposed to Darwinism. The book of Genesis, as Professor Gardner wrote,

retained for him . . . its absolute theological value as the embodiment of abiding metaphysical truth. ⁽⁸⁹⁾

In his extant writings it is not often that we see Darwinism mentioned at all. Rather strangely, as the evolutionary debate

87. J.W. Burrow, op.cit., p.15.

88. Bertrand Russell, History of Western Philosophy (2nd edn., 1961), p.479.

89. W.H. Gardner, Cerard Manley Hopkins ii (1949), p.21.

was being carried on during that period, it is not mentioned in Father Thomas's book on Hopkins's training as a Jesuit,⁽⁹⁰⁾ and all the four times that it is mentioned in his letters Hopkins is writing to non-Catholics--his mother (once)⁽⁹¹⁾ and Bridges (three times),⁽⁹²⁾ Writing to his mother in 1874 he is much more tentative about Darwinism than he is in his letters to Bridges (the earliest of which is dated 1883), perhaps because at that time he had not come across it in his training or been accustomed to discuss it. In 1874 his account of an address of John Tyndall's, the eminent geologist, is brief and is tempered by the fact that Tyndall had once helped Hopkins and Edward Bond when they were touring Switzerland. He thought Tyndall's speech

interesting and eloquent, though it made me 'most mad', It is not only that he looks back to an obscure origin, he looks forward with the same content to an obscure future--to be lost 'in the infinite azure of the past' (fine phrase by the by).

Hopkins criticises Tyndall for not distinguishing between authorities of unequal importance. He concludes in the quite amiable way that he reserves for non-Catholics whom he admires for other, usually intellectual, qualities (for instance, Keats and Purcell):⁽⁹³⁾

I fear he must be called an atheist but he is not a shameless one: I wish he might come round.

90. Alfred Thomas, Hopkins the Jesuit/ The Years of Training (1968)

91. Letters iii 128.

92. Letters i 172, 281, and 290.

93. Poems^{4r}, p.80.

He objectively admires Tyndall's intellect, and even his poetic eloquence, although Hopkins emotionally rejects evolution (the speech 'made me "most mad"'), and Tyndall's evolutionist picture of a godless history. In the same letter Hopkins interestingly corrects what was presumably a common prejudice about Darwin:

I do not think, do you know, that Darwinism implies necessarily that man is descended from any ape or ascidian or maggot or what not but only from the common ancestor of apes, the common ancestor of ascidians, the common ancestor of maggots, and so on: these common ancestors, if lower animals, need not have been repulsive animals. What Darwin himself says about this I do not know. (94)

There is an odd mixture here of a desire to show some kind of informed and interested amateur's knowledge of science, the admission that he had not read Darwin, nevertheless, and the aesthetic wish that Darwin had made man's ancestors attractive. In this last he presumably realises that he and his mother feel a common repulsion towards the idea of man being descended from 'lower animals' (The Descent of Man had been published only three years earlier), and is trying to take some of the harshness out of the idea for his mother's sake. It is noticeable that he purposely holds back any expression of his moral disapproval and intellectual disbelief of Darwinism in this passage, so that he can come to this comforting conclusion from an apparently objective position; his mother, as a high Anglican, without his protective Catholic framework of ideas to support her,

would be far more exposed than he would to the evolutionists' intellectual bombardment and the deeply worrying developments of the time, whose effects on the average thinking person were well described by Matthew Arnold:

For what wears out the life of mortal men?
 'Tis that from change to change their being rolls;
 'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
 Exhaust the energy of strongest souls
 And numb the elastic powers. (95)

In the later nineteenth century, many ideas and doctrines passed or were intended to pass as derivatives of Darwinism, but few were legitimately derived. As Burrow says,

'Darwinian' and 'Evolutionary' became loose and honorific terms which authors were often glad to claim or accept with slight justification. (96)

One such bastard was 'Impersonality and Evolution in Music', an article by Vernon Lee in the December 1882 issue of The Contemporary Review, (97) which gave rise to the following comment in Hopkins's letter to Bridges of 5 January 1883, the second of the four on Darwinism:

I don't like it. She professes herself a disciple of a Mr. Edmund Gurney, who by way of reaction against the gush of programmes ('sturdy old tone-poet'--'inimitable drollery of the semi demi-quavers in the dominant minor' and so on) says that we enjoy music because our apish ancestors serenaded their Juliet-apes of the period in rudimentary recitatives and our emotions are the survival--

95. 'The Scholar-Gipsy', ll.142-6.

96. J.W. Burrow, op.cit., p.44.

97. Pages 840-58.

that sexual business will in short be found by roking the pot. This is to swing from pap to poison. Would that I had my materials ready to talk sense. (98)

Abbott's footnote, which quotes part of the article, shows that it was not at all such a caricature of Darwinism, but that it did use the term for fashion's sake. (99) Again Hopkins shows an emotional and aesthetic reaction against Darwinism. I assume that by the two sentences 'that sexual . . . poison' Hopkins means

sexual origins can be ascribed to everything, if you really scrape the barrel, according to Darwinism. To substitute that kind of criticism of music for the old programme-notes kind is like swinging from the one extreme of eating too easily digested tasteless food to the other of taking positively vicious poison. (100)

Darwinism itself, in other words, according to Hopkins's crude conception of it, is poison because it ascribes these origins to our appreciation of music. Hopkins does not attempt to judge Darwinism intellectually. He emotionally reacts against it from his fixed position.

What the origins of music are Hopkins makes clear in a letter to Bridges of 13/14 September 1888, his third which mentions Darwinism. Earlier that month Hopkins had sent a copy of his jingoistic 'recruiting song for soldiers', 'What Shall I Do for the Land that Bred Me?', (101) both words and music, to Bridges who, liking it, had shown it to a minor composer, W.S. Rockstro,

98. Letters i 171-2.

99. Letters i 171, fn.2.

100. Abbott's footnote (Letters i 172, fn.1), 'possibly a slip for "rocking"', is stupid.

101. Poems^{4r}, p.195.

who wrote an accompaniment to Hopkins's tune. Rockstro, like another more frequent professional musician critic of Hopkins's, Sir Robert Stewart,⁽¹⁰²⁾ had many criticisms of Hopkins's composing ability and suggestions, including one of transposing the key of this song to F. Hopkins replied:

I will transpose it to F of course: all keys are the same to me and to every one who thinks that music was before instruments and angels before tortoises and cats.

The thought in these three lines is more complex than it at first appears. Hopkins is saying that he thinks the tune is more important than its key, which is of a secondary nature both in importance and in sequence of time. He 'proves' this by saying

102. Stewart's letters are entertaining and informative, because he knew how to criticise Hopkins directly, without pulling his punches, and get away with it--a kind of confrontation rare among Hopkins correspondence, since Bridges destroyed his own letters. Both Dixon and Patmore have unfortunately sycophantic attitudes towards Hopkins in response to his usually straightforward, sometimes downright cruel or bullying letters. The following extracts from Sir Robert's letters are typical:

(i) Darling Padre! I never said anything 'outrageous' to you. Dont think so, pray! but you are impatient of correction, when you have previously made up your mind on any point, & I R.S. being an 'Expert', you seem to me to err, often times, very much.

(ii) Indeed my dear Padre I cannot follow you through your maze of words in your letter of last week. I saw, ere we had conversed ten minutes on our first meeting, that you are one of those special pleaders who never believe yourself wrong in any respect. You always excuse yourself for anything I object to in your writing or music so I think it a pity to disturb you in your happy dreams of perfectability--nearly everything in your music was wrong--but you will not admit that to be the case--What does it matter? It will all be the same 100 Years hence--There's one thing I do admire--your hand-writing! I wish I could equal that, it is so scholarlike!

[Both letters printed in Letters iii 427.]

that similarly a musical instrument is subordinate to music, depends for its existence on music being there first, and is purposeless without music. Music existed before man and without him; angels (real beings, of course, to Hopkins), who are representatives of God outside time as Man knows it have music (Henry Purcell had, Hopkins thought, 'divine genius'--that is, outside man's range--and his music was an 'air of angels');⁽¹⁰³⁾ and since they existed before mere animals, including cats, who furnish a material, catgut, which is a part of musical instruments, music, again, 'was before instruments'. Hopkins is attacking as patently absurd the notion that music, which has marvellous intangible incomprehensible qualities, can be patronisingly encapsulated and controlled by the scientific mind, and have its origins explained away as easily as tortoises and cats could by evolutionists, with whom, as aesthetically unaware scientists, he equates musicians who bother not about the tune itself, but about the key it is in.

By 'angels before tortoises' Hopkins is referring to one of the more dramatic and picturesque parts of Darwin's canon from which his views were caricatured by people who had not read his works (the title of W. Irvine's 1955 book Apes, Angels and Victorians is taken from another). In Darwin's Diary of the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ he had described how the giant tortoises of the Galapagos

103. 'Henry Purcell', Poems^{4r}, p.80; pre-amble and line 9.

104. Full title: The zoology of the voyage of H.M.S. Beagle, under the command of Captain Fitzroy R.N., during the years 1832 to 1836, edited and superintended by Charles Darwin (5 pts., London, 1838-43).

Islands varied slightly from island to island, so that the natives could tell in which island any tortoise had originated; and this led to the important conclusion:

The more closely different species resembled each other in adjacent areas or in different epochs in the same area, the more likely did it seem that those species might share a common ancestor. (105)

In the final section of The Origin of Species, 'Recapitulation and Conclusion', this had developed into the crucial judgement:

This grand fact of the grouping of all organic beings seems to me utterly inexplicable on the theory of creation.

As natural selection acts solely by accumulating slight, successive, favourable variations, it can produce no great or sudden modification; it can act only by very short and slow steps . . . We can plainly see why nature is prodigal in variety, though niggard in innovation. But why this should be a law of nature if each species has been independently created, no man can explain. (106)

Hopkins is attacking Darwinism on two fronts: he characterises it as materialist and therefore inadequate as a criterion for judging something as unworldly as music, and he also attacks it by a kind of aesthetic ridicule, putting angels and tortoises together for comparison and suggesting that only Darwinists and mechanical musicians would be sufficiently crass to prefer tortoises. He ignores Darwin's own ideas and empirical reasoning and has here cleverly substituted the Catholic system of hierarchy of species, by forcing the reader

105. J.W. Burrow, op.cit., p.27.

106. From the first edition of The Origin of Species (1859), as printed in J.W. Burrow, op.cit., pp.444-5.

to place two things in order of preference. He is actually using aesthetic criteria rather than reason in order to justify Catholic universal morality. By suggesting that the comparison between angels and tortoises is too ridiculous to be taken seriously--they are so evidently different and unequal--Hopkins is invoking the Cartesian view that

Science and Theology were independent modes of enquiry and that only by an irrational breach of frontiers could they clash. (107)

This view, as Gardner says, was the basis of Newman's confutation of Darwinism in his lectures on 'Christianity and Physical Science' and 'Christianity and Scientific Investigation', published (1873) in The Idea of a University. It was a common means of combating Darwinism, and not just among Catholics. In Good Words for 1888, for instance, the Duke of Argyll comes to the orthodox Pauline conclusion in his three articles on 'Darwinism as a Philosophy',

life has all the wealth of endowment of the most comprehensive manifestations, and none of the simplicity of physical phenomena . . . For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are seen, even His eternal power and Godhead.

And yet earlier in the same article the Duke had gone to great pains to praise Darwin as a scientist, coming to the conclusion:

We can take all his facts, enjoy all his observations, and accept much of his language, without giving the smallest heed to the fortuitous theory by which he would account

for the wonderful wealth of adaptive purpose in the phenomena of organic life. (108)

This distinction between Darwin's undoubted scientific gifts and his arguable conclusions was commonly made by all kinds of orthodox conservative Christians. In his letter to Bridges of 18 August 1888 Hopkins at first agrees with Bridges who had pointed to Darwinism all around him:

I agree about cricket and Darwinism and that 'everything is Darwinism'. But especially a ship.

Hopkins is able to agree that the particular satisfactory natures of cricket and a ship today are the products of an evolutionary process based on utilitarian mechanics--presumably he would point to the emergence of the three-stumped wicket as the utilitarian solution to the problem that was encountered with the old two-stumped wicket of how to combine sufficient width to make a reasonably large target for the ball, with a wicket which the ball could not pass through without breaking; (109) or the numerous features on a ship which are peculiarly suited to their purpose and which had developed to their present form by a utilitarian process of gradually weeding out of the inferior alternatives. Hopkins is able to agree with the omnipresence of this kind of man-made Darwinism (which, of

108. In Donald MacLeod, D.D. (ed.), Good Words for 1888 (1888), p.333.

109. It was in a cricket match in the summer of 1775, when no less than three 'balls' had rolled in between a Mr. Small's two stumps without stirring the ball, that it was decided to add stump iii.

Walter de la Mare (ed.), Come Hither (1967), p.530.

course, is not Darwinism at all, and which shows both Bridges's and Hopkins's ignorance of it)--even, with ships, of whose details he was fond, ⁽¹¹⁰⁾ with enthusiasm--but true Darwinism, which dealt with Nature, not with man-made things, was a different matter.

He continues in the same letter:

However the honeycomb is not quite so plain a matter as you think. The learned, I believe, are divided on the question whether the shape of the cell is really to be called a matter of mechanics. For observe: the cell can only be symmetrical, with a true hexagonal section and so on, by the bees being stationed at equal distances, working equally, and so on; in fact there is a considerable table of cetera paria. But this implies something more than mechanical to begin with. Otherwise the hexagonal etc cell wd. be the type tended to only and seldom or never arrived at; the comb wd. be like the irregular figures of bubbles in the froth of beer or in soapsuds. Wild bees do, I believe, build something like that. But grant in the honey bee some principle of symmetry and uniformity and you have passed beyond mechanical necessity; and it is not clear that there may not be some special instinct determined to that shape of cell after all and which has at the present stage of the bee's condition, nothing to do with mechanics, but is like the specific songs of cuckoo and thrush. ⁽¹¹¹⁾

Again, Hopkins is concerned to draw a contrast between Darwinism, which he considers clever mechanical deduction, but which is limited by only being a science, and God's natural law, which is inexplicable by science and is 'something more than mechanical'. It seems likely that Bridges had read, or at least was referring to, one particular section of The Origin of Species--a particularly long and detailed account and explanation of 'Cell-making instinct of the Hive-Bee'

110. See his knowledgeable references to rigging in 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' and 'The Loss of the Eurydice', and to his study of the seamanship details of Dana's Two Years Before the Mast, earlier in this same letter to Bridges.

111. Letters i 281.

in Chapter VII, 'Instinct', which starts:

He must be a dull man who can examine the exquisite structure of a comb, so beautifully adapted to its end, without enthusiastic admiration. We hear from mathematicians that bees have practically solved a recondite problem, and have made their cells of the proper shape to hold the greatest possible amount of honey, with the least possible consumption of precious wax in their construction. It has been remarked that a skilful workman, with fitting tools and measures, would find it very difficult to make cells of wax of the true form, though this is perfectly effected by a crowd of bees working in a dark hive. Grant whatever instincts you please, and it seems at first quite inconceivable how they can make all the necessary angles and planes, or even perceive when they are correctly made. But the difficulty is not nearly so great as it at first appears: all this beautiful work can be shown, I think, to follow from a few very simple instincts. (112)

Darwin continues from there to contrast the different kinds of bees, and to place them according to the complexity of their cell-making abilities within a series, ranging from the simple humble-bees to the 'extreme perfection of the cells of the hive-bee'. By using a third kind of bee, the Mexican Melipona domestica, which is intermediate in structure between the hive- and the humble bee, and by examining the geometric laws behind the shape of the wax cells it makes, Darwin is able to prove that

if we could slightly modify the instincts already possessed by the Melipona, and in themselves not very wonderful, this bee would make a structure as wonderfully perfect as that of the hive-bee.

The wonderfully complex cells of the hive-bee are thus shown to have

112. In J.W. Burrow, op.cit., p.248.

probably evolved from a crude cell such as that used by the humble-bees, who

use their old cocoons to hold honey, sometimes adding to them short tubes of wax, and likewise making separate and very irregular rounded cells of wax. (113)

It can be seen that Hopkins is arguing from no very close knowledge of what Darwin actually says or proves. He has the same emotional view of Nature as Ruskin's, and wants to, and does, come to the same dogmatic conclusion as Ruskin did above when he said:

It is true that we have only sparrows because we shoot the kingfishers; but God makes gentians gay and lichens grave as it pleases Him, and by no other law, no other reason.

Science, Hopkins and Ruskin are saying, is admirable as far as it goes, but we must recognise where its strictly delimited province lies. It is a product of the human mind, and so has the limitations of the human mind. It cannot explain God's ultimate ways, which are on a completely higher, non-human plane. The feelings of wonder and joy that we experience on looking at Nature are not explicable in material terms but have a heavenly quality about them. These should tell us that the area within which science is legitimate is a much smaller one than Darwin is imagining; science is beyond its depth when it tries to concern itself with universal natural laws.

Ruskin and Hopkins have not recognised firstly, that Darwin

113. In J.W. Burrow, op.cit., pp.248-50.

himself is not lacking in the same sort of wonder that they experience at natural details ('the exquisite structure . . . so beautifully adapted') and so their argument that the scientific mind, his kind of mind, is too low and removed to appreciate the higher responses, is invalid. Secondly, they have not realised that the basis of science is the empirical method, and that Darwin's conclusions lead genuinely and inevitably from his details, rather than being incompatible with them; and that their own method of exploring natural detail, although it has facets of science about it, can only lead to the natural theology conclusion they wish to draw from it if they themselves wilfully impose apriori dogma onto their results--dogma whose origin lies not in the natural details, nor in Ruskin or Hopkins, but in the traditional religious conventions of contemporary society.

Like the Pre-Raphaelites in their paintings Hopkins is not able to continue details into a conclusion, as Darwin, by a true scientific method, is doing, but has to arbitrarily and suddenly cut off the intellectual process by imposing the conclusion taught by natural theology on to the detail. He is hindered, as the Pre-Raphaelite painters were, by contemporary thought frameworks from following from the details along the path which these details suggest towards a genuine conclusion. And so an organic pattern is prevented in their arguments and in their art.

...ooOoo...

Chapter Six: Conclusions

The two-part structures of the poems and paintings that I described in Chapter One can be said to result largely from those aspects which we looked at in Chapters Two to Five of a culture in many ways controlled by and merged in its moral, self-evasive environment. The poems and paintings that we looked at became structured as they were because of the strong pressures on the Victorian artist to construe his perceptions in terms of society's pre-conceived conventions. The artist is committed to certain prescribed rituals, rather than to self-expression through his art. Society had not realised that part of the essence of art

as expression and communication is that it is synonymous with man's painful growth towards self-dependence. ⁽¹⁾

There cannot be that ritual without a commitment to it which, paradoxically, commits the artist only to non-commitment of himself--he is committed to self-evasion rather than to self-knowledge.

With the Pre-Raphaelite painters the result is that, with the exceptions I have already noted--the small group of Millais' paintings and the works of Rossetti's Dantean period, ⁽²⁾--their works do not transcend their age.

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1. Wilfrid Mellers, 'Committed Hero', review of George Giannaris, Mikis Theodorakis: Music and Social Change (1973), in New Statesman, 10 August 1973, p.195.
 2. See Chapter Three, footnote 3, for Millais; and the account of Rossetti's Dantean period in Chapter Four, pp.216-21.

It is strange to contrast the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites with twentieth-century art, so completely were they unable to see that two of their main roles would soon be unrecognised as essential to painting--those of moral preacher and detailed recorder of the visible world; and so they stay severely within their own age. As David Piper says:

the spread of photography undermined . . . the artist's . . . function as unique recorder of the visible world . . . The rapid development technically of the newly invented magic of the photograph in the 1840s and 1850s, is a fundamental factor in the revolution of modern art, as it freed painting from the necessity of achieving a literal likeness of the external world. Photography could do that more efficiently--more accurately, more cheaply, and with infinitely less labour and expense of time. (3)

The census returns of 1851 gave the occupation of fifty-one people as 'photographer'. But the 1861 figure was 2,534. (4)

At first the two media seemed to people to be mutually helpful. A school of photographers arose, the most well-known members being Oscar Rejlander and Henry Peach Robinson, who were painters-manqués, and who imitated anecdotal paintings, with photographs entitled, for example, 'Drat the East Wind', 'A Night out Homeless', 'Longing

3. David Piper, Personality and the Portrait (1973), pp.3 and 43.

4. This growth was due to a number of factors: the main processes were free of patents after 1853, the wet-plate process provided a means of producing cheap portraits, stereophotography was developed into a craze, and cartes-de-visite became fashionable at the end of the ten-year period. [Victoria and Albert Museum,] 'From today painting is dead' / The Beginnings of Photography (Exhibition Catalogue, 1972), p.32.

for Home', 'Have a Tune, Miss?' (Rejlander), or 'The Lady of Shalott', 'Wayside Gossip', 'Fading Away' (Robinson).⁽⁵⁾ On the other hand, W.H. Fox Talbot published The Pencil of Nature between 1844 and 1846 which gave an account of the history of his discovery of photography and provided illustrations to show varied artistic uses for it:

One advantage of the discovery of the Photographic Art will be, that it will enable us to introduce into our pictures a multitude of minute details which add to the truth and reality of the representation, but which no artist would take the trouble to copy faithfully from nature . . . A painter's eye will often be arrested where ordinary people see nothing remarkable. A casual gleam of sunshine, or a shadow thrown across his path, a time-withered oak, or a moss-covered stone may awaken a train of thoughts and feelings, and picturesque imaginings.⁽⁶⁾

Ruskin had discovered the new art of daguerrotyping from Dean Liddell (friend, of course, of the expert amateur photographer, 'Lewis Carroll') as early as 1840, and seems to have made extensive use of the process for recording details of architecture and as notes for subsequent drawings. (The 1972 Victoria and Albert Museum Exhibition contained five daguerrotypes belonging to him, of Pisa, Chamonix, Verona, a glacier, and an aerial view of a town.) He regretted, he said, that artists did not use photography to perpetuate beautiful but temporary natural effects.⁽⁷⁾ Ruskin

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5. Victoria and Albert Museum, op.cit., pp.46-7.
 6. Victoria and Albert Museum, op.cit., pp.28-9.
 7. Victoria and Albert Museum, op.cit., pp.25-6.

had realised two qualities about photography which were important to painting, that it could capture pieces of reality that painting could not, and that for painters of visual reality it could be useful for showing them temporary natural effects which they would otherwise miss. But he still saw the two media in alliance, not realising that photography would put an end to the kind of detailed painting he advocated. Lady Eastlake, however, writing in 1855, made a direct comparison damaging to painting:

There is no lack of evidence in The Photographic Journal of the photographer believing that art had hitherto been but a blundering groping after that truth, which the cleanest and precisest photography was now destined to reveal.

With photography, she said, there was 'perfect certainty that the ground plan was founded upon fact'.⁽⁸⁾

Neither Ruskin nor English painters realised, as Lady Eastlake did, the direct threat that photography posed. Painters used photography to help them with bits and pieces of their naturalistic paintings, but seemed to have no insight into its further implications. Frith, for instance, saved himself much time by using photographs for 'Derby Day', 'The Marriage of the Prince of Wales', and other paintings, but was always casual and denigrating in his references to photography:

8. Quoted without source in Tristram Powell's introduction to [Victoria and Albert Museum,] op.cit., pp.9 and 10.

As I had heard that portrait painting had often derived advantage from photography, I asked Dickens to give me a meeting at Mr. Watkins's, who was thought one of the best photographers of that day. In due course the photograph was taken; but not very successfully, nor did I derive the slightest assistance from it in the prosecution of the portrait. (9)

There seem to be traces of nervousness in these reactions of Frith's, as though he could see photography as a threat in embryo but turned his back on it so that he need not acknowledge it. Graham Ovenden in his Pre-Raphaelite Photography tries to make a case for photography's strong beneficial influence on the Pre-Raphaelites, but his very interesting photographs belie his commentary by showing how much more incredible nature is in photography than it is in paintings by the Pre-Raphaelites, and, perhaps more importantly, that our admiration of nature in Pre-Raphaelite paintings is an admiration of their technique, of the fact that they could do it, rather than of what appears on the canvas. (10)

We admire their eye-catching skills, rather than any deeper artistic qualities. To turn from the Pre-Raphaelites to their contemporary French painters is therefore like pretending that the Paraplegic Olympics can be judged by the same criteria as the world Olympic Games. There is an immediate sense of non-provincialism

9. Also:

The Danish Princes and Princesses baffled me completely. They had no time . . . to sit to be painted--scarcely for their photographs. I had therefore to trust to that most unsatisfactory process for my likeness of them, which are consequently the worst in all respects in the whole picture.

(Neville Wallis [ed.], op.cit., pp.97 and 110.)

10. Pre-Raphaelite Photography (1972), Introduction, pp.5-17.

with French painting, with artists in a much larger arena, competing to develop techniques which will advance their art and to be judged not by how much applause for eye-catching exploits they receive from partisan supporters but by their solid achievements in objective artistic standards. One result of their non-provincial outlook is that French painting has a much stronger line of logical development in the nineteenth century than the British, and that painters unerringly place artistic developments much more strongly and accurately onto this line. In the second half of the nineteenth century it was the French, not the British painters, who realised the strength, nature, and place of the geniuses of Constable and Turner, and by adding these influences onto tendencies already apparent in their own country's Delacroix, formed the historically important and intrinsically valuable school of Impressionism. Delacroix was of an earlier generation than the Pre-Raphaelites (his dates are closer to Wilkie's than to the P.R.B.'s), and photography came too late for him (he died in 1863) to use it more than perfunctorily (he kept a photograph album of nude models), but he did not fight a rearguard action against it (Hunt, Frith, and Millais were all noticeably on edge about new art at the end of their lives), but instead realised and acknowledged the power to influence painting that photography would have:

As far as I am concerned, I can only say how much I regret such an admirable discovery should have come so late! The possibility of studying such images would have had an influence on me that I can only guess from

the usefulness which they have now, even in the little time left me for more intensive study. It is the tangible proof of nature's ⁽¹¹⁾ own design, which we otherwise see only very feebly.

The genuine and open quality of this response can be compared with Frith's, above. Direct use of photography in French painting was, as it happened, superficial and of no real importance, according to Fritz Novotny, who writes that apart from

the occasional use made of photographs as foundations for pictures, a practice followed even by great painters, e.g. Cézanne, a direct relationship between photography and painting exists only . . . when knowledge gained from photographs is utilized in painting. This is the case, for example, with the rendering of galloping horses in motion by, e.g. Degas, after the appearance of the first photographs by E. Muybridge (from 1872; published in France from 1881).⁽¹²⁾

The indirect influence of photography, however, was so enormous that it completely altered the course of painting. Renoir blessed photography because it released the real artist for serious work.⁽¹³⁾ Likeness by itself was not enough. Painting would have to go beyond visual reality--it could now concentrate on more purely aesthetic problems. David Piper's account of the progress of portraiture from Cézanne to Picasso's cubism can serve as a potted history of the development of modern art away from nineteenth-century realism:

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11. [Victoria and Albert Museum,] op.cit., p.48.
 12. Fritz Novotny, Painting and Sculpture in Europe 1780-1880 (1971), p.427; some of the Muybridge photographs were in the 1972 'From today painting is dead' Exhibition (see Catalogue, p.40).
 13. David Piper, op.cit., p.43.

When Cézanne set about the person of his dealer, Vollard, in 1899, the result was less a traditional portrait than the record of Cézanne's laborious analysis of the way in which Vollard's presence posed certain problems of space, mass, and colour. When Picasso set about the same sitter, little more than a decade later, the disintegration of the sitter's physical identity, and its re-constitution in pure pictorial, cubist form is very well under way; a year later, in Picasso's most pure and austere cubist 'portraits', like the famous one of Kahnweiler, the sitter has vanished, fragmented and completely restructured according to the artist's and the picture's needs:--the victory of artist over sitter is complete. ⁽¹⁴⁾

Or, we might paraphrase, the victory of art and aesthetic form, over reality and representationalism.

In Britain, although the Natural Theological approach to art did involve a certain amount of quasi-scientific exploration, the stranglehold upon art of the two criteria of representationalism and morality continued until the end of the nineteenth century.

The following extract from The Gentleman's Magazine of September 1882 shows the kind of combined defence of these two criteria which was still common. The defence here was occasioned, as the extract shows, merely by a remark of William Morris's that he had an aesthetic preference for one colour of flower over another:

My very good and worthy master Mr. William Morris, whom I mention with sincere respect, startles me thus when he speaks of 'bad colour' in flowers. Surely this is going a little too far. Mr. Morris's words are: 'There are some flowers . . . which are bad colour altogether, and not to be used at all. Scarlet geraniums, for instance, or the yellow calceolaria; which, indeed,

are not uncommonly grown together profusely, in order, I suppose, to show that even flowers can be thoroughly ugly'. Mr. Morris's objections to certain shades of red and yellow are known. Against them I have nothing to say. He will not, however, soon convert me to the notion that the bright red of the geranium, or the yellow, not unlike that of the buttercup, of the calceolaria, is a bad colour . . . As Wordsworth says to the 'kindly unassuming spirit', the small celandine, I would say to the geranium--

There's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be
But 'tis good enough for thee. (15)

The arch, rhetorical tones of an earlier age still, in this passage from the 1880's, hide the fact that there is no reasoning process used here, only assertion of old dogma. A more serious article was published in the following year in The Nineteenth Century, 'The Painted Poetry of Watts and Rossetti', and it shows a different emphasis. It recognises that art has legitimately developed away from the representation of visual reality:

In times that are now long past it was often the province of the painter's art to teach facts as well as to create emotion towards beauty. There was then a scope for much elaborate art to be painted in order that an illiterate public should learn history and 'religion', and be impressed by notable passing events. But those times are over. Now photography and cheap engravings portray and endlessly repeat scenes of passing interest, and can procure for thousands the likeness of any place or person of public interest . . . Science will probably soon discover a means of photographing colour, and then the realistic school of art which aims only at giving the outward aspect of an object artistically arranged, without any reflection of an artist's nature, will be completely beaten on its own ground. But that art which emanates from a poetic preference, the highest art, in

15. 'Sylvanus Urban, Gentleman', 'Mr. William Morris on the Colours of Flowers', in The Gentleman's Magazine ccliii (September 1882), pp.383-4.

fact, painted and sculptured poetry, will not only retain the interest which it always has inspired, but will be more distinctly recognised as belonging to the same class of intellectual interests as do the best writings in prose and poetry, and will be recognised as demanding the same class of emotional response as that which the best music excites . . . The general intellectual world might learn perhaps how mistaken it is to demand even from the highest art that it should feed the intellect without first touching the emotional qualities and inspiring a satisfaction in true beauty of line and colour.

Freed of the necessity of realism, the artist can be 'poetic', 'touch the emotional qualities', and practise 'true beauty of line and colour'. These phrases describe the ways in which D.G. Rossetti had broken free of the other Pre-Raphaelite painters and also of his age, and the qualities in his paintings which make him the only one of the early Pre-Raphaelite painters who was both intrinsically and historically significant. The author of the article continues by emphasising some of Rossetti's unique aesthetic qualities:

. . . inspired touch which caressingly beautifies the painting itself independently of the aspect of the original
 . . . the beauty which belongs to art as art, and not to art as a copy of nature only . . .

Unfortunately, after this perception of Rossetti's special qualities and their position within the historical context, the critic draws back, and feels she has gone too far in antagonising Victorian people who are looking for different, older qualities of earnestness and morality. So in order to keep him within a recognisably conventional fold she perjures both Rossetti and her own previous observations:

Mr. Rossetti's work echoes back the feeling of our own time . . . in a reverence for all feeling which is purified by an earnest deep reality of passion; and . . . there is a most genuinely moral element in his art . . . If our modern intellectual vein of thought has no very definite dogmatic religion, there is certainly no lack of serious moral fibre . . . In Mr. Watts's and Mr. Rossetti's art we have everything that is most opposed in feeling to modern French art.

This is an avowal of the old standards of earnestness and morality, with the odd patriotic xenophobic reference thrown in. Art is still being judged, when the writers round off their discussions, by the values of the 1850's. In her last paragraph, in fact, the writer beautifully connects up her previous keenness for Rossetti's aesthetic qualities with the required moral standards:

We [the British] have a profound reverence for noble beauty, and an earnestness in the worship of it which is as religious in its way as ⁽¹⁶⁾ ~~was~~ the worship of a Fra Angelico or a Botticelli.

She is pretending to set up different standards of judgement; but she knows very well that the words 'We', 'reverence', 'noble', 'earnestness', 'worship', 'religious', 'worship of a Fra Angelico or a Botticelli', will emotively raise in people's minds the vision of the old religio-moral qualities, and that they will think that she is saying that Rossetti is one of the old reliables, after all, despite her previous enthusiasms for his outré qualities. Representationalism was no longer a fixed criterion but the hold

16. Emilie Isabel Barrington, 'The Painted Poetry of Watts and Rossetti', The Nineteenth Century, no.76 (June 1883), pp.950-70; these extracts from pp.950-1, 952, 965-6, 969, 970.

over art of the moralists was still firm.

Moreover it remained firm in respectable circles until the end of the century, despite Pater. In April 1891, for instance, there was a long article, 'Neo-Paganism', in The Quarterly Review, whose specific purpose is to magisterially⁽¹⁷⁾ denounce 'aesthetic' art as immoral. It starts by praising Gautier fulsomely:

He knew the magic of words; that some have in them, as he expresses it, the sheen of rubies, pearls, and emeralds, while others glow like a piece of phosphorous when it is chafed. In the hands of an every-day writer, language is inert, and at the best mere composition. But without doing violence even to French, he made his colours speak and his syllables vibrate with a life of their own.

But this is in order to lend an impression of balance and objectivity to the attack which follows:

His mind followed his hand; he dwelt among the forms of things visible, and could no more see through them into the spirit than a child whose conscience is not yet awake. The vision and the faculty divine, which interprets because alone it creates the tragic situations of life, was not his; nor had one of the same school, except Heine, who was Semitic and a son of the prophets of Israel, so much as a glimpse into that high realm.

The artist, Mr. Pater tells us, in producing his supreme achievements, 'will have gradually sunk his intellectual and spiritual ideas in sensuous form'. And he contrasts with the Greek, indifferent to spiritual elements and quite unashamed, the modern, who cannot steep his thought in the fire of colour without to some extent disavowing the Christianity in which he is supposed to have grown up . . . [Gautier is, nevertheless,] disdainful of the cheap Parisian pleasures. On the other

17. Its magisterial quality, like that of the present-day Times Literary Supplement, is increased by, or perhaps is partly due to, the anonymity of its writers.

hand, we may search his volumes through, and nowhere shall we light on the spiritual intuitions which abound in those poets who have written for mankind. His colour-sense was unrivalled. He had a splendid and graceful vocabulary and a quick power of imitation. But he keeps his enthusiasm for the decorations on which he has lavished his skill.

Twenty pages later the writer has lost sight of Gautier's praiseworthy qualities and indeed of Gautier altogether:

Do the Neo-Pagans give the key to life? Have they seen farther than the rest of men? What is their connexion with the immense tree of existence, with that Igdrasil whose leaves tremble and speak, whose branches fill the nine worlds, and which is planted deep down in the abyss? Can they sound the heart and reckon its secret throbbings? or have they not gone about the wrong way to understand these mysteries? To all of them, without exception, Christianity is a narrow, barbarous creed; their revolt from it they account deliverance. That is not the verdict of the greatest minds. Even Goethe qualifies it by the wonderful admissions in 'Wilhelm Meister', of which we have spoken. Shakespeare, Dante, Augustine--to quote only these--who well understood the elements that are combined in Neo-Paganism, and who had traversed that stage, would never have allowed that the Christian was but a child frightening himself in the dark, and the Hellene a grown man, perfect in wisdom.

And the article finishes by caricaturing the aesthetic opponents of Christianity and losing all sight of who they are, what they wrote or painted, or what their opinions really were:

To eat and drink for mere pleasure may be fitting for Ciacco and the herd of Circean swine; but rational beings put before themselves rational ends, they desire to rest in truth and reality, not in the passion of desire. 'To maintain' sensuous 'ecstasy', if we could, which is impossible, would not be 'success in life' . . . 'The greyness of the ideal or spiritual world' may be trying to endure; but is not the disappearance of ideals the fall of Humanity? We submit that a philosophy which corrupts because it despairs, and which offers a man a momentary thrill of passion in the place of Life

Everlasting, crowned with perfect Human love, might be tidings of great joy to the brute creation, but has no right to call itself Humanism. (18)

With the continuation into the 1890's of this kind of mid-Victorian Mrs. Grundy pontificating masquerading as criticism it is not surprising that the inheritors of the one strain in early Pre-Raphaelitism which seemed to promise profitable artistic development, Rossetti's aestheticism, reacted in the way that Aubrey Beardsley did, so that decorative line and design in his work exclude realism, and conscious amorality or immorality (according to the standards of his age) replace the conscious telling of a moral fable. Beardsley's important effect on his time and on future artists has been described as follows:

the drawings evaded the logic of descriptive representation as understood by the Victorians, there being in some of them no backgrounds, and in others background-lines running through images in the foreground . . . His unique way of embodying Pater's, and Bacon's, maxims on the beauty of strangeness, the style of certain of his slow-moving lines and rigidly conventionalised trees and roses and peacock feathers, the manner in which he gave decoration and substance equal weight, all became set in the repertory of art-nouveau . . . while the short cuts taken by Beardsley, his occasionally near-abstract forms, his concentration on what was essential to the dramatic presentation of the subject--which seemed to be cantilevered on to the page without any of the old and erudite supports--were liberating forces in the development of avant-garde artists like Kandinsky and Klee, and even Picasso within the next dozen years. (19)

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18. [Anon.,] 'Neo-Paganism', The Quarterly Review, vol.172, no.344 (April 1891), pp.273-304; these quotations from pp.280, 281, 303, 304.
19. Brian Reade, Aubrey Beardsley (1966), pp.6-7.

But Beardsley's positive contribution to modern art is often overlooked, and is probably far less than it could have been, because so much of his limited supply of energy went into annoyed self-conscious reaction against those aspects of Victorianism which had so hampered the quality of the early Pre-Raphaelite paintings--so strong was the hold of the Victorian environment over its art.

The hold of his age over Hopkins's poetry as a whole is of a more patchy and uncertain nature, because his was a far stronger, more passionate, and idiosyncratic personality. Besides radically affecting the form and unity of the group of poems we have looked at, the clash between Hopkins's aesthetic impulses and the formal philosophical restraint made his position with regard to twentieth-century English poetry ambiguous. To compare his poetry with the characteristic insipidities of Georgian poetry (what K.Allott has characterised as 'their pastoral week-end England of trout streams, parish churches, cricket and R.S.P.C.A. collecting-boxes')⁽²⁰⁾ is to immediately notice a more vivid, tense, original response to Nature, and Hopkins's nature-poetry appears as a rebuke to the Georgians' tameness of imagery, diction, and rhythm. Hopkins's poetry has a hardness which is opposed to their flabbiness, and which in some respects is similar to the Imagist poetry which reacted against the Georgians. The Imagists however rejected not

20. Kenneth Allott (ed.), The Penguin Book of Contemporary Verse (1950), p.14.

just flabbiness of image but also subjective emotion. Hopkins's concentration on single images in the first parts of his nature poems is similar in some ways to theirs; his description is enlivened by subjective emotion, of course, which they did not approve of, but he would have agreed with them in freshly looking at each object, without letting an awareness of literary tradition come between the observer and the object.

Hopkins unintentionally repudiated conventional verse-forms in some poems by so expanding them as to make the original form unrecognisable: poets in the 'twenties also rejected conventional forms, although more positively and absolutely. T.S. Eliot said that in a complex world poetry, to be adequate, must be difficult, and much of Hopkins's was noticeably outside literary decorum and difficult to assimilate in many ways. But whereas the new twentieth-century poets needed new subject-matter Hopkins is forced in most poems to keep to the old. Eliot's early poetry extended the range of subject-matter which was available for poetic treatment, while Hopkins's religious vocation severely limited his range, both in subject-matter and in sympathies, so that it must be one of the narrowest of major poets. It is in technique that he is closer to the twentieth century. As Professor Leavis says:

He aimed to get out of his words as much as possible unhampered by the rules of grammar, syntax, and common usage. (21)

21. F.R. Leavis, New Bearings in English Poetry (1932; new edn.1962), p.132.

With another important dictum of Eliot's for new poetry, the 'dislocation of language', in order to express greater variety and complexity in the poet's response, Hopkins anticipated what Allott calls 'Joyce's polyglot word-images', which in his case, as in those of poets of the 'twenties, could lead to 'private extravagances'.⁽²²⁾ Most of these connections, however, seem to be somewhat distant and unessential.

Even if some aspects of Hopkins's poetic technique show him a fore-runner of that poetry of the early twentieth century which was reacting against Victorian literary convention, the outstanding formal characteristic of the group of poems, examples of which I examined in Chapter One, is one which, I hope I have shown, was essentially the result of pressures of his age. And Hopkins's most remarkable characteristic in his other poems was his feeling, which was quite unique.

My purpose in this thesis has been to examine that area of Hopkins's poetry where it seems to me he is most radically affected by his age; and the group of poems I looked at in Chapter One seem to me to fail as integrated works of art because of those outside influences coming from his age into his work. The main limitation of this thesis is that it only deals with that group of poems. I am very aware that Hopkins's poetry has many more sides and subtleties to it than are represented in that group,

22. Kenneth Allott (ed.), The Penguin Book of Contemporary Verse (1950), pp.17 (footnote), and 21.

and that qualifications or contradictions of the conclusions that I have made about this group in each chapter will be seen to be necessary as soon as other poems of Hopkins's are considered. I will now very briefly indicate the area in which my argument would develop if this were a larger study, because I do not wish the reader to have the final impression that the main characteristic of Hopkins's poetry is a negative one--that it was weighed down by his age, or that there is not a sense of disproportion about my comparison of Hopkins's poetry with the Pre-Raphaelite paintings once we take the discussion outside the limited sphere of cultural history and into the realm of comparative aesthetic values. I have used the Pre-Raphaelite painters as examples of artists who seem to me to be almost entirely swamped by their age; their similarity with Hopkins seems to be only in that group of poems on which I have concentrated. Hopkins does transcend his age, and thus in his better poems is manifestly of a calibre quite superior to theirs.

What is most distinctive about Hopkins's best poetry, as I have said, the quality which makes it stand out from that of his contemporaries, is the individual nature of his passion. Whereas so many other attributes of his poetry are part of the common stock of his age, the quality of his passion is unique. Hopkins claimed to be a lyric poet; his poetry, he said, could be almost sung. The connection between these two factors, of his passion and his

lyrical propensity has been well made by Professor Hardy:

The importance of strong feeling belongs not to Hopkins alone but to the medium of lyric. Lyric poetry is exceptionally powerful in its capacity for feeling and that capacity depends on the power to exclude. Lyric is free, as no other literary form is free, to concentrate on feeling at the expense of history, psychology, and judgment. Lyric poetry can turn away from the solicitations of story, character, and morality as drama, epic, and fiction cannot. ⁽²³⁾

In the poems we looked at in Chapter One, Hopkins did not continue the lyrical feeling into the last part of the poems; he did not allow the lyric form its prerogative of concentrating on feeling at the expense of other things; in their second parts, the poems go away from the lyric and become of a mixed form, because they have not turned away from the solicitations of story, morality and judgement. The moral judgements, the lesson-drawings, are not part of the same passionate act as the lyrical parts of the poems.

However, many other poems of Hopkins's are completely unified lyrics, whose moral values are, in Professor Hardy's words, 'constantly and intimately blended with [their] passions'. ⁽²⁴⁾ I will briefly point to three examples of organic unity of form and feeling in different kinds of Hopkins's poetry: 'The Caged Skylark', 'My own heart let me more have pity on', and 'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves'. ⁽²⁵⁾

23. Barbara Hardy, 'Forms and Feelings in the Sonnets of Gerard Manley Hopkins', First Annual Lecture of the Hopkins Society (1970), p.4.

24. Barbara Hardy, op.cit., p.4.

25. Poems^{4r}, pp.70, 102, 97.

In 'The Caged Skylark', the two objects which are to be compared are immediately connected in the argument on which the poem depends for its unity by the poem's first word 'As'--'As a dare-gale skylark . . . / [So] Man's mounting spirit'. The conclusion to the poem depends on everything that has gone before; each piece of sensation contributes to the final assertion. It is all part of one joyful vision. This is a poem of affirmative feeling. In the desolate Dublin sonnets the feelings are dark and agonised, but still concentrated and unified throughout the poem. 'My own heart let me more have pity on', for instance, is unified by the continuous movement of the passion throughout the poem, from the bewildered statement of the difficulty the poet finds in defining his emotion because its nature is that of a vicious circle, to the breaking away from the pattern, then the fatigue and final relaxing.

'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves' I find the most remarkably powerful and unified of all Hopkins's poetry. Although the poem (purposely) starts by describing broken fragments of reality, in lone adjectives, 'Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable, vaulty . . . ', these words are not straightforward natural description, but have a portentous meaning, emphasised, as I have said earlier, by the fact that the first word 'earnest' can be simultaneously understood as a noun meaning 'foretaste' or 'presage'--thus preparing us for the explosion of meaning further on. As some of the Sibyl's leaves were drawn out by her at random (as a Tarot pack is used

for fortune-telling) building up a picture of the oracle's meaning, so Hopkins is being a seer, taking disordered fragments from what he observes during a sunset that seems awesomely portentous. Larger fragments are added, building up to a climax when the subject and significance of the pieces of the puzzle suddenly become plain-- 'Our tale, O our oracle!' A strict ethical lesson is being drawn from a natural phenomenon in this poem--just as the variegated colours of day decline into stark black and white with the setting of the sun, so on Judgement Day the lesser aesthetic differences of the world will all be subsumed into the only two permanent values, the ethical ones of black and white, right and wrong. But the connection between nature and the moral lesson was one which Hopkins did not have to make himself--it had already been achieved centuries before, in early Christian religious myths, which connected Judgement Day with violent and awful terrestrial upheaval.⁽²⁶⁾ The marriage of the natural sensuous experience with the Christian interpretation had already become a unified myth by the time Hopkins used it.

26. The 'Dies Irae' was probably the immediate source of the connection for Hopkins, but there were several more on offer, including Augustine's City of God. In both of these, the Sibyl's Second Book of Oracles, as they were known to the early Christian Church, the original source for the connection, is referred to. Gardner's notes in Poems^{4^x}, pp.284 and 285, quoting the Aeneid book vi, are quite mistaken. See my article 'Hopkins' "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves"', Victorian Newsletter, no.36 (Fall 1969), pp.27-8.

It is on this positive note that I wish to finish this thesis, having shown very briefly the point beyond which the comparison between Hopkins's poetry and the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites cannot be taken. And it is beyond this point that Hopkins's value and excitement lie, in the realm where his highly individual feeling burns at such a pitch that there is no question of discord between each component part of a poem and its whole.

...ooOoo...

Appendix: Hopkins and Gothic Architecture

The most noticeable feature of Hopkins's architectural notes is his preference for works in the Gothic style. Whether it is of the Middle Ages or of the Victorian Gothic Revival Gothic is absolutely preferred to Romanesque or Grecian or to any other style. Where Hopkins visits churches which have pre-Gothic parts these are usually dismissed or called 'barbarous'. At St. Alban's Cathedral, for instance, 'there is a little Saxon work, like rude turning in carpentry, merely barbarous', and 'the outside on the whole is plain and, where Norman, barbarous'.⁽¹⁾ The Norman in St. Alban's is otherwise only noticed where it has been converted (as Hopkins thinks--he is sometimes wrong) to Gothic, or easily dismissed among 'the rest I forget', while the Gothic detail is energetically converted into words--'the abbot's passage . . . is remarkable for the curious astragalus moulding of the interlaced wall-tracery'. Similarly after seeing Ely Cathedral he writes

otherwise the Norman work (transitional) is not striking but some of the foliate trailing on the capitals etc remains and has been repainted: It is in fact the loss of this correction that makes the style heavy and barbarous.⁽²⁾

The foliate trailing, decoration approaching the Gothic manner,

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1. Journals, p.186. Compare the complimentary tone of 'now, barbarous in beauty, the stocks rise/ Around', in 'Hurrahing in Harvest' (Poems^{4f}, p.70).
 2. Journals, p.187.

which the late Norman architects added to the plain capital, is all that prevents this style from being called 'barbarous' by Hopkins. Norman is otherwise incorrect. The only whole-hearted compliment he pays this style is 'the Norman work on the doorways is of much beauty'.⁽³⁾ This refers to Glastonbury Abbey, where Hopkins is probably looking at a series of medallions carved in an arch of the North door, showing in relief scenes from the life of the Virgin.⁽⁴⁾ This kind of detail is quite exceptional to the usual Norman range.

Another remarkable feature of Hopkins's notes on Gothic architecture is his early concern with intricate detail rather than with large features. At first arches and windows, noticed for their tracery, are the most commonly mentioned parts. When Hopkins's eye is concentrated on a particularly beautiful feature, the description of it is liable to become almost as intricately involved/clumsy as Hopkins's baroque poetic style. But in some of the later entries pieces of architecture acquire a peculiar significance: if perfect they convey the God-given aesthetic emotion of instress. For example:

In the building [Ketley Abbey] the most beautiful and noticeable things are the east window; the triplet windows . . . the middle light trefoiled the other two lancets . . . a pair of plain three-light lancets in each clearstory of the S. transept, which dwell on

3. Journals, p.140.

4. Journals, p.356.

the eye with a simple direct instress of trinity; a fine piece of blind tracery in the quasi-triforium of this transept at the s.end--two broad arcade-arches . . . and containing in the head a quaterfoiled roundel each, the two surmounted by a great six-foiled roundel (sharp-hung)--plate tracery and the roundel having no immediate gearing with the two arches; lastly three beautiful windows in the chapterhouse, not quite of equal breadth etc.-- a plain sixfoil, clear, not enclosed in any roundel, at least inside, riding two plain broad lancets. (5)

At Ely there is another example of feeling added to description of Hopkins's favourite architectural period--the Decorated, in which preference, of course, he is following Pugin: (6)

The Lady-chapel . . . has its walls bordered all round with an ogee-canopied arcade of great richness . . . The all-powerfulness of instress in mode and the immediateness of its effect are very remarkable. (7)

What the mature Hopkins did not like were architectural characteristics which Pugin had said in Contrasts that he did not like (although Pugin's practice, as we have seen, did not follow his theory), 'features about a building which are not necessary for convenience, construction or propriety'. (8) Examples

5. Journals, p.215.

6. The Medievalists, looking back to Pugin's dream of the past, usually met with the approval of the Camden Society in the Church. They favoured Middle Pointed or Decorated, considered the most 'perfect', as opposed to Early Pointed or Early English, considered the most 'pure'. Perpendicular or late pointed was called 'debased'.
(John Betjeman, First and Last Loves [1969], p.149.)

7. Journals, p.189.

8. See the letter to Bridges of 24 March 1885, in Letters i 209-10, quoted in Chapter Four (footnote 148).

of bad features of the Renaissance, Hopkins writes, are pilasters and rustic-work.⁽⁹⁾ Both these have a discrepancy between their apparent and real purpose which Hopkins dislikes.⁽¹⁰⁾ A similar, self-explanatory, entry is:

Transoms in Decorated and Early English. In former not infrequently found for the purpose which they were intended to answer, before they became in Perpendicular only ornamental, viz. to give strength to mullions of tall windows . . . Their evidently deliberate rejection in ordinarily proportioned windows by the Decorated architects ought to be decisive against them.⁽¹¹⁾

Hopkins's Puginesque preference for the Decorated period leads him slightly astray here. All transoms in mullioned windows are purely decorative; the true (that is, purposeful) transom was a crossbeam spanning an opening to carry a superstructure and did not occur in windows.⁽¹²⁾

The three main features, then, of Hopkins's notes on architecture

9. Journals, p.13.
10. Pilasters are pillars partially built into the wall of a structure, whose function is not to support (the work done by the wall containing the pilaster) as a pillar should, but is merely to decorate. Rustic work is usually a surface artificially roughened to give a picturesque weathered effect.
11. Journals, p.14.
12. For explanations of architectural terms I am indebted to John Fleming, Hugh Honour, and Nikolaus Pevsner, The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture (1966); the Glossary in Peter Kidson, Peter Murray, and Paul Thompson, A History of English Architecture (1965), pp.334-9; John Summerson, The Classical Language of Architecture (1964), particularly the Glossary, pp.47-52; and especially Martin S. Briggs, A Pictorial Guide to Cathedral Architecture (1964), with its very useful Glossary of Architectural Terms, pp.19-24.

of the Middle Ages are his concern with Gothic, particularly the Decorated style, his adolescent concern with detail at the expense of the whole building, and his change in maturity to a concern for overall constructive sense as well as detail.

I will now turn to the Butterfield entries in the journals. References to Butterfield's new and restored churches cover the crucial period of ten years, from 1864 to 1874, when Hopkins's mature taste was being formed, and are sufficiently numerous to show the kind of architectural taste in modern architecture Hopkins had when he first went up to Oxford and how it developed during the next ten years. They show a strikingly similar development to that of his poetry away from Keats towards Ruskin and then to Milton.

The last Butterfield entry, for 12 June 1874, perhaps sums up the development in Hopkins's taste over these ten years:

After that we went to All Saints' Margaret Street. I wanted to see if my old enthusiasm was a mistake, I recognised certainly more than before Butterfield's want of rhetoric and telling, almost to dullness, and even of enthusiasm and zest in his work--thought the wall-mosaic rather tiresome for instance. Still the rich nobility of the tracery in the open arches of the sanctuary and the touching and passionate curves of the lilyings in the ironwork under the baptistery arch marked his genius to me as before. (13)

There are two other references to the church in his diaries, one ten years earlier which gives the names of the designers of

its stained-glass windows,⁽¹⁴⁾ and the other, for 10 August 1874, which is a long, highly perceptive, painstaking, and detailed account of another of Butterfield's churches, All Saints', Babbacombe, and compares the party-walls of the two churches.⁽¹⁵⁾ There is the interesting comparison in the extract above between his 'early enthusiasm' for the church, when youthful ardour and the loyalty due from him as a member of its congregation and faith may have influenced his aesthetic opinion of its architecture,⁽¹⁶⁾ and his later reactions to it when, as a man of thirty who had not only rejected but was also now, in some ways, professionally opposed to its religious teaching, his aesthetic opinions would probably be more objective and mature.

There are numerous features of All Saints', Margaret Street, which for a church of its time are remarkable enough to be noticed by Hopkins. The most noticeable features of the exterior are the unique wooden spire with its eighteen horizontal stripes, irregularly placed and garishly contrasted with their ground, and its clever broachwork; and the many bands and patterns forming similarly vivid contrasts in its frankly brick, flat-surfaced walls.⁽¹⁷⁾ The

14. Journals, p.34.

15. Journals, pp.254-5.

16. See Chapter Four, footnote 60, for Hopkins's early connections with All Saints', Margaret Street.

17. See T.S.R. Boase, op.cit., pp.243-4, and plate 71c.

interior is notable for its contrasts in kinds of materials, types of stone, vivid colours, geometrical and flower/foilage patterning, frescoes (by Dyce) painted on a thick gilt background, and harshly bright stained windows. The response of the young Hopkins had been partially arrested by the more obvious superficial qualities of the church, the picturesque colours and contrasts of its glass, whose garishness the Art Journal of 1859 had found 'unworthy of the edifice which it disfigures', and its wall-mosaic.⁽¹⁸⁾

At thirty years old, however, the over-stated eye-catching qualities pall, and Hopkins's distaste for and over-emphatic rejection of his earlier likings is shown by his phrases 'want of rhetoric . . . and even of enthusiasm and zest', which is probably the least just criticism that could be made of Butterfield's essentially lively and dramatic work. The positive qualities which the mature Hopkins noticed are the more subtle and lastingly valuable tracery of the arches and the foliage of the ironwork. The uncouth qualities which accompany Butterfield's vigour⁽¹⁹⁾ are recognised. A taste

18. See Journals, pp.34 and 248 (quoted above).

19. See: T.S.R. Boase, op.cit., p.244; the anonymous lead review-article 'Butterfield: most challenging architect of the Victorian style', Times Literary Supplement, no.3683 (6 October 1972), pp.1181-3, which reviews Paul Thompson, William Butterfield (1971), which I have not read thoroughly; and Sir John Summerson's review of the same book, 'Visionary architects', in The Sunday Times, 7 November 1971, where he mentions Hopkins's liking for Butterfield, and quotes 'an architect of the same generation as Hopkins', Halsey Ricardo, who said that Butterfield's genius could 'compel one to shout and cry at the same moment'.

for the violent colours and contrasts which The Ecclesiologist of June 1859 noted were as bold and striking as those of Millais or Holman Hunt, had been replaced by one for the values of The Seven Lamps of Architecture.⁽²⁰⁾

In the other Butterfield entries there can be frequently noticed acute perception of these two notable features of this architect: his highly idiosyncratic and eye-catching use of contrast in colour and stone (particularly in his horizontal bands of colour, mosaics, and encaustic tiles), and his conventional, but more sensitive, recreation of authentic Gothic tracery, wood- and stone-work. While Hopkins is always conscious of these two elements his taste appears to grow towards favouring the latter at the expense of the former, as the last entry for 1874 (quoted above)⁽²¹⁾ shows. In the 1874 entry for All Saints', Babbacombe, however, he does give an impression of seeing how the two features apparently so opposed in taste were combined into one recognisable style.⁽²²⁾

The first journal entry (for 1865) where Hopkins discusses Butterfield's work concerns the major restoration of Merton College Chapel (the 'common centre and place of worship for the High Church group'), which Butterfield undertook in 1849.⁽²³⁾ Hopkins sees

20. T.S.R. Doase, op.cit., pp.244-5. Doase points to 'curious similarities between Butterfield's churches and Ruskin's book, but concludes that they were due to 'some common trend to which they both were susceptible' rather than to a 'clear contact' between them.

21. Journals, p.248.

22. Journals, pp.254-5.

23. Journals, p.59.

that the first question about any restoration work is 'how far does the new fit the old?'; but his desire to support Butterfield, perhaps out of loyalty to an already developed enthusiasm for the main High Church architect, clouds his observation (Hopkins supported, in the family tradition, the High Church of England until his conversion in 1868; and he was in a city, Oxford, and at a time, of fierce religious loyalties and divisions). He judges there to be a careful 'following out' of 'the old work' and that the new fittings are 'in keeping with the old', somehow ignoring the floor of red, black and white encaustic tiles, set diagonally, with a decorated yellow border, which replaced plain black and white squares.⁽²⁴⁾ The adolescent Hopkins hoped the restoration was in keeping, and was attracted to the garish features; and it was this wish and taste, rather than his intellect and dispassionate observation, which governed his conclusion.

An entry a year later gives the hint of a development in taste. In 1866 Hopkins visited a recent (fifteen-year-old), entirely Butterfield, church, St. Mary Magdalen's, West Lavington, in Sussex,⁽²⁵⁾ which he had noted in his diary the previous year.⁽²⁶⁾ Although this is fairly typical of its architect, and Hopkins must have been familiar with his work by that time (besides the entries

24. Journals, p.330.

25. Journals, p.145.

26. Journals, p.60.

already mentioned, there are three other, minor, references to Butterfield in the journals before this), he calls the church 'immature and strange' and says 'I should like to see it again'. He does not look at it long enough to lay his finger on why it appears immature and strange, but a guess can be made. The Ecclesiologist of 1850 criticised it for being too original (that is, concentrating on colour) and not Gothic (concentrating on form) enough, so it seems that Hopkins's taste may now have developed beyond the stage when the immediate effect of Butterfield's polychromatic designs played a large part in his judgement. (27)

In 1866 there are two further entries which do not tell us more about Hopkins's taste so much as compare his ideas with what his contemporaries thought of Butterfield. Firstly Hopkins notes, without comment, that Alfred Waterhouse was to draw up designs for rebuilding two sides of Balliol's Front Quadrangle, and that Butterfield had been rejected. (28) Jowett probably discarded Butterfield because ten years earlier he had rebuilt the college chapel in his typical banded red and white. (29) Here again it was

27. Journals, p.334.

28. Journals, p.136. Taking sides would be difficult for Hopkins. The same journal entry includes the innocuous-sounding 'Dinner at Clarendon with the Geldarts'. Edmund Geldart was Hopkins's friend and contemporary at Balliol, and his brother Ernest was a pupil of Waterhouse's. Hopkins had stayed with both of them, and on this occasion Ernest had come to Oxford on Waterhouse's behalf, to discuss the new buildings with Jowett. Hopkins's loyalties, if not his taste, would thus have been divided.

29. Journals, p.350.

Butterfield's less successful loud eccentricities and not his quieter, more worthy, conventional qualities which were noticed, as Jowett implicitly states in a letter to Thomas Woolner:

In choosing Mr. Waterhouse we hope to avoid eccentricity and Unenglish styles and fancies. Simplicity and proportion such (not colour) always seem to me the great merits of Architecture. (30)

This is a similar aspect of Jowett to that which confronted D.G. Rossetti in the Beerbohm cartoon. (31) We are made aware that Hopkins could have pointed out to Jowett the other aspect of Butterfield's talents when we see his (surprisingly brief) entry on Tintern Abbey:

The Abbey is, one thinks, the typical English work and reminding one, as Street led one to expect, of Butterfield. (32)

The features of Tintern which closely resemble Butterfield are the lights in the windows, the shape of a nearly straight-sided arch, and the long high-pitched roof, (33) that is, its shapes, not its colours. So we see that the thirty year-old Hopkins's preference for Butterfield's shapes rather than his colours is a preference for the lasting recognisably English parts (34) as opposed to the more

30. Journals, p.350.

31. Max Beerbohm's 1916 cartoon (in the Tate Gallery) 'A Remark by Benjamin Jowett', Rossetti Exhibition (1973), no.374. Inscribed lower right:

The sole remark likely to have been made by Benjamin Jowett about the mural paintings at the Oxford Union. 'And what were they going to do with the Grail when they found it, Mr Rossetti?'

32. Journals, p.140.

33. Journals, p.357.

34. See also Chapter Four, footnote 43.

ephemeral and personal features of his work.

When, in 1874, Hopkins visited Butterfield's new church of All Saints', Babbacombe, he left us further evidence of how his ability to assimilate and produce a balanced judgement of a wider range of architectural features had progressed.⁽³⁵⁾ Again he remarks oddness--'It is odd and the oddness at first sight outweighed the beauty'; but his eyes seem, more evenly than in the 1860's, to take in not only tiles and marble fittings but also 'seven-foiled blind tracery' (there are drawings at this stage of the journal of both the tiles and the seven-foils). He senses how the two features--the shapes and the colours--harmonise with each other. He likes this one better than most Butterfield churches because 'there was a more quarried look about the designing than he commonly has'. With the word 'quarried' he has given us for the first time in his writing about Butterfield a glimpse of what he thought to be the ultimate ideal quality for architecture, which we can parallel with the much more frequently stated inscape and instress of God-created architecture in external Nature.

We can see from this brief survey that Hopkins's interest in Gothic is absolute, and based on Pugin's theories, so that his reaction to a work of the Middle Ages depends largely on whether it is in the Decorated style or not, whether it has unjustified

35. Journals, pp.254-5.

extraneous features, and the quality of its detail. In modern Gothic architecture his taste develops from his being attracted by bright colours and other garish qualities for their own sake, to a calmer, more mature liking for more lasting, less immediately noticeable, qualities, such as shape, harmony of parts, and solid, masculine, 'quarried' development, as opposed to merely sensuous picturesque decorations. His adolescent concern is almost entirely with detail at the expense of a sense of the whole, while in maturity this changes to a two-fold concern for overall constructive sense as well as for quieter detail.

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