SHORT TITLE

The Pattern of the Archetypal Search in Hopkins' Poetry: An interpretation of Hopkins' poetry as the symbolic utterance of the inner process of individuation as described by Carl Gustave Jung.

ABSTRACT

Author Suzanne Kohl Weldon

Title of Thesis The Pattern of the Archetypal Search in Hopkins' Poetry

Department Department of English

Degree Master of Arts

An interpretation of Hopkins' poetry as the symbolic utterance of the inner process of individuation as described by Carl Gustave Jung.

THE PATTERN OF THE ARCHETYPAL SEARCH IN HOPKINS' POETRY

by

Suzanne Kohl Weldon

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirments

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Department of English

McGill University

June, 1971

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Man's archetypal search is, and always has been, the search for the self, that "selfless self of self, most strange, most still, / Fast furled and all foredrawn to No or Yes."[1] The goal, the "Treasure hard to obtain", is hidden in the mysterious territory of the unconscious, unrecognized until it is found. As T. S. Eliot puts it: "And the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time."[2]

Previous critics have viewed Hopkins' poetry from the religious aspect. The present study is based on the discoveries of modern depth psychology concerning the unconscious component of the psyche, especially those of Carl Gustave Jung. Joseph Campbell writes, in his Preface to his book The Hero With a Thousand Faces:

> It is the purpose of the present book to uncover some of the truths disguised for us under the figures of religion and mythology . . . The old teachers knew what they were saying. Once we have learned to read again their symbolic language, it requires no more than the talent of an anthologist to let their teaching be heard. But first we must learn the grammar of the symbols, and as a key to this mystery I know of no better modern tool than psychoanalysis. Without regarding this as the last word on the subject, one can nevertheless permit it to serve as an approach.[3]

According to the findings of modern psychology, as Erich Neumann affirms, "Myth, art, religion and language are all symbolic

---

[1] Gerard Manley Hopkins, Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, eds. W. H. Gardner and N. H. MacKenzie (London, 1967), p. 196. Subsequent references to Hopkins' poetry will be to this edition, appearing by poem number and line number in parentheses in the body of the text.

[2] T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding", Collected Poems (London, 1963), p. 222.

[3] Joseph Campbell, The Hero With a Thousand Faces (Cleveland, 1956), p. vii.

expressions of the creative spirit of man; in them this spirit takes on objective, perceptible form, becoming conscious of itself through man's consciousness of it."[4]

The archetypal search expressed in the great myths, and in the mythic poetry of Homer, Virgil and Dante (to give only the classic examples; there are, of course, hundreds of others), follows the adventures of the Hero. The general pattern is: 1. The hero's sense of something missing, which is of essential value. 2. A lateral quest, which explores the external world. 3. A descent into the underworld, with, or without a mortal struggle with the monster who guards the treasure. 4. The return to the upper world, bearing the treasure. The final two stages represent a death and rebirth: symbolic death precedes symbolic rebirth as the whole man, whose suffering and struggle have resulted in the union of the outer and the inner selves. This intrinsic goal is expressed variously as the search for home, for the father, for personal identity.

The pattern of the search is clearly revealed in Hopkins' poetry when it is viewed as a single body of work. Reading the poems in chronological order,[5] one finds, in the undergraduate poems, a restless dissatisfaction with both himself and his environment, and a longing for transcendence -- a persistent hunger for "that sense beyond" (23, 43). "The Wreck of the Deutschland" (No. 28) utters with dramatic sweep and force the released energy of the poet, an energy released by his election of Christ as his heroic goal upon his conversion to the Roman Catholic religion, and his entry into the Society

---

[4] Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness (Princeton, 1970), p. 369.

[5] I have followed the dating of the poems given by N. H. MacKenzie in his Notes to the edition of 1967, cited above.

of Jesus. True to the pattern of the archetypal search, the poems of the middle period express in ecstatic images and racing rhythms the poet's search for his hero in external nature. He saw in mountain, cloud and flower the embodiments of the Creature, "news of God." The pattern continues to develop: the descent into the underworld is uttered in the terrible words of the "dark sonnets", four of which, as Hopkins wrote to Robert Bridges, "came like inspirations unbidden and against my will."[6] The finding of the treasure, and the subsequent rebirth in wholeness of being into the outer world, is expressed in the complex symbolism of sonnets No. 68 and 72. The fruit of the heroic search is the reconciliation of inner and outer reality; for Hopkins the experience was a total identification with Christ, the fusing of the God without and the god within, and thus was the realization of his life's aim: "To be, in a manner, Christ."[7]

Rollo May writes:

> Symbolizing is basic to such questions as personal identity. For the individual experiences himself as a self in terms of symbols which arise from three levels at once: those from archaic and archetypal depths within himself, symbols arising from the personal events of his psychological and and biological experience, and the general symbols and values which obtain in his culture.[8]

As a devout Roman Catholic, Hopkins possessed the full quota of personal symbols of meaning; theoretically, he was safely walled against the "perils of the soul" -- the loss of conscious identity in the inchoate unconscious.[9] The masculine, ego-conscious side of

---

[6] Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, ed. Claude Colleer Abbott (London, 1955), p. 221.

[7] John Pick, Gerard Manley Hopkins Priest and Poet (London, 1966), p. 100.

[8] "The Significance of Symbols", Symbolism in Religion and Literature, ed. Rollo May (New York, 1960), p. 22.

[9] C. G. Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious (New York, 1959), p. 22.

of his being was identified with Christ, his model and hero, whom he had elected in a triumphant act of will ("I did say yes / O at lightning and lashed rod" (No. 28, 1, 1-2).[10] His feminine, emotional aspect was constellated in the figure of the Virgin Mary. Jung locates the origin of such a projection deep in the unconscious, giving it the name of the anima.[11] The influence of the anima is all the more powerful because it rises from the unconscious. Consciously, Hopkins was aware only of the benign side of his anima, in the image of the Virgin. Nevertheless, this symbol carried an enormous weight of meaning for him. On one hand she was mother and mediatrix of grace, while on the other she was immaculate maid. Since her feast falls in the month of May, the poet identified her with youth and spring-time: "All things rising, all things sizing / Mary sees, sympathizing" (No. 42, 25-26). Mary, both as mother and maid, fused with the image of spring; her inviolate body harboured the waxing ("sizing") Christ-embryo -- an image which parallels that of the mothering earth, which protects and produces the "infant buds of spring". This dual image constituted the ideal of beauty for the poet -- "Nothing is so beautiful as Spring" (No. 67). By association he identified young people with this ideal beauty: "Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy, / Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning " (No. 67, 15-16). One of Hopkins' Jesuit contemporaries recalled his "shrinking dread of anything that tended to endanger, especially in the young, the angelic virtue."[12]

---

[10] In the case of references to "The Wreck of the Deutschland" I shall give poem, stanza and line number.

[11] Jung, Archetypes, p. 27.

[12] Quoted by Pick, p. 99.

Correlatively, he deplored the contrast between adult man and innocent nature:

> Lovely the woods, waters, meadows, combes, vales,
> All the air things wear that build this world of Wales;
> Only the inmate does not correspond
> (No. 34, 9-11)

For Hopkins, as for many poets, beauty, both moral and aesthetic, was rooted in an Eden which lacked any vestige of the serpent. Therefore "Age, and age's evils, hoar hair, / Ruck and wrinkle" (whose ugliness was so obviously repugnant to the poet's fastidious sensibilities) must somehow be transcended. He found a temporary solution to the "blight man was born for", with its loathsome finale of "winding sheets, tombs and worms and tumbling to decay" in consigning beauty to God "early now, long before death". Only thus, he felt, could it remain "its own best being and its loveliness of youth", safe forever from the "Tall sun's tingeing" and the treacherous "tainting of the earth's air" (No. 59,11-13, 5). Here one notes the paradoxical parallel between the lovely air / unworthy (adult) inmate of No. 34 above and the treacherous air / youthful beauty of No. 59 just quoted. It is evident that the poet longed to be able somehow to arrest beauty, to "inscape" it immutably at its peak, just as he yearned to preserve the innocence of the young at its "Mayday". Thus beauty, for him, both aesthetic and moral, depended upon the frail threads of mortality. Unconsciously he had set up a polarity in which youth, beauty and innocence were opposed to age, ugliness and sin. Because he rejected the dark side of reality he possessed no symbols in which to constellate it.

This lacuna in his conception of reality made itself felt in a certain dis-ease of spirit. Significantly, many of Hopkins' poems

are cast in dialogue form, the witness of continual inner debate. No. 51 is a good example:

> When will you ever, Peace, wild wooddove, shy wings shut,
> Your round me roaming end, and under be my boughs?
> When, when, Peace, will you, Peace? I'll not play hypocrite
>
> To own my heart: I yield you do come sometimes; but
> That piecemeal peace is poor peace. What pure peace allows
> Alarms of wars, the daunting wars, the death of it?
> (1-6)

If "disunity with oneself is the hall-mark of civilized man"[13], which few would deny, Hopkins, both as poet and priest, laboured under a double dichotomy. As Jung has observed, "Whoever loves the earth and its glory, and forgets the 'dark realm' has spirit for his enemy; and whoever flees the earth and falls into the 'eternal arms' has life for an enemy."[14] This psychic impasse came to crisis after the poet had passed the first half of life, during which the lateral search in the external world had taken place. "The most dangerous revolutionary is within ourselves", Jung notes, "and all must realize this who wish to pass over safely into the second half of life."[15] During the Dublin years, from the year 1885 until his death in 1889, Hopkins suffered a kind of nervous collapse. He himself tried to explain it as the result of uncongenial work and failing health. In October, 1888, he wrote in a letter to Bridges: "This morning I gave in what I believe is the last batch of examination-work for this autumn (and if all were seen, fallen leaves of my poor life, between all the leaves of it)."[16]

---

[13] Jung, Two Essays on Analytical Psychology (Cleveland, Ohio, 1956), p. 28.

[14] Jung, Symbols of Transformation (New York, 1956), II, 396.

[15] Jung, Two Essays, p. 86.

[16] Letters to Bridges, p. 296.

He seemed to be drained of all energy and enthusiasm. The "inmate" had ceased to conform either to the soaring symbol of power, beauty and freedom, inscaped as Christ in such poems as "The Windhover" (No. 36) and "Hurrahing in Harvest" (No. 38), or to the Eden image of youth, beauty and innocence which he connected with the Virgin. Life and spirit had both become his enemies. He could no longer say "What I do is me: for that I came"(No. 57, 8). As he once noted pathetically: "A purpose may look smooth and perfect from without but be frayed and faltering within."[17]

From Hopkins' letters and journals it can be seen that he was constantly plagued by an excessively demanding conscience. "I have never wavered in my vocation", he wrote, "but I have not lived up to it."[18] According to Jung, a "feeling of moral inferiority does not come from a collision with the generally accepted . . . moral law, but from the conflict with one's own self which, for reasons of psychic equilibrium, demands that the deficit be redressed."[19] Thus, in Jungian terms, a sense of sin is the discomfort caused by an imperfect correspondence between the inner and the outer selves. As has been noted above, the poet's two great symbols of meaning, Christ and the Virgin, had ceased to embody the reality of his life experience. Jung's theory is that the psychic energy not embodied in impoverished gods falls into the "dark realm", whence it will erupt spontaneously if triggered off by external pressures.[20]

---

17 Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Dixon, ed. C. C. Abbott (London,1935), pp. 88-89

18 Ibid, p. 98.

19 Jung, Two Essays, p. 145.

20 Jung, Archetypes, p. 244.

Robbed of his essential life energy by this failure of the symbolization of the self, and thus weakened in the conscious will, Hopkins could no longer postpone a confrontation with the dark side of his being. Jung has called this dark side the Shadow. The Shadow stands for "everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is always thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly."[21] It stands, like Cerberus, guarding the doorway to the underworld of the unconscious.

Loyola taught that the purpose of asceticism is to free man from inordinate attachment.[22] The tragic irony in Hopkins' fate is that his asceticism led him into a blind alley, "stalled" in a springtime world of youth and innocence, which, after the first half of life had gone by, proved inadequate. Jung writes of the "diminution of soul", phenomenal of the second half of life, as the signal for the descent into the "dark realm": "separation from youth has . . . taken away the golden glamour of Nature, and the future appears hopeless and empty. But what robs Nature of its glamour, and life of its joy, is the habit of looking back for something that used to be outside, instead of looking into the depths of the depressive state."[23] This looking back is a lingering in the protected world of childhood: "I say that we are wound / With mercy round and round / As if with air; the same / Is Mary . . ." (No. 60, 34-37). These lines image the Virgin as a soft, nest-like haven for mankind, or at least for

---

[21] Jung, Archetypes, p. 284.

[22] Pick, p. 37.

[23] Jung, Archetypes, p. 415.

the poet. The prospect of being forced to renounce this vision results in a feeling of intense desolation, for "Here there are no fathers and mothers; all the illusions . . . projected upon the world and upon things gradually come home . . . jaded and wayworn"[24] (my italics). In "The Wreck of the Deutschland", that prophetic poem, Hopkins refers to the "jading and jar of the cart / Time's tasking" (27, 2-3). The loss of this vision amounted to a kind of spiritual death for him, since it cut him off from the grace of God by separating him from both the Virgin Mary and from Christ, his two great symbols of meaning. A passage from some unpublished notes which he made for a sermon preached at Stoneyhurst in 1879 makes clear the essential nature of the Virgin's availability, in recalling "St. Bernard's saying, All grace is given through Mary: this is a mystery."[25] This passage also emphasizes Mary's function as the projection of the poet's anima on an ideal feminine being. Significantly, in February of the same year, he declared in a letter to Bridges that "Feeling, love in particular, is the great moving power and spring of verse and the only person I am in love with seldom, especially now, stirs my heart sensibly . . ."[26] Hopkins is referring to Christ in this letter, but the closeness in dates of the two excerpts quoted above makes the connection between the loss of the anima figure, the projection of the emotional component of the psyche, and the loss of feeling generally.

---

[24] Jung, Two Essays, p. 71.

[25] Quoted by Pick, p. 104.

[26] Letters to Bridges, p. 66.

The earliness of this evidence of psychic trouble (1879), six years before the overt breakdown in 1885, is somewhat surprising. However it reveals the slow but relentless activity of the unseen "selfless self of self" in the unconscious realm of being.

Hopkins believed that the being was perfected by the exercise of that selfhood which is the will.[27] His election of Christ, and his consecration of mortal beauty to God, were both operations of this will to perfection. However it is evident from the prevalence of the anvil image in his poetry that conforming his will to God's involved intense struggle: "With an anvil-ding / And with fire in him forge thy will" (28, 10, 10-11). He experienced his own individuality as an "unspeakable stress of pitch"[28], while it was always the "forged feature" (No. 45, 7) which compelled his attention in other men. There is a strangeness, then, in the apparent fatalism expressed in stanza 7 of the poem "On the Portrait of Two Beautiful Young People" (No. 157):

> Man lives that list, that leaning in the will
> No wisdom can forecast by gauge or guess,
> The selfless self of self, most strange, most still,
> Fast furled and all foredrawn to No or Yes.
> (25-28)

The reference to "The selfless self of self" indicates that Hopkins had some intuition of an essential kernel of self, sheathed in mystery like an embryo in the womb, which was unamenable to the conscious will.

---

[27] The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley, ed. Christopher Devlin, S.J. (London, 1959), p. 164.

[28] Ibid, p. 123.

The "No or Yes" from the stanza just quoted becomes a nightmare image in the poem "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" (No. 61). This poem appears in the "Dublin Note-Book", and was probably written in the year 1885, according to N. H. MacKenzie.[29] The dark side of the poet's psyche, suddenly released, swells into consciousness, like the geni in the Arabian Nights, to fill the heavens with gigantic menace. All Hopkins' symbols suffer a cataclysmic reversal. The stars, the friendly "fire-folk" of sonnet No. 32, have become a "wild yellow hoarlight hung to the height" (No. 61, 3), which appears to bend over the earth, threatening, like the destroying angel, to dismember all its dappled beauty. "Mothering earth" has lost her power to protect her offspring:

> . . . For earth | her being has unbound; her dapple is at an end, astray or aswarm, all throughther, in throngs; | self in self steepèd and pashed -- quite
> dísremémbering, dismembering | áll now. Heart you round me right
> with: Our évening is over us; our night | whélms, whélms, and will end us.
>
> (No. 61, 5-8)

The image of the "terrible mother", who devours her young after giving them birth is subsumed in this evening which "strains to be time's vast, | womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night" (61, 2). The Virgin, associated with the clear daytime sky, has become hideously fused with the false virgin of Revelation 12, where we read: "the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent

---

[29] Poems, Notes, p. 284.

called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

Thus, belatedly, did the serpent make his appearance in Hopkins' Eden. His forty-year wait in the wings had so enhanced his demonic power that his sudden constellation threatened to obliterate Eden and its progenitor both. Dizzied by this vision of the formless void, flooded by the black fear of total annihilation, the poet clung to the "No or Yes" of poem No. 157 as the final solidity in "all a world of wet" (No. 69, 8)[30]:

> . . . Lét life, wáned, ah lét life wind
> Off hér once skéined, stained, véined variety upon, áll on twó spools; párt, pen, páck
> Now her áll in twó flocks, twó folds -- black, white; right, wrong; reckon but, reck but, mind
> But thése two; wáre of a wórld where bút these twó tell, each off the óther; of a rack,
> Where, selfwrung, selfstrung, sheathe-and-shelterless, thóughts against thoughts in groans grind.

(No. 61, 10-14)

It would appear that the "rebel within" was now taking its terrible vengeance -- redressing the deficit. As Jung puts it: "autonomy of the unconscious begins where emotions are generated. . . and it is precisely those who give least credence to it who are the most surprised by it."[31] Jung's description of the onset of the process of individuation, or transformation of soul, seems to be an exegesis of Hopkins' plight:

---

[30] I have taken some liberties with the chronological order of the poems here: No. 157 was not written until 1888, while No. 61 and No. 69 belong to the year 1885, the year of crisis. My justification is the link formed by the words "No or Yes", which also appear in one of the undergraduate essays to be examined later, and which are closely related to the poet's "alternating rhythm", also discussed later in this essay.

> . . . the judging intellect proves itself powerless. Human interpretation fails, for a turbulent life-situation has arisen that refuses to fit any of the traditional meanings assigned to it. It is a moment of collapse. . . . It is a surrender of our own powers, not artificially willed but forced upon us by nature; not a voluntary submission and humiliation decked in moral garb, but an utter and unmistakable defeat, crowned with the panic fear of demoralization.[31]

Most critics have associated Hopkins' dark period with the Dark Night of the Soul of St. John of the Cross. John Pick, however, states unequivocally that in his opinion there is no evidence to support this traditional view. He writes:

> Not a single line of Hopkins that is extant bears the authentic stamp of the very essence of the Dark Night. . . of the Soul. He is not in any strict sense a contemplative or mystical poet. . . . until evidence is produced to show that he himself experienced the unitive way it is certainly innacurate to attribute the aridity and desolation which is the subject of many of his poems to the Dark Night of the Soul.[32]

I agree with Pick's view. The various accounts of the Dark Night of the Soul appear to me to be <u>descriptions</u> of emotional affects, with the addition of the well-tested instructions for combatting and overcoming them, whereas Jung, in his account of the process of individuation, reveals through the symbols thrown up during the process the actual inner experience. In every way, as I shall show, Jung's account of the process of individuation parallels Hopkins' experience, as projected in the symbols of his poetry, and as described in his letters. The religious forms assumed by powerful emotional affects seem to be the common experience. Wholeness of being, the experience of the true self, is the object of the archetypal search, and the process of individuation is the means whereby man arrives at his goal. Jung writes:

---

[31] Jung, <u>Archetypes</u>, p. 32.

[32] Pick, p. 131.

> We are that pair of Dioscuri, one of whom is mortal and the other immortal, and who, though always together, can never be made completely one. The transformation processes strive to approximate them to one another, but our consciousness is aware of resistances, because the other person seems strange and uncanny, and because we cannot get accustomed to the idea that we are not absolute master in our own house. We should prefer to be always "I" and nothing else. But we are confronted with that inner friend or foe, and whether he is our friend or our foe depends on ourselves.[33]

The Ignation form of the inner colloquy reduces the responses of the "other", that immortal inner twin, to the merely human. As Jung says "The 'voice' is explained as nothing but 'associating'"[34] -- in the Lockean sense that there is nothing in the mind except what has been received from the perception of outer reality. Hopkins' immediate experience of God as a terrifying, inhuman being with "darksome devouring eyes", a "wring-world right foot" and lion limbs (No. 64) cannot be explained as "associating". The image in all its strangeness and terror is archetypal, arising spontaneously from the deepest layers of the disturbed unconscious.

The force of the poetry of the dark sonnets vouches for the force of the poet's experience, whether the reader possesses any criterion for assessing it or not. As Hopkins wrote: "O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall / frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap / May who ne'er hung there." (No. 65,9-11) -- a hint to the "nothing but" type of criticism that a neat linguistic exegesis may not contain all the truth concerning these sonnets, four of which (No's 64, 65, 66 and 67) "came unbidden" and against the poet's will.

---

[33] Jung, Archetypes, p. 131.

[34] Ibid.

Hopkins' feeling of abandonment by God: "... And my lament / Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent / To dearest him that lives alas! away." (No. 62, 9-11) parallels Jung's account of the contribution of the "other" to the inner colloquy:

> But what if it were the supplicated Christ himself who gave immediate answer in the words of the sinful human heart? What fearful abysses of doubt would then be opened ... one can ... understand why that inner friend so often seems to be our enemy, and why he is so far off and his voice so low.[35]

In recognizing the archetypal forms for what they are in Hopkins' dark sonnets the reader's understanding expands beyond the personal ego-consciousness, with its personal symbols (the defenses against the "perils of the soul")[36] to the "world-sorrow" of sonnet No. 65:

> Comforter, where, where is your comforting?
> Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?
> My cries heave, herds-long; huddle in a main, a chief-woe, world-sorrow; on an age-old anvil wince and sing--
>
> (3-6)

In defence of this point of view Leslie Fiedler writes:

> Certainly, the contemplation of the Archetype pushes the critic beyond semantics, and beyond the kind of analysis that considers it has done all when it assures us ... that the parts and the whole of a poem cohere. The critic in pursuit of the Archetype finds himself involved in anthropology and depth psychology (not because these are New Gospels, but because they provide useful tools); and if he is not too embarrassed at finding himself in such company to look about him, he discovers that he has come upon a way of birding together our fractured world, of uniting literature and nonliterature <u>without the reduction of the poem</u>.[37]

---

[35]Jung, <u>Archetypes</u>, pp. 132-133.

[36]See p. iii above.

[37]Leslie Fiedler, "Archetype and Signature", <u>Literature in Critical Perspectives</u>, ed. Walter K. Gordon (New York, 1968), p. 522.

The poet's eventual recognition of the monster with whom he wrestled as God ("That night, that year / Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God" (No. 64, 13-14) shows that he had come to terms with the dark, unconscious side of being, both personal and divine, and thus had achieved unity of being. As Jung writes, "Only what is really oneself has the power to heal."[38]

Jung defines the individuation process as a man becoming what he always was.[39] "The Wreck of the Deutschland" appears to bear out this theory. Prophetically, Hopkins wrote: "Not out of his bliss / Springs the stress felt . . . Stroke and a stress that stars and storms deliver" (6, 1-2), but

> It dates from day
> Of his going in Galilee;
> Warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey;
> Manger, maiden's knee;
> The dense and the driven Passion, and frightful sweat:
> Thence the discharge of it, there its swelling to be,
> Though felt before, though in high flood yet --
> What none would have known of it, only the heart, being hard at bay
> (7)

If Hopkins' own version of the "womb-life grey" had not been too much for him he would not have been forced to experience in the depths of his being, in reverse, as it were, what he had experienced in soaring triumph, in his youth: "Thy terror, O Christ, O God . . . The swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl of thee trod / Hard down with a horror of height" (28, 2, 4, 6-7), nor to recognize the beast image of sonnet No. 64 as God: "Father and fondler of heart thou hast wrung / Hast thy dark descending and most art merciful then" (28, 9, 7-8).

---

[38] Jung, Two Essays, p. 175.

[39] Jung, Archetypes, p. 40.

The following discussion is based on the evidence of Hopkins' poetry, Journals and Letters. The pattern of the search for the self (the process of individuation) is both linear (the journey through time) and circular (the ego-consciousness turns inward on itself and arrives at the place of all beginnings in the darkness of the unconscious). When the immortal twin has been confronted and integrated with the mortal ego the linear pattern reveals itself to be, in fact, circular. When the two selves unite the ego is released from the limitations of time and enters a new timeless existence.

As I have noted above, I have followed the dating of the poems given by N. H. MacKenzie in the 1967 edition. Although I have felt free to interpret the symbolic structure of Hopkins' poetry as the utterance of a psychological process, in no case have I gone beyond that evidence. The material which I have incorporated from the poet's prose writings has been employed as further elucidation of this process; such references as I have made to biographical facts are those germain to my thesis, without which much of the following discussion would be meaningless.

Granted that the inner search can only be uttered in symbols, as RollоMay affirms,[40] it follows that the symbolism of poetry offers one of the most reliable charts of this otherwise invisible process. In Hopkins' case the symbolism of colour is a strong organizing force, for a variety of reasons. His early training as a painter,

---

[40] See p. iii, above.

of course, made him keenly aware of colour. His Journal entry for May 6, 1866, for instance, reads: ". . . the warm greyness of the day, the river, the spring green, and the cuckoo wanted a canon by which to harmonise and round them in -- e.g. one of feeling."[41] Of the catalogue given two of the items are colours (grey and green), and one suggests colour (the river). It is logical to assume that the missing canon is some one of the colours. Red is the natural choice, since it is the generally accepted colour symbolizing passion (feeling) and the life-giving principle, and since it is the opposite of grey, the colour of neutralization and inertia.[42] In any case, the passage indicates that colour constitutes a "canon of feeling" for the poet. He appears also to associate the colour red with meaning, as in the final couplet of the early poem "Winter with the Gulf Stream" (No. 3), which reads: "Into the flat grey mist the sun / Drops out, and all our day is done" (my italics). The analysis of this poem in Chapter I following will bring out the force of this interpretation.

The subsumption of the spectrum in the black/white dichotomy of the poem "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" (page xii, above), and the total blackness of some of the dark sonnets, is further evidence that for Hopkins colour symbolized a feeling/meaning complex.

---

[41] Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, eds. Humphry House and Graham Storey (London, 1959), p. 135.

[42] J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols (New York, 1962), p. xxxiii. I have found myself in somewhat of a quandary as to how to refer to Cirlot's sources, since he has omitted pagination in his own system of reference. In one case the date of publication has also been omitted. This fact accounts for the varied types of reference to the material I have used from A Dictionary of Symbols.

Colour symbolism is a unitive force in his poetry, since it represents both meaning and feeling (the intellectual and the emotional functions), which elsewhere in his writings always appear to be in opposition. Father Devlin notes Hopkins' constant distinction between desire and choice in his spiritual writings,[43] a distinction often made by St. Ignatius, but differing from that of the poet in that "he always insisted that they should go together."[44]

The power of colour to speak of and to the soul is, perhaps, only surpassed by that of music. Hopkins' musical sensibility came into play simultaneously with his feeling for colour. Colour and rhythm form an intrinsic relationship in each poem, and serve to complement, enforce and enrich each other. His emotional response to colour was spontaneous; he wrote to Dixon that "Crimson and pure blue were a sight to draw tears once."[45] It is obvious that he loved the multi-coloured world of nature, as the poem "Pied Beauty" (No. 37) bears witness, with its opening lines: "Glory be to God for dappled things." As has been noted, the sonnets of the critical year 1885 are drained of colour, symbolic of a psyche drained of meaning and emotion. In the early poems examined in Chapter I following, "waxen" (opaque), muted, secondary colours are matched by conventional, confined, almost suffocating rhythms, symbolic of the inertia of frustration. When one turns to the "Deutschland" the colours are clear, vibrant and simple, consisting of the two primary colours red and blue, and their composite, purple. All

---

[43] Devlin, Sermons, p. 116.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Letters to Dixon, p. 38.

three express traditional religious meanings. The rhythm is free and sweeping, the first appearance of the poet's newly-forged "sprung rhythm". The effect of both colour and rhythm is that of the force of energy released by the revelation of a supremely challenging goal. The initial encounter with Christ: "The swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl of thee trod / Hard down with a horror of height" (2, 6-7) images a terror which is also an almost fierce delight -- the exultation resulting from having joined the band of heros who follow the all-mastering master. Later, when the exultation has dimmed, and only the terror remains, the colours disappear, and the rhythm weighs on the senses with the hopeless heaviness of black:

> I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day,
> What hours, O what black hours we have spent
> This night! What sights you, heart, saw; what ways you went!
> And more must, in yet longer light's delay.
> (No. 67, 1-4)

The dark is a felt "fell", an animal pelt, weighing heavily upon the poet's body with the "fell" menace of the "lionlimb" of sonnet No. 64. The three consecutive heavy accents of "And more must" further weights this visitation with the foreknowledge of the drawn-out agony spelled out in the unbearable stresses of the concluding line of "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves": "Where, selfselfwrung, selfstrung, sheathe-and-shelterless, thoughts against thoughts in groans grind."

Hopkins' use of colour symbolism, whether conscious or spontaneous, is in accord with the conclusions reached by modern scholars of symbolism. In the briefest outline, the relevant discoveries are as follows: colour corresponds to feeling;[46] as a visual rhythm it relates deeply and constantly with emotion;[47] man

---

[46] Rorschach's discovery that "colour and movement are expressions respectively of feeling and activity", quoted by Cirlot, p. 328.

[47] Jung, Cirlot, p. xxxiii.

identifies with nature through a "common rhythm".[48]

Although I have begun my examination of each individual poem with an analysis of its colour symbolism, colour has led naturally to the symbolism of number, with its intrinsic relationship to all natural phenomena. It has also led to the integration of alchemical colour symbolism in my study, which is closely related to the process of individuation, or transformation of the soul. As Evola wrote in his Tradizione Ermetica: "Our Work is the conversion and change of one being into another being, one thing into another thing, weakness into strength, bodily into spiritual nature."[48a] Jung discovered, to his surprise, that the symbolism of the individuation process, expressed in the dreams and the mandala of his patients, showed "the closest affinities with alchemical ideas, and especially with the conceptions of the 'uniting symbol', which yield highly significant parallels."[49] It is in the symbols that "the union of conscious and unconscious contents is consummated".[50] The symbolism of Hopkins' poetry, especially its colour symbolism, demonstrates the essential truth of Jung's discovery. For this reason I have incorporated the alchemical colour series in my analyses. There is no assumption that the poet was aware of this affinity with the alchemists and their colour symbolism. The fact that the latter is identifiable in the poems is simply one more piece of evidence that the archetypal symbols are living realities.

---

48 Cirlot, xxxii.

48a J.C. Evola, La Tradizione Ermetica (Bari, 1931), Cirlot, p. 9.

49 Jung, Archetypes, p. 229.

50 Ibid.

For the artist colour and form are closely related. Form fascinated Hopkins, as the hundreds of meticulously described "scapes" and "inscapes" in his Journal bear witness. Yet he possessed a morbidly acute apprehension of its evanescence in a world where "whatever's prized and passes of us, everything that's fresh and fast flying of us, seems sweet of us and swiftly away with, done away with undone / . . . The flower of beauty, fleece of beauty, too too apt to, ah! to fleet" (59, 7, 10). God is both creator and destroyer, and this apparent split in the nature of the Deity was of haunting concern to the poet for most of his life. The problem set up a kind of alternating rhythm in the poet's psyche; the evidence is plainly visible in everything he wrote, in his aesthetic and religious theories, and in the poetic rhythms themselves.

Hopkins' theory of aesthetics is based on his concept of two forms, which he called diatonic and chromatic beauty. He set them forth in an undergraduate essay, written in 1865, entitled "On the Origin of Beauty":

> Sounds must either pass from note to note, as may be done with the string of a violin, or notes may follow each other without transition as on the piano. Well this will apply to all things I suppose. . . . any change in things, any difference between part and part, must be either transitional or abrupt. . . . I think I would call it . . . a division into chromatic and diatonic beauty.[51]

In a later essay, "The Probable Future of Metaphysics" (1867) he made an implicit connection between diatonic form and the Ideal Forms of Plato, which Jung, along with other scholars, connates with the collective archetypes:

---

[51] Journal, p. 104.

> To the prevalent philosophy and science nature is a string all the differences in which are really chromatic but certain places in it have become accidentally fixed and the series of fixed points becomes an arbitrary scale. . . . there are certain forms which have a great hold on the mind and are always reappearing and seem imperishable, such as the designs of Greek vases and lyres, the cone upon Indian shawls, the honeysuckle moulding, the fleur-de-lys, while every day we see designs both simple and elaborate which do not live and are at once forgotten . . . the forms have in some sense or other an absolute existence. . . . The new school of metaphysics will probably encounter . . . atomism of personality with some shape of the Platonic Ideas.[52]

In this passage the division the poet had made between the two modes of beauty (form) is blurred, if not obliterated: they are opposed, in one sense, yet stand in a continuous relationship to each other.

Hopkins' religious experience also found utterance in the two apparently opposed modes of "stress" and "instress". The parallel between diatonic beauty and stress, and that between chromatic beauty and instress is brought out in poem after poem. In the "Deutschland", for example, the poet contrasts the effects of stress and instress in a series of complementary pairs of images. Stanza 10 reads:

> With an anvil-ding
> And with fire in him forge thy will
> Or rather, rather then, stealing as Spring
> Through him, melt him but master him still:
> Whether at once, as once at a crash Paul,
> Or as Austin, a lingering-out sweet skill,
> Make mercy in all of us, out of us all
> Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King.

---

[52] Journal, pp. 120-121.

Duns Scotus's distinction between individuality (completion by opposition or bracing) and personality (spontaneous fulfillment)[53] may be the underthought here -- the religious philosopher who, Hopkins said, "of all men most sways my spirits to peace" (No.44,11) The interaction, rather than the opposition, of stress and instress is expressed in another pair of complementary images: the soul reaches out to God at full stretch, "the midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with fire of stress" (28, 2, 8), then relaxes, in order to instress (assimilate to the self) the flash of stress, which will "mouthed to flesh-burst, / Gush! -- flush the man, the being with it, sour or sweet, / Brim, in a flash, full!" (28, 8, 4-6).

The connection between diatonic and stress is further strengthened by Eric Partridge's note in Origins. He traces diatonic to the Greek diatonikos, which means extended, or stretched out -- at stress, as it were.[54] Whereas stress is imaged as a diatonic flash, delivered in a single instant of time, instress appears as a liquid infiltration of the being, a gush which fills it "brim, in a flash, full".

These alternating, yet complementary rhythms are built into the very core of Hopkins' poetry. His "sprung rhythm" is built on the theory of stress and instress. The extreme example is the poem "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" (No. 59) , in which lines of four syllables and lines as long as thirty-two syllables occur, yet the basic four beats to the line is maintained throughout. The

---

[53] Alan Heuser, The Shaping Vision of Gerard Manley Hopkins (London, 1958), note 3, p. 117.

[54] Eric Partridge, Origins (London, 1959).

short lines represent stress, the long lines instress, as for example in the following:

> And wisdom is early to despair:
> Be beginning; since, no, nothing can be done
> To keep at bay
> Age and age's evils, hoar hair,
> Ruck and wrinkle, drooping, dying, death's worst, winding sheets, tombs and worms and tumbling to decay
>
> (59, 8-11)

The stress is delivered in lines 1 and 3: despair, and the hopelessness of any defence against it; the instress goes on to itemize and adumbrate, to assimilate the message in concrete images of despair, the cause of which is the inevitable approach of age and death.

I have included a chart, which appears in the Appendix, which attempts to show how Hopkins' alternating rhythm shaped all his experience, from his response to the traditional symbols of the Roman Catholic religion to the making of his poetry. His essential conflict between body and spirit, "desire " and "choice" was finally resolved through the agency of what Jung calls the "uniting symbol".[55] What appears, at first, to be a psychic split reveals itself finally as the type of dualism defined by R. Bertrand:

> The dualism of religion (or of mystic or cosmic philosophy) is theoretical or superficial: in actual fact, there is always something extra -- a third term which prevents the two opposing terms from cancelling each other out, forcing both these force-principles to yield, that is, to function alternately and not simultaneously . . . . However, this solution by means of the 'third term' serves less to 'resolve' the problem than to prolong it indefinitly, since it encourages the persistence of the dualist state by virtue of the inner equilibrium which it implies. It is as if, in the symbolism of alchemy, the twin currents -- ascending and descending -- of solution and coagulation were kept in perpetual rotation. But this is in fact not

---

[55] Jung, Archetypes, p. 289.

> the case: the positive forces triumph in the end -- they transmute matter (that is the passive, negative or inferior principle), redeem it and bear it upwards.[56]

The words "solution and coagulation" suggest the chromatic and diatonic forms, and I have made use of this parallel in my discussion of the early poems in Chapter I following. Cirlot's comments on form are relevant here: "Whereas Primitive Man saw forms and phenomena as essentially fluid [chromatic] more advanced civilizations have given pride of place to the static aspect of forms and the purely geometric outlines and shapes [diatonic]".[57] Hopkins was aware of this development: "As soon as composition becomes formal and studied", he wrote, "that is as soon as it enters the bounds of Art, it is curious to see how it falls into parallelisms."[58] By parallelisms, as he makes clear, he means the abrupt, or diatonic forms. Hopkins, however, refused to be confined within the bounds of traditional prosody. Both forms appear in his work, infusing it with the intensity of the clash of opposites. The resulting energy makes his poetry always fresh and exciting. It is dramatic in the grand tradition, uttering in arresting symbols the heroic struggle of man seeking to free himself from the material limitations of his earthly existence, and achieve his goal of total self-realization.

---

[56] R. Bertrand, La Tradition secrete (Paris, 1943) quoted by Cirlot, p. 36.

[57] Cirlot, p. xxxiii.

[58] Journal, p. 113.

The "third term" referred to by Bertrand in the passage quoted above, with its potential for creating an "inner equilibrium" would appear to be the "mystic Centre" itself, the god within. René Guenon writes: "In all symbols expressive of the mystic Centre, the intention is to reveal to Man the meaning of the primordial 'paradisal state' and to teach him to identify himself with the supreme principles of the universe."[59]

---

[59] René Guenon, Aperçu sur l'initiation (Paris), quoted by Cirlot, p. 39, without further reference; date of publication not given.

CHAPTER I

THE PROLOGUE TO ACTION

Taken as a whole, the four early poems to be examined in this chapter shadow forth in embryonic form the main action of the "Search". "Il Mystico" (No. 77) paints a "dream of Paradise on earth";[1] "Winter with the Gulf Stream" (No. 3) and "The Alchemist in the City" (No. 15) project the poet's frustrated efforts to realize the dream on the real earth; "Nondum" (No.23) suggests the way in which the chasm between the eternal and the temporal, the dream and the reality, may be bridged. All four poems were written between 1862 and 1865, during Hopkins' undergraduate years at Oxford.

Cast appropriately in the form of a "dream-vision", "Il Mystico" opens on a stern Miltonic note:

> Hence sensual gross desires,
> Right offspring of your grimy mother Earth!
> My spirit hath a birth
> Alien from yours as heaven from Nadir-fires
> (1-4)

The idea that "the soul is a stranger on earth, that it has descended from the spaceless and timeless universe, or that it has 'fallen' on account of sin into matter" probably originated with Plato.[2] Although his theme is not remarkable, the way in which Hopkins illustrates it is both intricate and highly individual. He manipulates an extremely sensuous surface play of sound and colour scales to reveal the innate relationship of spirit on three levels -- divine,

---

[1] Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (London, 1963), p. 298.

[2] Cirlot, p. xxvi. (referring to the structure of Paradise Lost)

human and earthly.

The dualism of spirit and flesh is complicated by the poet's own dualism. Thus the mystic persona desires the accession of spiritual power either like Galahad's or like Ezekiel's. The distinction is that between knowing through imitation (echo), and knowing through intuition (reflection): Galahad is like God, Ezekiel sees God in nature. The two ways are expressed diatonically and chromatically, respectively; Galahad represents the Ideal Form, the archetype, the One, and Ezekiel's vision the multi-faceted reflections of that form in the dynamic, chromatic flux of nature -- the One as displayed in the Many. The religious concept of "imitation" parallels that of symbology: "As the essence of all phenomena is, in the last resort, a vibrant rhythm, the intimate nature of phenomena is directly perceptible by polyrhythmic human consciousness. For this reason, imitating is knowing. The echo is the paradigmatic form of imitation".[3] In this mode of knowing, Platonism, Christianity and symbology coincide. The concept that spiritual insight emanates from the reflection of spirit in nature reverses the Platonic idea of the temporal world as a shadow of the eternal. Symbolism recognizes that "every created object is, as it were, a reflection of the divine perfection, a natural and perceptible sign of a supernatural truth".[4]

---

[3] Cirlot, p. xviii.
[4] Cirlot, p. xxx.

Similarly for the alchemists "the world was an image and symbol of God".[5] They conjectured that "just as the mind revealed its nature in the light of the divine revelation, so nature herself must possess a 'certain luminosity' which could become a source of enlightenment".[6]

Hopkins was conscious of the connection between both echo and reflection, and individuality, according to the note he made on his use of the word Sake, which occurs in the sonnet "Henry Purcell" (No. 45). "I mean by it", he wrote

> the being a thing has outside itself, as a voice by its echo, a face by its reflection... and also that in the thing by virtue of which especially it has this being abroad, and that is something distinctive, marked, specifically or individually speaking, as for a voice and echo clearness; for a reflected image light, brightness.[7]

Scotus, whose ideas influenced Hopkins strongly, held that "'individuality' or haecceitas (thisness) is the 'final perfection' of any creature".[8] Thus it seems reasonable to assume that for Hopkins echo and reflection were emanations of the essential spirit within. The poet symbolized these ideas in "Ad Mysticon" by the complementary chromatic scales of sound and colour issuing from a lark and a rainbow. The lark experiences "that close-folded peace that glad / The seraph brows of Galahad" (41-42) as it sinks to its nest

---

[5]C.G. Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis (New York, 1963), p. 209, n.225.
[6]Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis, p. 209.
[7]Poems, Notes, p. 274.
[8]Gardner, Poems, Introduction, p. xxi.

with folded wings from its ecstatic singing in the sky. The rainbow elicits "Jewell'd harmonies / That meet in mid-air" (138-139) from the rain-drenched earth, in a natural parallel to Ezekiel's vision:

> To whom the common earth and air
> Were limn'd about with radiance rare
> Most like those hues that in the prism
> Melt as from a heavenly chrism
> (59-62)

Just as rain is essential to the rainbow's appearance, so water, or moisture, is essential to spiritual insight (this fact is emphasized by the imaging of the lark's song in the metaphor of a gushing cataract). Ezekiel's "ken through amber of dark eyes / Went forth to compass mysteries" (51-52). Amber had the figurative meaning of tears up to the end of the sixteenth century,[9] and this reading is reinforced by lines 99-100: "Where liquid heaven sapphire-pale / Does into amber splendours fail". Moisture appears throughout the poem in a chromatic flow which mingles with the scales of sound and colour. The angelic vision is evoked to appear "With heavenly cithern from high choir, / Tresses dipp'd in rainbow fire, / An olive-branch whence righly reek / Earthless dews on ancles sleek" (13-16). The radiant spirit which Ezekiel sees in nature is "Most like those hues that in the prism / Melt as from a heavenly chrism" (61-62). Chrism has two meanings: (1) "Oil mingled with balm, consecrated for use as an unguent in the administration of certain sacraments",

---

[9] Oxford English Dictionary.

and (2) "a sacramental anointing".[10] The angelic vision embodies both ideas: (1) it sheds "Earthless dews" from an upheld olive branch, symbolic of the "close-folded peace that clad / The seraph brows of Galahad" (41-42), and (2) it is "balm to aching soul" (11), an anointing which must prepare the soul for vision. Thus, in the poem, moisture is both an essential condition of spiritual insight, and the lens through which that insight appears.

Luminosity, both in subject and object, then, depends on the presence of moisture. And, in addition, it requires the further two conditions of height and solitary contemplation. The angel is evoked to appear when "Silence holds breath upon her throne, / And the waked stars are all alone" (33-34)

> ... because then most thinly lies
> The veil that covers mysteries;
> And soul is subtle and flesh weak
> And pride is nerveless and hearts meek.
> (35-38)

At such a time "hard men feel a softening touch" (30), and their souls become "subtle" -- that is "Of thin consistency, tenuous; not dense, rarefied; hence penetrating, pervasive"[11] Just as tears have their natural counterpart in rain, the "rarefied" human spirit finds its counterpart in the lark, whose song does not begin

> Till the lifted clouds were nigh,
> In breezy belts of upper air

---

[10] Oxford English Dictionary.
[11] Oxford English Dictionary.

> Melting into aether rare;
> And when the silent heights were won,
> And all in lone air stood the sun,
> (72-76)

"Aether" is the Greek aither (the upper air, clear sky); the word is "related to aithein, meaning to burn brightly".[12] Fire purifies; but the definition of ether, according to the Newtonian physics of Hopkins' day, yields an exact scientific analogy to the spiritual process -- an analogy typical of the poet's essentially symbolic apprehension of reality. Ether, according to The Oxford English Dictionary (which still, it seems, has to take cognizance of Einstein's theories) is "an elastic and subtle substance believed to permeate all space; it is the medium through which waves of light are propagated. Sometimes called the luminiferous ether".[13] If one allows the usual poetic ambiguity, so that "aether" is also the chemical ether, the aptness of the analogy develops further: ether is a powerful solvent of fats, and thus an agent in banishing the "sensual gross desires" of the poem's opening lines; "gross" here is read in its meaning of "fat".

The "softening touch", then, permits the interchange of "subtle" spirits -- resulting in the illumination of the human by the divine. Hopkins follows an identical analogical method with regard to the relationship between tears and spiritual insight. Alan Heuser notes that the poet was well-acquainted with Greek theories of perception, and adds:

---

[12]Partridge, p. 188.
[13]Oxford English Dictionary.

> In Greek thought generally, sensation was threefold -- in the sensed object, an emission of sense qualities ... in the sensory passage a medium to carry the sensibles; in the sensing subject a receiving organ of potential activity. Organs of sense could not come in contact with objects except through media: for Aristotle and his precursors, sight was due to water in the eye ...[14]

From personal experience Hopkins knew the mysterious clarification effected by tears, following upon the "softening touch" of powerful feeling:

> One day in the Long Retreat ... they were reading in the refectory Sister Emmerich's account of the Agony in the Garden and I suddenly began to cry and sob and could not stop. I put it down for this reason, that if I had been asked a minute beforehand I should have said that nothing of the sort was going to happen ... I remember much the same thing on Maundy Thursday when the presanctified Host was carried to the sacristy. But neither the weight nor the stress of sorrow, that is to say of the thing which should cause sorrow, by themselves move us or bring the tears as a sharp knife does not cut for being pressed as long as it is pressed without any shaking of the hand but there is always one touch, something striking sideways and unlooked for, which in both cases undoes resistance and pierces, and this may be so delicate that the pathos seems to have gone directly to the body and cleared the understanding in its passage.[15]

The rainbow, the unitive image of "Il Mystico", embodies the entire series of analogies implicit in the poem. Its father is the sun, its mother the rain: "... the rain-born arc glows higher / Westward on his sinking sire" (123-124). The sun, the masculine principle, is associated with the

---

[14]Heuser, p. 14.

[15]Journals and Papers, p. 195.

elements of fire and air ("And all in lone air stood the sun", 76); the rain, the feminine principle, with water and earth ("water is, of all the elements, the most clearly transitonal, between fire and air (the ethereal elements) and earth (the solid element). By analogy, water stands as a mediator between life and death"[16]). Light is identified with intellectual wisdom,[17] water with intuitive wisdom.[18] The sun is "the astral body of immutable constancy",[19] representing the eternal order, water "symbolizes terrestrial and natural life, never metaphysical life",[20] and thus belongs to the temporal order of reality.

The rainbow in "Il Mystico", then, connotes a great deal more than the conventional bridge between heaven and earth; more even than Kepler's mystical application "by which God the One was Light", represented in creation as "an unfolding sequence of sevenfold colour".[21] The poem does not conclude -- it tails off in a line of dots, as though language had been pressed to its uttermost perimiters, and simply

---

[16]Gaston Bachelard, L'Eau et les Rêves (Paris,1942), quoted by Cirlot, p. 346.
[17]Ely Star, Les Mystères de l'Etre (Paris,1962), Cirlot, p. 179.
[18] Harold Bayley, The Lost Language of Symbolism (London,1912), Cirlot, p. 345.
[19]Oswald Wirth, Le Tarot des imagiers du Moyen Age (Paris,1927), Cirlot, p. 305.
[20]G.C. Evola, La Tradizione Ermetica (Bari,1931), Cirlot, p. 347.
[21]Marjorie Hope Nicolson, Newton Demands the Muse (Princeton,1946), p. 65, n. 25.

faded out:

> Then while the rain-born arc glows higher
> Westward on his sinking sire;
> While the upgazing country seems
> Touch'd from heaven in sweet dreams;
> While a subtle spirit and rare
> Breathes in the mysterious air:
> While sheeny tears and sunlit mirth
> Mix o'er the not unmoved earth, --
> Then would I fling me up to sip
> Sweetness from the hour, and dip
> Deeply in the arched lustres,
> And look abroad on sunny clusters
> Of wringing tree-tops, chalky lanes,
> Wheatfields tumbled with the rains,
> Streaks of shadow, thistled leas,
> Whence spring the jewell'd harmonies
> That meet in mid-air; and be so
> Melted in the dizzy bow
> That I may drink that ecstacy
> Which to pure souls alone may be ....
>
> (My italics) (123-142)

I have italicized those words and phrases which suggest, once more, the interpenetration of spirit, eternal, "natural" and human, and the agents which effect the exchange. The observer's ecstatic response to colour is two-fold: he sees an earth irradiated by spirit (reflection), then he longs to become the rainbow (echo). This latter idea is reinforced by a comparison of the lark's "throbbing breast" (92) and the "dizzy bow" (140), which appear as rhythmic parallels. Colour as the "objective correlative" of feeling, and colour as a visual rhythm,[22] are almost overwhelmingly obvious in this passage -- to an extent which vitiates the feeling.

Even from a purely aesthetic point of view, "Il Mystico"

---

[22]See my page xx, above.

remains an unsatisfactory poem, due to an excess of sensuous harmony. Northrop Frye writes:

> Colour is to painting what harmony is to music; an inference from the outline. And just as thinking of music as "harmonious" destroys its contrapuntal virility at once, so we can look at a camouflaged blend of colours only with a baffled stare. Perception in depth, the first effort of imaginative energy, becomes impossible, and just as harmonious music is sensuous, so a painter who is a great "colorist" demands, or rather coaxes, a nostalgic or languid response.[23]

However, "Il Mystico" only purports to portray a dream. Hopkins was fully aware that "action lies in time".[24] From the evidence offered by the three early poems about to be examined, it appears that he was unable to discover what he was seeking, and that he found material reality frustrating.

"Winter with the Gulf Stream" (No. 3) distinguishes, like the dreamer in "Il Mystico", between "grimy" earth ("mounded mire", 1), and the colourful heavens -- in this case a sunset sky. Earth is imaged as a frozen chaos, in the grip of a moribund winter. The neutral colour of brown (bare boughs, dead leaves and "mire") is parallelled by the low sound of the "sighing wind" (6). The moisture present is unhealthy:

> The clogged brook runs with choking sound
>
> Kneading the mounded mire that stops
> His channel under clammy coats
> Of foliage fallen in the coose.
>
> (9-12)

Thus colour, sound and moisture work together as a frustrating force:

---

[23] Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry (Boston, 1962), pp. 101-102.

[24] "The Origin of our Moral Ideas", Journals and Papers, p. 80.

The hoarse leaves crawl on hissing ground
Because the sighing wind is low.

But if the rain-blasts be unbound
And from dank feathers wring the droos
The clogged brook runs with choking sound

Kneading the mounded mire that stops
His channel under clammy coats
Of foliage fallen in the copse.

(My italics) (5-12)

Fallen nature is represented as de-spiritualized, and man's spirit suffers a corresponding abasement of élan vital: "A simple passage of weak notes / Is all the winter bird dare try" (13-14).

In search of spiritual enlightenment, the poet shifts his gaze to the sky, where

The bugle moon by daylight floats

So glassy white about the sky,
So like a berg of hyaline,
And pencilled blue so daintily,

I never saw her so divine.

(15-19)

The crescent moon is a symbolic image of paradise in mediaeval emblems of the Western world,[25] but in this instance it is only "like a berg of hyaline" (my italics), since it fails to reflect the light of the sun. The crescent moon also symbolizes the world of changing forms and the passive feminine principle,[26] and may therefore represent the poet's psyche, in a condition of nerveless drifting.

---

[25]Bayley, The Lost Language of Symbolism, Cirlot, p.63.
[26]Ibid.

The following line begins with the word "But", suggesting that the desired inspiration may be found elsewhere in the sky:

> But through black branches, rarely drest
> In scarves of silky shot and shine,
>
> The webbed and the watery west
> Where yonder crimson fireball sits
> Looks laid for feasting and for rest.
>
> (20-24)

This skyscape appears promising at first glance -- the "scarves of silky shot and shine" suggest the rainbow, and the west is "watery", infused with the medium of vision. However, the poet is caught in time, his view framed by the bare boughs of a wintry earth, "drest", interestingly enough, in a primitive symbol of time ("a sheen as of shot silk"[27]), while the weak terminal of "watery" leaves the emphasis on the dubiety of "webbed" (unclear). The sunset sky only "Looks laid for feasting and for rest". In addition, a basic psychic contradiction is revealed by the association of the "crimson fireball" with "rest", since red is the colour of passion, the life-giving principle, and of activity per se.[28] On the conscious level, the poet's will seeks to identify with the sun, ignoring the aimlessly drifting moon (the unconscious self). However, the enervate unconscious exerts the decisive influence, since the poet longs for "feasting and for rest",

---

[27]The Zuni Indians of Western America symbolize time as a "sheen as of shot silk", Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, Cirlot p. 51.

[28]Wirth, Le Tarot des imagiers du Moyen Age, Cirlot p. 52.

rather than for an infusion of spiritual energy.

The celestial landscape, then, is merely a projection of the fashionable nineteenth century nostalgia for a lost Eden. It is painted in an effete colour scheme of violet and gold, imitative of the Pre-Raphaelites. The metre echoes the world-weary images:

> I see long reefs of violets
> In beryl-covered fens so dim,
> A gold-water Pactolus frets
> Its brindled wharves and yellow brim,
> (25-28)

Dim images of the islands of the blest, heaven's crystal river (at one time beryl meant crystal or glass[29]), and healing balm ("Pactolus" refers to the miraculous stream which cured Midas) float moon-like through these lines. The scene is bathed in the yellow light of eternity, as though preserved forever in a golden fluid (Newton designated yellow as "the most luminous of the Prismatick Colours").[30] However, the display disintegrates with appalling swiftness:

> The waxen colours weep and run
> And slendering to his burning rim
>
> Into the flat blue mist the sun
> Drops out and all our day is done.
> (29-32)

Meaning "drops out" with the colour, leaving the sky a void (blue, in this case, is "darkness made visible"[31]). The

---

[29] Oxford English Dictionary.
[30] Nicolson, p. 45.
[31] Bachelard, L'air et les Songes (Paris, 1943), Cirlot, p. 51.

curvature of infinity is proven to be a mirage, like the apparently eternalized colours ("waxen" -- solid, luminous). "Waxen" assumes connotations of death. Diction, rhythm and image combine to project the flatness of disappointment. The rainbow promise and the heavenly landscape alike have been merely a subjective "appearance". There is nothing, now, to choose between the frustrations of earth and those of heaven (body and spirit).

The physicist Werner Heisenberg observes that man, in his examination of nature and the universe, invariably finds, not objective qualities, but himself.[32] Hopkins had not yet found his purpose in life, and sought to relieve his sense of frustration through a philosophic aestheticism. His vision of celestial peace did not hold; its colours ran, probably because, as Ruskin pointed out, "the quality of Repose in art demands for its expression the implied capability of its opposite, Energy".[33] Jung notes that the colour blue "often denotes the function of thinking",[34] while red, as has been recorded, stands for passion and activity ("Into the flat blue mist the sun / Drops out and all our day is done"). "Winter with the Gulf Stream", then, images the enervating effects of intellectualizing the emotions.

---

[32]C.G. Jung, Man and His Symbols (London, 1964), p. 307.

[33]John Ruskin, Modern Painters (London, 1897), II, 72.

[34]Jung, Man and His Symbols, p. 230.

"The Alchemist in the City" (No. 15), a companion poem, pictures these effects at a further stage of development. Frustration has caused despair:

> But now before the pot can glow
> With not to be discover'd gold,
> At length the bellows shall not blow,
> The furnace shall at last be cold.
> (13-16)

The alchemist's lifelong quest for the secret of transmuting lead into gold (spiritualizing matter) has alienated him from the world. He now rejects activity of any kind, desiring only to contemplate the sunset, until the end in "silence and a gulf of air" (40) -- the nothingness of the void:

> There on a long and squared height
> After the sunset I would lie,
> And pierce the yellow waxen light
> With free long looking, ere I die.
> (41-44)

Ruskin, with whom Hopkins shared many intuitive responses to nature, found that a luminous distance gives "the feelings a species of escape from all the finite objects about them".[35] The alchemist represents the human spirit reduced to the single faculty of contemplation. The "waxen light" is opaque and static, not susceptible to being pierced. The "free long looking" is thus the opposite of free: subject and object are united in the rigidity of rigor mortis, the silence of death.

Franz Marc asks: "Have we not learned from a thousand years of experience that things cease to speak the more we

---

[35] Ruskin, Modern Painters, II, 45.

hold up to them the visual mirror of their appearance? Appearance is eternally flat".[36] Ruskin warned against the dangers to which a withdrawal from the "populous foreground of things" exposed the artist:

> The imagination must be fed constantly by external nature. ... many painters of powerful mind have been lost to the world by their suffering the restless writhing of their imagination in its cage to take the place of its healthy and exulting activity in the fields of nature. The most imaginative men always study the hardest, and are the most thirsty for new knowledge. Fancy plays like a squirrel in its circular prison, and is happy: but Imagination is a pilgrim on the earth -- and her home is in heaven.[37]

The One may be discovered only through the Many, the timeless through the temporal, spiritual insight through the earthly element of moisture. The despairing alchemist seeks an image of himself in nature -- one of static, enervate aridity:

> Then sweetest seems the houseless shore,
> Then free and kind the wilderness.
>
> Or ancient mounds that cover bones,
> Or rocks where rockdoves do repair
> And trees of terebinth and stones
> And silence and a gulf of air.
>
> (35-40)

Contemplation has become an end in itself, a dead end, a living death.

The poem "Nondum" (No. 23) depicts the ultimate fate of one who rejects earthly reality. Light itself, the long-sought illumination, reveals only the horror of emptiness: "Vacant creation's lamps appal" (12). The poet's efforts to

---

[36]Jung, Man and His Symbols, p. 262.

[37]Ruskin, Modern Painters, IV, 235.

"reveal unearthly life dwelling behind everything, to break the mirror of life so that we may look being in the face"[38] (the goal of art, according to Franz Marc), have failed. Paradoxically, the contemplation of light has revealed the blackness of a void "signifying nothing":

> And still th'abysses infinite
> Surround the peak from which we gaze.
> Deep calls to deep, and blackest night
> Giddies the soul with blinding daze
> That dares to cast its searching sight
> On being's dread and vacant maze.
>
> (25-30)

The searching soul has found "out there" only the image of itself ("Deep calls to deep") -- an answering darkness.

In terms of natural colour, meaning "drops out" when the "crimson fireball" disappears ("Into the flat blue mist the sun / Drops out and all our day is done"(No. 3,31-32). Since the colour red symbolizes both passion and activity,[39] its reappearance (by implication) in "Nondum" signifies a return to the natural world:

> And Thou art silent, whilst Thy world
> Contends about its many creeds
> And hosts confront with flags unfurled
> And <u>zeal is flushed</u> and <u>pity bleeds</u>
>
> (My italics) (31-34)

The poet's "searching sight" is redirected, specifically, upon suffering humanity. Noteworthy is the change from the first person singular in "Winter with the Gulf Stream" and "The Alchemist in the City" to the communal "we" of the first five

---

[38] Jung, <u>Man and His Symbols</u>, p. 262.
[39] see my note 25, p. ~~23~~ 15 above.

stanzas of "Nondum".

In the "Great Work" of alchemy (a symbol of spiritual evolution), the ascending scale of colours is black - white - red: "Black pertains to the state of fermentation, putrefaction, occultation and penitence; white to that of illumination, ascension, revelation and pardon; red to that of suffering, sublimation and love".[40]

The white-black antithesis represents the alternating dualism of nature (day/night, life/death, appearance/disappearance, and so on), symbolized inter alia by the double circle of Yang-Yin.[41] Cirlot writes:

> But mankind has groped towards a way out of the terrible circle...and this way is that indicated by the axis white / red or red /gold. ...We would also emphasize that in symbolism of mediaeval Christian art, black stands for penitence, white for purity and red for charity and love. Through love, then, man can find the way out of the closed, double circle.[42]

Thus in "Nondum" the "softening touch" of tears is added to the chromatic flow of human compassion: "And zeal is flushed and pity bleeds / And truth is heard, with tears impearled, / A moaning voice among the reeds" (34-36). The "yellow waxen light" (No. 15,43) appears in "Nondum" as swirling blackness: ("...blackest night / Giddies the soul with blinding daze") - all the colours, contained in light (the One), when they "weep and run" (No. 3,29) all together produce black (the

---

[40]Jung, "Psychology of the Transference", The Practice of Psychotherapy (London, 1954), Cirlot, p. 53.
[41]M. Senard, Le Zodiaque (Lausanne, 1948), Cirlot, p. 56.
[42]Cirlot, pp. 56-57.

type of chaos).

"Nondum" concludes with an implicit reference to Christ as the "Dayspring" -- the first colour of the sunrise is red: "Then, to behold Thee as Thou art, / I'll wait till morn eternal breaks" (53-54).

The colour progression traced through the poems discussed above indicates that Hopkins' longing for "that sense beyond" (No.23,64) remained unsatisfied by the aesthetic of the Pre-Raphaelites, with its reliance upon physical nature. The dreamer in "Il Mystico", bathing ecstatically in the rainbow's colours, and the contemplatives of "Winter with the Gulf Stream" and "The Alchemist in the City" all, no doubt, formed aspects of the poet's nature. He had, however, more in common with Ruskin, who saw "reciprocal action between intensity of moral feelings and the power of imagination", believing that the latter "may always be tested by accompanying tenderness of emotion."[43] The second part of "Nondum" indicates that Hopkins' "tenderness of emotion" for the human condition led him out of the impasse in which he found himself, trapped within the white/black "terrible circle". In other words, he found the answer to his search in his own "throbbing breast" (No. 77,92), rather than in the"yellow waxen light" (No. 15,43). Psychic energy, damned-up and frustrated during these early years, found its true channel when Hopkins finally chose his life's vocation. Cirlot quotes

[43] Ruskin, Modern Painters, IV, 152.

Jung's conviction that "The spiritual appears in the psyche as an instinct, indeed as a real passion ... It is not derived from any other instinct, but is a principle sui generis, that is, a specific and necessary form of instinctual power."[44]

Such "instinctual power" demands action, and as Hopkins himself realized "action lies in time".[45] When one recalls that "colour and movement are expressions respectively of feeling and of activity",[46] it is clear, from the evidence drawn from the poems examined above, that Hopkins projected the activities of his psyche in the symbolism of colour. His "prologue to action" consisted of a period in which he paused to consider and to probe into the various ways available to him, as an artist and as a man, by which he might assuage his thirst for "that sense beyond". Thus he appears in the archetypal figure of the Questor, whose saga begins (in terms of the poetic evidence) in medias res with the "heroic choice" dramatized in "The Wreck of the Deutschland" (No. 28).

---

[44]Cirlot, p. xxvi.
[45]See my note 24, p. 13, above.
[46]See my note 46, p. xx, above.

CHAPTER II

THE HEROIC CHOICE

Hopkins' Election of Christ was the "heroic choice" which inaugurated the "epic action" of his poetry, as a study of its colour symbolism reveals. Christ's life exemplifies "an emotional pattern of self-assertion and abasement [such] as corresponds to the form of tragedy [and] is the deepest and most universal pattern that the hero-image can reflect".[1] It is easy to understand how Hopkins found the "objective correlative" of his deepest feelings in Christ, since he himself was constantly engaged in a conflict between "passionate self-assertion and religious loyalty".[2]

It has been noted how, at the close of the poem "Nondum", the poet turned from his frustrated probing of "being's dread and vacant maze" to wait in child-like faith for evidence of the "Dayspring" -- a turn, significantly, from west to east (death to life). In the sonnet which begins: "Let me be to Thee as the circling bird" (No. 19), written in 1865, he was able to declare: "I have found the dominant of my range and state -- /Love, O my God, to call Thee Love and Love" (13-14). Three years later he entered the Society of Jesus to begin his training for the priesthood, and a poetic silence fell, which lasted seven years.

"The Wreck of the Deutschland" (No. 28) broke this silence, like the "rushing mighty wind" of the Pentecostal Spirit.[3] Feeling had burst its bonds at last, and colour and movement ("the two balance-pans of the psyche"[4]) sweep through the poem, as the Questor launches forth on his Quest in the "awful daring of a

---

[1]Bodkin, p. 244.
[2]Bodkin, p. 244.
[3]Acts of the Apostles, 2:2.
[4]Rorschach, quoted by Cirlot, p. 221.

moment's surrender / Which an age of prudence can never retract".[5]

In terms of colour "The Wreck of the Deutschland" is built upon the sacred triad, scarlet/blue/purple, the colours of the "vails" for the holy tabernacle described in Exodus. Ruskin refers to this "sacred chord of colour" in Modern Painters.[6] It was popular with the Pre-Raphaelites because of the connection with the medieval illuminators of the Scriptures. In his early days, Hopkins shared this interest: a scrap of poetry inscribed in the Early Diaries (1864) reads: "Think of an opening page illuminèd / With the ready azure and high carmine".[7] However, his intuitive response to the key colours (the emotional as against the intellectual) is more important for an understanding of his unique combination of intuitive, aesthetic and religious sensibility. In a letter to his friend Richard Dixon he wrote these revealing words: "crimson and pure blues seemed to me spiritual and heavenly sights fit to draw tears once."[8] It is interesting to note that Orlando, in Virginia Woolf's novel of that name, experienced a similar reaction, in reverse, when, in a moment of emotional ecstacy, the thoughts rose in her mind: "it's something useless, sudden, violent; something that costs a life, red, blue, purple; a spirit; a splash; ... something rash, ridiculous".[9]

These feelings of risk and danger, or rather the exhilar-

---

[5]T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land", Collected Poems (London, 1963), p. 78.

[6]Modern Painters, IV, 64.

[7]Journals and Papers, p. 35.

[8]Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard W. Dixon, ed. C.C. Abbott (London, 1935), p. 39.

[9]Virginia Woolf, Orlando (New York, 1960), p. 168.

ation which they arouse in the human spirit, give "The Deutschland" a breathless quality -- appropriate to the Mystery of the Incarnation. Colour plays a major part in ordering the poem, so that its intricate analogies remain consistent, while, at the same time, allowing emotion full play. The roughest paradigm would show Christ as red, the Virgin Mary as blue, and the Incarnation as purple (the combination of the first two colours).

Christ is the hero of "The Deutschland": the heroic colour is red, the colour of passion and activity, and also of blood and wounds.[10] He is described as the "Lovescape crucified" (23, 4), the "dayspring ...and a crimson-cresseted east" (35,5). Ruskin called purity in art "the type of energy".[11] Like Hopkins, he found intense spiritual meaning in colour, experiencing a "right splendour of colour [as] purifying and cleansing like fire".[12] In alchemy, red is related to fire and purification,[13] while Ruskin, again, believed that "matter may be spiritualized by infusing its inertia with energy."[14] Hopkins obviously sensed these analogies: the eternal spirit purified matter with a cleansing fire -- the "Stroke and a stress that stars and storms deliver" (6,5) -- and then infused it with energy, in the Incarnation, to "flush the man, the being with it sour or sweet, / grim, in a flash, full!" (8,5-6).

---

[10]Cirlot, p. 51.
[11]Modern Painters, II, 82.
[12]Modern Painters, II, 133.
[13]Marius Schneider, La danza de espadas y la tarantela (Barcelona, 1948), Cirlot, p. 53.
[14]Modern Painters, II, 86.

As Hopkins recognized, "The activities of the spirit are conveyed in those of the body;"[15] thus, in rejecting the earth, in what I shall term the "pre-Election" poems, his spirit was denied expression. Its frustration projected itself in a colour scheme bound in stasis between the antitheses of black (the clay-brown earth) and white (the yellow sunset light). Blue, as intellectual aspiration toward the infinite, and red, as human, instinctual longing for "that sense beyond", cancelled each other out, and thus were equally enervate. Interestingly enough, present-day aesthetics bases its colour system on similar antitheses of positive and negative: yellow (white) versus blue (black) with red as the indirect transition.[16]

Thus colour unites, through its "common rhythm", aesthetics, instinctive feeling, and religious symbolism. His Election of Christ delivered Hopkins from the closed circle of "being's dread and vacant maze" -- a parallel, as has been noted, to the way out of the terrible Yang-Yin double circle.[17] This way is symbolized by the colour red,[18] which is also the colour representing Christian charity and love.[19]

Christ's two-fold nature is symbolized by red as the life-blood (energy and passion), and red as the sacrificial stream shed at the Crucifixion (sacrifice and compassion). Thus, his

---

[15]"The Probable Future of Metaphysics", Journals and Papers, p. 118.

[16]According to the view of Kandinsky and Herbin, Cirlot, p. 52.

[17]See my note 42, p. 21, above.

[18]See my note 42, p. 21, above.

[19]See my note 42, p. 21, above.

identification with his hero reconciled for Hopkins the masculine will and the feminine sensibility which represented the intellectual and the emotional aspects of his being.

The second colour of the "sacred triad" is blue. It permeates "The Deutschland" with the atmosphere of "sighs soaring" between the heights and the depths, the awesome intermingling of spirits divine and human. Traditionally the colour of the Virgin's cloak, it is connected with the heroic nun, since she is presented as almost another Mary. According to the most generally accepted symbology, it stands for "religious feeling, devotion and innocence".[20] A "gulf of air" appears to the eye as blue; hence one may visualize human sighs of aspiration (prayers) as blue, and on the same principle, the answering inspiration of the divine spirit.

The nun, in her extremity, has only "one fetch in her" -- a call to her master: "'O Christ, Christ, come quickly'" (24, 6). A "fetch" may mean both a contrivance and an indrawn breath.[21] The nun's contrivance is to breathe in, as it were, the spirit of her Saviour. Thus the lines which follow in the next stanza: "Breathe, arch and original Breath" and "Breathe, body of lovely Death" (25, 2 and 4) may be understood as the answering Pneumae of God the Father and God the Son. This inspiration results in revelation:

---

[20]Cirlot, p. 52.
[21]Oxford English Dictionary.

For how to the heart's cheering
The down-dugged ground-hugged grey
Hovers off, the jay-blue heavens appearing
Of pied and peeled May!
Blue-beating and hoary-glow height; or night, still higher,
With belled fire and the moth-soft Milky Way,
What by your measure is the heaven of desire,
The treasure never eyesight got, nor was ever guessed what for
the hearing?

(26)

The revelation appears as a process, in a colour progression from grey to gold, symbolic of the transmutation of lead into gold, which, in alchemy, represents the spiritualzation of matter. Unspiritualized matter is grey, the psychic condition of despair ("Hope had grown grey hairs", 15,1), in which all on board "The Deutschland", except for the "tall nun" are smothering. The wind of the Pneuma clears away this obscuring fog, allowing the "colours" to appear ("pied"). The "colours" appear at the penultimate stage of the alchemical "Work", immediately before the lapis (the gold) is obtained.[22]

The vision itself is a manifestation of the triune Godhead. The Virgin is seen in the "jay-blue heavens.../ Of pied and peeled May" (3-4): Her feast takes place in the month of May, and thus is connected with spring, the shining, as of freshly-peeled Maypoles, of physical rebirth, and joyous spring rites. Living hearts beat: so must living spirits: "Blue-beating and hoary-glow height" (5) images the nun's spirit soaring up into the infinite spirit, and then "still higher", where it

---

22C.G. Jung, Psychology and Alchemy (Princeton, 1968), p. 231.

encounters God in his masculine, purifying, diatonic aspect ("belled fire"), and God in his feminine, nourishing, chromatic aspect ("the moth-soft Milky Way"[23]). The breathless sensation of vast height projected by these lines (5 and 6) is in direct contrast with the flatness of the horizontal line drawn by the "flat blue mist" in "Winter with the Gulf Stream". The mysterious vault of night has a transparent glow, as though it held millions of tiny particles of gold dust in suspension. Eyesight cannot pierce it, because it is infinite. Its glowing, beating, breathing life is the treasure, whereas the "yellow waxen light" of "The Alchemist in the City" is a chimera which makes of life a living death.

Purple, the third colour of the "sacred chord", is a combination of red and blue. It symbolizes the "mystery of the Passion",[24] which "dates from day / Of his going in Galilee; / Warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey" (7, 1-3) -- that is from the Incarnation, when Christ (red) entered into Mary (blue). Purple symbolizes both royalty and power, and suffering and sublimation,[25] the heroic heights and the heroic depths. The poet recognizes his hero in the "dappled-with-damson west" (5, 5) (plum purple), "mystery must be instressed, stressed" (5, 7). In the heights, Christ is "Mid-numbered he in three

---

[23]The fine dust of the Milky Way as world-nourishing milk: Mertens Stienon, L'Occultisme du Zodiac (Paris, 1939), Cirlot, p. 23.

[24]Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis, p. 289.

[25]Wirth, Cirlot p. 52.

of the thunder-throne" (34, 5), with its implied image of massed, purple thunder-clouds; yet, "Not a dooms-day dazzle in his coming nor dark as he came: / Kind, but royally reclaiming his own" (34, 6-7). In the depths, his Passion, the fruit of the Virgin 's womb, is a "lush-kept, plush-capped sloe" (plum purple), which "Will, mouthed to flesh-burst, / Gush! -- flush the man ... / Brim, in a flash, full!" (8, 3-6).

The celebration of the sense of touch is psychologically significant. The seer in "Il Mystico" prayed: "Touch me and purify, and show / Some of the secrets I would know" (39-40), but the sense of touch is notably absent from both "Winter with the Gulf Stream" and "The Alchemist in the City". It is the most immediately corporeal of the five senses, and thus its appearance in "The Deutschland" emphasizes the paradox of Christ's nature. "That sense beyond", for which the poet prayed in "Nondum" is granted, ironically, through the despised clay of a human body.

The interaction of stress and instress is experienced as a physical process. The afflictive finger of God touches nun and poet, who respond, respectively, with sighs and tears. When one touches an object, one may be said to "feel" it: thus when the sense of touch makes its appearance in Hopkins' poetry, it is a sign that he is able to express his emotions (absent from "Il Mystico", which dealt only in aesthetics, and frozen or congealed in "Winter with the Gulf Stream" and "The Alchemist in the City").

The colour purple is of key importance in Hopkins' symbolism, because of its unitive function. As noted above, it represents Christ both as God and man, so that by identifying himself with Christ, Hopkins was able to reconcile the masculine and the feminine aspects of his being. However, the schematic rationalization of the meaning which the colour purple held for the poet is inadequate. He responded to it on the deepest psychological level, and used it to carry a weight of various, but related, meanings. For instance, the nun's suffering: "heart-throe" (30, 7) -- red, and understanding (in that she "read the unshapeable shock night / And knew the who and the why", 29, 3-4) -- blue ("birth of a brain", 30, 7), combine to produce the "patience" with which she willingly endured her suffering.[26] And the result of that patience is her sublimation:

> Well, she has thee for the pain, for the
> Patience; but pity of the rest of them!
> Heart, go and bleed at a bitterer vein for the
> Comfortless unconfessed of them --
> (31, 1-4)

The blood that "pity bleeds" is veinous and dark. Man's compassion links him to God, who

> With a mercy that outrides
> The all of water, an ark
> For the listener; for the lingerer with a love glides
> Lower than death and the dark;
> A vein for the visiting of the past-prayer, pent in prison,
> The-last-breath penitent spirits -- the uttermost mark
> Our passion-plungèd giant risen,
> The Christ of the Father compassionate, fetched in the storm of his strides.
> (33)

---

[26] Oxford English Dictionary: Patience as the suffering or enduring (of pain, trouble or evil) with calmness and composure.

Suffering, compassion, patience, sublimation and the "mystery of the Passion" -- All are related through Christ, the "vein" which provides a passage for the reciprocal flow of feeling between God and man. Christ as God "royally" claims his own:

> Five! the finding and sake
> And cipher of suffering Christ.
> Mark, the mark is of man's make
> And the word of it Sacrificed.
> But he scores it in scarlet himself on his own bespoken,
> Before-time-taken, dearest prizèd and priced --
> Stigma, stigma, cinquefoil token
> For lettering of the lamb's fleece, ruddying of the rose-flake.
>
> (22)

A "ruddying" would, obviously, darken the colour of the "rose-flake" -- a "ruddying" worded by "Sacrificed" when the Word became flesh. Eight years later, in a letter to Robert Bridges dated February 3, 1883, Hopkins was still engaged in "wording" this key concept. Speaking of Christ, he wrote:

> ... he could not but see what he was, God, but he would see it as if he did not see it, and be it as if he were not and instead of snatching at once at what all the time was his, or was himself, he emptied or exhausted himself so far as that was possible, of godhead and behaved only as God's slave, as his creature, as man, which also he was, and then being in the guise of man humbled himself to death, the death of the cross. It is this holding of himself back, and not snatching at the truest and highest good, the good that was his right, nay his possession from a past eternity in his other nature, his own being and self, which seems to me the root of all his holiness and the imitation of this the root of all moral good in other men.[27]

The analogy with Hopkins' own life is obvious. He understood

---

[27]Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, ed. C.C. Abbott (London, 1955), p. 175.

Christ's sacrifice in the deepest level of his being, because he, too, spared to seize upon his heavenly heritage of genius, choosing instead the higher holiness of humble service.

In "The Deutschland", the poet is granted this insight through the medium of his responsive tears: his sympathy with the nun forms a stem of stress which unites heart and mind, feeling and thinking (red and blue):

> Ah, touched in your bower of bone,
> Are you! turned for an exquisite smart,
> Have you! make words break from me here all alone,
> Do you! -- mother of being in me, heart,
> O unteachably after evil, but uttering truth,
> Why, tears! is it? tears; such a melting, a madrigal start!
> Never-eldering revel and river of youth,
> What can it be, this glee? the good you have there of your own?
>
> (18)

The afflictive touch has, paradoxically, softened him, so that the tears essential to vision may flow. Tears are water, which may be symbolized by the colour violet.[28] They are an answer to the nun's willing sacrifice, as violet is a paler echo of purple: "heart" (emotion, red) and "truth" (recognition of the religious meaning of the nun's "fetch", blue), unite, to bring forth tears (violet). These tears are spiritually regenerating, as line 7 makes clear, with its evocation of the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb".[29] A heart touched in a "bower of bone" is quite definitely an earthly heart. Thus the tale of the elements

---

[28]Cirlot, p. 51.
[29]Revelation 22:1.

is complete in "The Deutschland" -- yet another sign of unification. Cirlot's observations on the hierarchical progression of the elements bear relevantly upon both visions, the nun's and the poet's:

> Jung stresses the traditional aspects: 'Of the elements, two are active -- fire and air, and two are passive -- earth and water.' Hence the masculine, creative character of the first two, and the feminine, receptive and submissive nature of the second pair. The arrangement of the Elements in hierarchal order of importance or priority has varied from age to age and writer to writer; one of the factors influencing this has been the question of whether or not to admit a 'fifth Element', sometimes called 'ether', sometimes freely designated 'spirit' or quintessence' in the sense of the 'soul of things'. It will be readily understood that the hierarchal progression must proceed from the most spiritual down to the most material, since creation is involution or materialization. Beginning then with the fifth Element at the Origin, identifying it with the power of the demiurge, next comes air (or wind) and fire, next water and lastly earth; or, in other words, deriving from the igniferous or aerial state comes liquid and finally the solid.[30]

The nun's spirit ascends ("blue-beating" evokes an image of wings breasting the sky) to the realm of the luminiferous ether (where fire is "belled" as it swings in the wind of the Pneuma), and partakes of the divine nourishment of the Milky Way. The poet's sympathetic response (love plus understanding) gains for him the tears of vision (water), and the softened heart in which the stress may be instressed (earth).

The concluding line of "The Deutschland" reaffirms Christ's double nature, acclaiming him "Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire" (instinctive feeling) and "our thoughts' chivalry's throng's

---

[30]Cirlot, p. 91. The Jung quotation is from "Psychology of the Transference".

Lord" (intellectual aspiration). Combined at the Incarnation, sublimated by sacrifice at the Crucifixion (divine compassion and human Passion) the red and the blue become purple, the most royal of the colours in the "sacred triad".

CHAPTER III

THE SEARCH FOR THE FATHER

"Nothing is so pregnant and straightforward to the truth as simple yes and is", Hopkins declared, prophetically, in an undergradguate essay on Parmenides.[1] Once he had made his heroic choice ("I did say yes / O at lightning and lashed rod"[2]), his sight was "open'd", so that he was able to perceive the fifth dimension of the spirit in nature,[3] thus becoming, like Ezekiel, one "To whom the common earth and air / Were limn'd about with radiance rare" (No. 77, 59-60).The flat geometry of "appearance" expanded into the three-dimensional solid.

As a result, the phenomenal world appeared to him, as it had to Parmenides as the "brink, limbus, lapping, run-and-mingle / of two principles which meet in the scape of everything -- probably Being, under its modification or siding of particular oneness or Being, and Not-being, under its siding of the Many."[4] Christ was "Being" for Hopkins after his Election -- that is, nature summed up in a "universal man", a world-image of the Word made flesh. The two principles which "meet in the scape of everything", were probably, Hopkins decided, "materially, fire and earth".[5] A feature of "The Wreck of the Deutschland" is the constant distinction between these two principles -- as, for example, in the first four lines of Stanza 10:

With an anvil-ding
And with fire in him forge thy will

---

[1] Journals and Papers, p. 127.
[2] "The Wreck of the Deutschland", 2, 2.
[3] The fourth dimension is time.
[4] Journals and Papers, p. 127.
[5] Journals and papers, p. 127.

Or rather, rather then, stealing as Spring
Through him, melt him but master him still.

Matter, spiritualized, provided the ideal ground on which to analogize Hopkins' aesthetic theory of diatonic and chromatic beauty with his religious theory of stress and instress: fire, a diatonic flash, was the afflictive finger of divine stress; earth, with its moisture-bearing veins (chromatic), received and instressed the divine inscape.

In religious terms, Christ, in his descent from the heights of glory (the luminiferous ether) into the dark fecundity of the womb (earth) forged a channel through which matter became impregnated with spirit (the stem of stress). Since Christ was human, as well as divine, this stem of stress became a vein through which an exchange of divine compassion (Christ's sacrificial agony) and human suffering could take place. Human suffering, when "spiritualized", that is, offered up to God as a willing sacrifice, conforms the creature to Christ. The basis of most cosmogonies is the idea that there can be no creation without sacrifice[6] (Christ created a new relationship between God and man). A frequent correlative is the belief that it is not possible to transform the human soul in any way, except through sacrifice.[7] Stanza 22 of "The Deutschland", quoted above, makes this correspondence of the creature with Christ quite clear: "And the word of it Sacrificed" (4).

---

[6]Cirlot, p. 62.
[7]Cirlot, p. 63.

The importance of "wording" things seems to have been recognized from the earliest times, as Moses' account of the Creation in Genesis bears witness: God presented the animals to Adam "to see what he would call them". Northrop Frye writes:

> A thing's name is its numen, its imaginative reality in the eternal world of the human mind. That is another reason why Jesus is called the Word of God. Reality is intelligibility, and a poet who has put things into words has lifted 'things' from the barren chaos of nature into the created order of thought.[8]

With the "wording" of "Sacrificed" Hopkins was able to break the code of "being's dread and vacant maze". The word united the two principles of fire ("flash") and earth ("flush") -- an apparently afflictive God, and suffering mankind.

Five sonnets written during the extremely productive year which followed upon the composition of "The Deutschland" (1877) bear witness to the poet's release from the "barren chaos of nature". "God's Grandeur" (No. 31), "The Starlight Night" (No. 32), "Hurrahing in Harvest" (No. 38) and "The Windhover" (No. 36) show him seeking, finding and greeting Christ in nature. "Spring" (No. 33) celebrates the ecstatic union of heaven and earth.

The "Pre-Election" poems, as has been noted above, rejected "grimy mother Earth" (No. 77, 2). According to the Platonic theory of numbers, "The ternary is the number pertaining to the idea; the quaternary is the number connected with the realization of the idea."[9] In the terms of Hopkins' poetry, the

---

[8]Frye, p. 114.
[9]Cirlot, p. 256.

ternary is represented by the vision of a triune Godhead in "The Deutschland", and the quaternary by the recognition of the creative spirit in nature. This interpretation agrees with Cirlot's conclusion: "The quaternary ... corresponds to earth, to the material pattern of life; and the number three to moral and spiritual dynamism."[10]

"God's Grandeur" (No. 31) begins:

> The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
> It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
> It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
> Crushed.
>
> (1-4)

It will be remarked that this "shining" combines the two principles of fire and earth: the diatonic "flame out", and the chromatic "ooze of oil". The past participle "Crushed" is related to sacrifice: "waxen colours" (No. 3, 29), crushed, become liquified, and thus transmuted into a heavenly "balm", like that in "Il Mystico", but available to earth. Sacrifice is the necessary prerequisite for the reception of this "oil of gladness", as in the early poem "Easter Communion" (No. 11):

> Breathe Easter now; you serged fellowships,
> You vigil-keepers with low flames decreased,
> God shall o'er-brim the measures you have spent
> With oil of gladness
>
> (7-10)

However, unregenerate man, in his obduracy, is unreceptive to this "softening touch" from heaven. It is he who is responsible for the unregenerate condition of the earth, which remains a bare clay-brown -- the same dull colour as the earth

---

[10]Cirlot, p. 256.

in the "pre-Election" poems:

> Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
> And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
> And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
> Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.
>
> (No. 31, 5-8)

Thus, the octave depicts "appearance" as still imprisoned in the hopeless black/white antithesis: brown (earth) and grey (human despair), versus yellow (oil, the disregarded gift of spiritual insight). However, the creative spirit is always at work, unknown to, and in spite of, man:

> Yet for all this, nature is never spent;
> There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
> And though the last lights off the black West went
> Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs --
> Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
> World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.
>
> (9-14)

The sestet finds a way out of the black/white circle through red, the colour of the sunrise. Curiously, however, the colour green is missing from a poem specifically concerned with the constant regeneration of nature ("the dearest freshness deep down things", 10), through the agency of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, in fact, is symbolized by the colour green in the sphere of Christian psychology.[11] Green predominates in Christian art, also, since it is the bridge between the warm, advancing group of colours, and the cool, retreating group, and thus, symbolically, unites the physical and the spiritual orders of reality.[12] Water, too, is missing from the poem (green is one of the colours which

---

[11] Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis, p. 113.

[12] Eliphas Lévi, Les Mystères de la Kabbales (Paris, 1920), Cirlot, p. 53.

represent water[13]), an equally curious omission, when one recalls the importance of moisture, in Hopkins' poetry, to the mingling of divine and human spirit. The word "brink", in line 12 ("Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs"), brings to mind the "brink, limbus, lapping, run-and-mingle / of two principles ... materially, fire and earth",[14] and the question arises as to how such a mingling can be effected on a brink which is both "bare" (8) and "brown" (12) -- totally lacking in moisture.

An obvious explanation lies in the grey (despair) / green (hope) antithesis: "man's smudge" (7) has blotted out the green, like a grey fog. His destructive activities result from his spiritual condition -- a blindness which is projected in the image of pit ponies circling endlessly ("Generations have trod, have trod, have trod", 5). It is an image which suggests the Yang-Yin circle, its black and white "bleared, smeared with toil" (6) to produce the grey of despair. Since green as the traditional colour of earthly, tangible, immediately perceptible growth, represents the function of sensation,[15] Hopkins may have decided that it had no place in this sonnet; the shod foot of a pit pony can sense no difference between grass and bare earth.

Nonetheless, there is the "feeling" of green in the poem.

---

[13]Cirlot, p. 51.
[14]See my page 39, above.
[15]Jolan Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung (London, 1951), Cirlot, p. 51.

A possible explanation may be found in the Journal entry for May 18, 1866, in which the poet noted an unusual colour effect: "Squares of green out-of-doors, as a window or garden-door, are delightful and the green then suggests rose in an unusually recondite way, as if it were a translation of rose or rose in another key".[16] Perhaps, in "God's Grandeur", the reverse suggestion is subtly operating, so that the green of the Holy Ghost's regeneration of matter is suppressed in the rose of the dawn (the "Dayspring"), "as if it were a translation of [green] or [green] in another key." This seems to be a tenable (if recondite) idea, since Christ, when the time came to leave them, committed his disciples, specifically, into the care of the Holy Ghost, saying: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."[17]

On the other hand, however, if Hopkins meant to embody a quaternary of colours, as a symbolization of the Platonic "realization of the idea",[18] and also wished to follow the ascending colours of the alchemical "Work" (the spiritualization of matter) -- black - white - red - gold,[19] then he may have omitted the colour green from structural, rather than psychological reasons. The poem concludes with the sublimation: "with ah! bright wings" (gilded by the light of the rising sun).

The poet's new vision of the earth is matched by a new

---

[16]Journals and Papers, p. 139.
[17]Matthew 28:20.
[18]See my note 9, p. 44, above.
[19]Cirlot, p. 257.

vision of the sky, as portrayed in "The Starlight Night" (No. 32). The alchemical order of ascending colours is reversed in this sonnet: gold (fire) is brought down to earth, where it is transmuted into a substance assimilable by man (symbolically, the Holy Eucharist):

> Look: March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow sallows!
> These are indeed the barn; withindoors house
> The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the spouse
> Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows.
>
> (11-14)

Christ, on earth, is "quickgold" (5), that is living gold. The "gold-water Pactolus" (the "river" which the poet saw in the yellow sunset sky of "Winter with the Gulf Stream"), healed Midas, as with a miraculous balm, of his affliction, but for the poet it proved to be merely a chimera, which disappeared, leaving only a disconsolate "flat blue mist". A connection between the two poems may be discovered in a detail of the Midas myth: when the sick king attempted to eat a crisply-fried trout for his breakfast, the first mouthful turned, instantaneously, into a lump of solid gold. The fish, of course, is a symbol of Christ. The reversal of this process -- gold into food, instead of food into gold -- makes the eternal Christ "quick" (instinct with life) nourishment for man. The price is, significantly, a <u>fourfold</u> sacrifice: "Prayer, patience, alms, vows" (9).

"Hurrahing in Harvest" (No. 38) is of especial interest, since it is expressed in the same colour scheme as "Winter with

the Gulf Stream": yellow, misty blue, and violet, thus affording the opportunity to make a parallel colour comparison. Generally speaking, yellow denotes spiritual insight, blue spiritual aspiration, and violet memory (nostalgia) and devotion (sacrifice).

The first, and essential, difference between the two poems is in their movement: as has been noted, "Winter" is a static piece, whereas the images in "Hurrahing in Harvest" are in flux! "... what wind-walks! what lovely behaviour / Of silk-sack clouds! has wilder, wilful-wavier / Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies?" (2-4). The Pneuma is writing its message in a chromatic flow of yellow light embodied in the scapes of clouds (meal is normally yellow); by contrast the "waxen colours" of the golden sunset in "Winter" are hard and static, because unspiritualized. As was noted in Chapter II, Ruskin believed that "matter may be spiritualized by infusing its inertia with energy".[20] Energy may be caught at its creative work, as it forms from the "flat blue mist" of "Winter" the stupendous image: "And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder" (9) -- an image which combines an almost breathless adoration with the immense stability of faith: the response of the "beholder" (11) to the mysterious breath of the Pneuma, and the almighty strength of God the Creator.

Again, in "Winter" violet expresses a typical late nine-

---

[20]See my note 14, p. 27, above.

teenth century, enervate nostalgia for "another world": the colour is composed of the blue of devotion and the red of passion, and thus, perhaps, symbolizes the "best of both worlds" to an effete sensibility. After his Election of Christ as his hero, the poet saw violet as Christ (red) embodied in Mary (blue), or, actually, as a manifestation of Christ in external nature. Thus the "azurous hung hills" become the Annunciation of the Saviour, which the "beholder" receives, and instresses in his own being as "very-violet-sweet" (10). The poet himself becomes the "brink" where the two principles of fire and earth "run-and-mingle": "...which two when they once meet, / The heart rears wings bold and bolder / And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him off under his feet." (12-14). Violet represents the meeting of two sacrifices: Christ's sacrifice of the Incarnation, and the poet's sacrifice of answering devotion.

"The Windhover" (No. 36) stresses the fact that the essential link between Christ and adorer is sacrifice. Once again the colours of the alchemical process appear in their ascending order; and once again those of the black and white Yang-Yin double circle, and its sublimation in red. "Blue-bleak embers" (13) versus the "Shine" which "sheer plod" of "plough down sillion" (12-13) produces, represent the black/white closed circle, and the condition of average unregenerate man. The way out is through identification with Christ: it is not enough merely to "catch" Christ's inscape in nature, and to respond to it with the rapture of "very-violet-sweet", as in "Hurrahing in Harvest". It must be buckled

into the heart under stress (instressed); under such pressure "the achieve of, the mastery" (8) of Christ's heroic actions (his love shown in the Incarnation, his Passion of sacrifice in the Crucifixion) flames out in a fire which breaks open the "blue-bleak" embers in a responsive fire of love and sacrifice: "and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear, / Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion" (13-14). "Gold-vermilion" may be interpreted as the "run-and-mingle" of the two principles of fire and earth -- gold, the colour of the alchemical transmutation, symbol of the state of glory,[21] and vermilion, the dark red of the human heart offered up as an ecstatic sacrifice. Again the "brink" is the heart of the "beholder", which is broken open under the force of this meeting of elements.

As has been noted, the colour green is absent from the sonnet "God's Grandeur", and, in fact, rarely appears in Hopkins' poetry. With reference to the "dry" pre-Election poems, this is quite logical, since green represents water, regeneration, sensation and hope; however, its absence from the four sonnets examined above requires further research at this point.

It seems strange that green, the colour which symbolizes the Holy Ghost in the Christian tradition,[22] should have no place in poems which describe the search for, and the recognition of, the divine spirit in nature. One answer may be that Hopkins associated green with freshness and innocence, as in the "St. Dorothea" poems (Nos. 10 and 25), and "The May Magnificat" (No. 42), which all three centre on purely religious

---

[21]Cirlot, p. 114.
[22]See my note 11, p.43, above.

themes. Green has, however, opposite connotations: it is connected with vegetation, "but also with death and lividness (green is therefore the connecting-link between black -- mineral life -- and red -- blood and animal life -- as well as between animal life and discomposition and death)".[23] Its paradoxical symbolism is due to its central position in the spectrum. An early poem, "Spring and Death" (No. 4) indicates that Hopkins was sensitive to the morbidity latent in the colour named "gay green" in James Thomson's symbology of the spectrum:[24]

> As I walk'd a stilly wood,
> Sudden, Death before me stood:
> In a hollow lush and damp,
> He seem'd a dismal mirky stamp
> On the flowers that were seen
> His charnelhouse-grate ribs between,
> And with coffin-black he barr'd the green.
> (5-11)

It seems as though the poet sensed a kind of treachery lurking at the heart of the most poignant beauty: "A little sickness in the air / From too much fragrance everywhere" (3-4). Indicative of this sensibility is the deliberate control of any over-ardent response to a beauty always at the mercy of fate: "To what serves mortal beauty -- dangerous; does set danc- / ing blood" (No. 62, 1-2).

Thus, when green does make a rare appearance in one of Hopkins' poems (it runs like "green fire" through "Spring"

---

[23]Cirlot, p. 51.
[24]Nicolson, p. 44.

(No. 33), although, strangely, never spelled out), it is not surprising to find red omitted entirely. Red symbolizes human passion, among other things, and as has been noted above, in Hopkins' symbolic use of colour the human element, in its unregenerate state, is antithetical to green.

The sonnet "Spring" is based on a colour triad of green/blue/white: the green of springing vegetation, "When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush" (2); the blue of the sky, "descending ... all in a rush / With richness" (7-8); the white of "racing lambs" (8). In terms of religious symbolism, this triad represents the green of the Holy Ghost (regenerating nature); the blue of the Virgin Mary (bringing down nourishing grace from heaven); the white of purity and innocence.

The only human figures, in the poet's view, which can harmonize with this ideal depiction of spring, are adolescents: "Innocent ... girl and boy" (13). Despite the implied action in lines like " ... the racing lambs too have fair their fling" (8), and ecstacy, in "What is all this juice and all this joy?" (9), the poem is actually a set piece of diatonic perfection, painted from "memory" -- it projects an archetypal image of the "lost Eden". Thus, growing up (the flux of life) will "sour with sinning, / Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy, / Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning" (12-14). The "juice" and the "joy" are "A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning / In Eden garden" (10-11), and thus any untoward fostling will sour the ancient vintage. Innocence is con-

noted with youth and beauty, and all are fleeting, like the green of spring.

With reference to the absence of red (adult human passion) from the sonnet "Spring", Jung's explanation of the implications which the colour "quaternio" blue-red-yellow-green held for the alchemists is helpful. They related the four principle colours to the four basic functions: sensing, intuiting, feeling and thinking: "Consequently the synthesis of the four ... colours would mean nothing less than the integration of the personality".[25] This concept may be applied to the colour scheme of "Spring" simply by substituting the yellow of the colour quaternio for white. It must be assumed, then, that Hopkins' heroic choice had failed to absorb all the aspects of his psyche, or perhaps more exactly, to harmonize all the chords of his being. The cleft between red and green is evidence for the assumption that his compassionate, overly-anxious care for the innocent and vulnerable young blinded him to the necessity that they, too, must experience suffering, and be exposed to evil, in order to be able to make their own heroic choice. If choice resulted in the fallen world, it is also (through sacrifice) the only path to redemption and rebirth. Hopkins' deliberate rejection of purely human passion (in his response to beauty) suggests a basic self-distrust, and a basic fear of life (time's treachery, the ever-present black in the green).

---

[25]Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis, p. 287.

The poet felt more at home with the colour blue -- perhaps because it belongs to the unchanging sky, perhaps because it is, traditionally, connected with the Virgin Mary. (One recalls the lady in T.S. Eliot's "Ash Wednesday", "who walked between / The various ranks of varied green / Going in white and blue, in Mary's colour".)[26] While Christ represents the heroic male principle of the Deity, the Virgin represents the fostering female principle; each elicit from the poet a contrasting response. "Hurrahing in Harvest" shows him half hurling himself off the earth, in an ecstatic meeting with his hero, "midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with fire of stress" ("The Deutschland, 2, 8), while "The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breathe" (No. 60) depicts him "Nestling" (2) like a dependent child within the Virgin's care. Just as she was the medium through which Christ entered the world, so, as earth's envelope of air, she is the medium through which man perceives the light of the sun (God). As the Mother of God, "She, wild web, wondrous robe, / Mantles the guilty globe" (38-39); as the mother of earth, she is "This needful, never spent, / And nursing element" (9-10) -- the element on which each breath of life depends. Her divine mercy and human grace weave God and man together "I say that we are wound / With mercy round and round" (34-35).

> She holds high motherhood
> Towards all our ghostly good

---

[26]Eliot, "Ash Wednesday", Collected Poems, p. 100.

> And plays in grace her part
> About man's beating heart,
> Laying, like air's fine flood,
> The deathdance in his blood:
> (47-52)

Her nature reflects the eternal (diatonic): "The glass-blue days are those / When every colour glows, / Each shape and shadow shows" (83-85) -- probably a reference to the Platonic forms, and their earthly mirror-images. She protects man by filtering the sun's light to suit his inferior vision (an action analogous to God tempering the wind to the shorn lamb):

> Whereas did air not make
> This bath of blue and slake
> His fire, the sun would shake,
> A blear and blinding ball
> With blackness bound...
> (94-97)

-- verses which recall the despairing lines in "Nondum":

> ... and blackest night
> Giddies the soul with blinding daze
> That dares to cast its searching sight
> On being's dread and vacant maze.
> (27-30)

In this connection, it is of interest that, in alchemy, the black sun (the Sol niger), signifies the state of death.[27] Mercy and grace, then, are essential to life (a "bath of blue" -- a chromatic flow of air and moisture).

Hopkins' attitude of blissful relaxation with regard to the Virgin is, obviously, the direct opposite of his posture vis à vis Christ. An analogy extremely pertinent to an under-

---

[27]Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis, p. 95.

standing of both the poet and his poetry may be found in Scotist's distinction between "personality (spontaneous fulfillment) and individuality (completion by opposition or bracing)".[28] From "The Wreck of the Deutschland" onward a dualism which alternates between these two concepts appears in the poems. A glance at the Chart in the Appendix will give an indication of how comprehensive, through their analogues on every plane, these concepts have proved to be. The basic dichotomy is still that between eternity and time, heaven and earth -- in cosmic terms, fire and earth, the masculine and the feminine elements of reality. The first three colours of the spectrum, red, orange and yellow are connected with fire and light (the triune Godhead); as has been noted, Hopkins chose blue, rather than the traditional green, as the mediating colour between God and man. More meaningful for the poet, because of its connection with the Virgin, it performs the same symbolic function as green in this context, since blue and green both may stand for water, and water, as will be remembered, is "of all the elements, the most clearly transitional, between fire and air (the ethereal elements) and earth (the solid element)".[29]

I shall discuss Hopkins' response to the colour blue, apart from its strictly religious connotations, in the following chapter.

---

[28] See my note 53, p. xxiv, above.

[29] See my note 12/16, p. 11, above.

CHAPTER IV

THE MYSTIC CENTRE

I have allotted a separate short chapter for the discussion of the colour blue because of its deeply psychic meaning for Hopkins. For an understanding of its importance it is necessary to turn, for the moment, to the Journal.

The poet found blue to be the most remarkable colour in the rainbow: "The reason Shakspere [sic] calls it 'the blue bow' ... is because the blue band edged by and ending in violet, though not the broadest, is the deepest expression of colour in the bow and so becomes the most decisive and emphatic feature there".[1] (My italics). The Oxford English Dictionary defines "intense" as "of a colour, very deep, of a feeling, very ardent". The colour blue was for Hopkins, then, the most intense in the rainbow, because of its depth of expression. Apart from the rainbow, blue always had an emotional impact on him, judging from the number of entries like the following: "From the top the lake of Brienz was of the richest opaque green modulated with an emotional instress to blue".[2] (My italics). As has been noted, colour and emotion are related through a "common rhythm".[3] Hopkins was sensitive to colour as a visual rhythm: "Take a few primroses in a glass", he wrote, "and the instress of -- brilliancy, sort of starriness; I have not the right word -- so simple a flower gives is remarkable. It is, I think, due to the strong swell given by the deeper yellow middle".[4] (My italics). Star and flower are both to

---

[1] Journals and Papers, p. 148.
[2] Journals and Papers, p. 199.
[3] See my note [illegible], p. xxi.
[4] Journals and Papers, p. 206.

be found among the numinous symbols of alchemy;[5] it is interesting that Hopkins, in his search for the right words, should have combined them in his description. A starry flower might unite in itself the rhythms of fire and earth, and so effect the psyche as a swell, as when two waves meet, and tower up against each other.

The bluebell meant more to Hopkins than the primrose, for obvious reasons: "I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at", he wrote, "I know the beauty of our Lord by it. It (s inscape) is (mixed of) strength and grace".[6] Schneider affirms that symbolism is what might be called a magnetic force, drawing together phenomena which have the same rhythm and even allowing them to interchange."[7] Just as the bluebell drew Hopkins' eyes because of its intensely radiating colour, uniting him with earthly nature, so it united the two aspects of God for him -- the creative masculine principle ("strength"), and the nurturing feminine principle ("grace"). In addition, it was a manifestation of the eternal spirit (radiance, fire) in nature (blue flower, rooted in earth). Correlatively, the Bluebell combined in itself Hopkins' two theories of aesthetic beauty, the diatonic and the chromatic, as the following passage from the Journal shows:

> Bluebells in Hoarder wood, all hanging their heads one way. I caught ... the Greek rightness of their beauty, the lovely / what people call / 'gracious' bidding one

---

[5]Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis, p. 54.
[6]Journals and Papers, p. 199.
[7]Cirlot, p. xxxiii.

> to another or all one way, the level or stage or shire of colour they make hanging in the air a foot above the grass, and a notable glare the eye may abstract and sever from the blue colour / of light beating up from so many glassy heads, which like water is good to float their deeper instress in upon the mind.[8]

The "Greek rightness" of the bluebell's "scape" makes it an example of Ideal form (diatonic), which stands out from the flow of colour, like a "bath of blue", "beating up" from the mass of "the Many" (chromatic). It is clear that the colour blue possessed an especial rhythm for the poet (one recalls the "blue-beating and hoary-glow height" in Stanza 26 of "The Deutschland"), which was intensified in Hodder Wood by the repetition of the "scape". The transfer of inscape to mind depends upon the chromatic flow, the rhythm of repetition: " ... repetition, oftening, over-and-overing, aftering of the inscape must take place in order to detach it to the mind".[9]

Although Hopkins was speaking here of the function of rhythm in poetry, the connection with his response to the bluebells in Hodder Wood throws a fascinating light on the process of poetic symbol making. Various writers have recorded the same kind of phenomenon: Santayana described it as a "floating off" of an "eternal essence", which would be "henceforth a possession of poets", independent of the physical object;[10] E.M. Forster noticed a "bardic quality" in the work of D.H. Lawrence, "an irr-

---

[8] Journals and Papers, p. 231.
[9] Journals and Papers, p. 127.
[10] Bodkin, p. 100.

adiation from within, so that every colour has a glow and every form a distinctness which could not otherwise be obtained".[11] It is clear that both glow and distinctness (chromatic and diatonic beauty, respectively), depend upon the "vibrant rhythm ... which is, in the last resort ... the essence of all phenomena".[12] (My italics).

Maud Bodkin, to whom I am indebted for the quotations from Santayana and E.M. Forster above, observes: "Such 'irradiation' seems to me an instance of what I have described as 'glory' transfiguring those objects that assume for us the character of archetypal images, reflecting in some special degree the life within and beyond us."[13] (My italics).

The"blue flower" is a symbol of the "mystic Centre" of the self.[14] Jung has identified it with the anima, the feminine unconscious dwelling in the masculine soul.[15] In this connection there is evidence, both in the Journal and in the Poems that Hopkins identified his compassionate self with the chromatic qualities of the bluebell, just as he saw Christ reflected in its diatonic glassiness. He describes, in the Journal, bluebells "washing the brows and slacks of ground with vein-blue".[16] (My italics). Obviously, the reference is to the colour of human veins. The analogy is developed further in the first quatrain of "On the

---

[11]Bodkin, p. 289.
[12]Cirlot, p. xviii.
[13]Bodkin, p. 289.
[14]C.G. Jung, Psychology and Alchemy (London, 1953), p. 159.
[15]C.G. Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious (New York, 1959), p. 59.
[16]Journals and Papers, p. 209.

Portrait of Two Beautiful Young People" (No. 157):

> O I ADMIRE and sorrow! The heart's eye grieves
> Discovering you, dark tramplers, tyrant years.
> A juice rides rich through bluebells, in vine leaves,
> And beauty's dearest veriest vein is tears.
> (1-4)

The image of bluebells does not recur in the poem, but Stanza 7 seems to be relevant to the thesis that the bluebell symbolizes Hopkins' anima in the Jungian sense:

> Man lives that list; that leaning in the will
> No wisdom can forecast by gauge or guess,
> The selfless self of self, most strange, most still,
> Fast furled and all foredrawn to No or Yes.
> (25-28)

It will be remembered that the feminine principle is passive, receptive, and connected with the elements of earth and water.[17] "Fast furled" evokes the image of an embryo, very much like the representation of Christ in Mary in "The Deutschland" as "The heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled / Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame" (34, 3-4), while "all foredrawn to No or Yes" recalls Hopkins' assertion that "nothing is so pregnant and straightforward to the truth as simple yes and is".[18]

In addition, the bluebell comprises all four elements: fire (radiance), air(blue colour), water(juice, veins) and earth (in which it has its roots), and therefore may be considered to constitute, for the poet, a symbol of wholeness. Its inner radiance (chromatic rhythm) and outer glassiness (diatonic reflection) are interdependent, the complementary halves of a single

---

[17]See my note 30, p. 36, above.
[18]See my note 1, p. 39, above.

entity. Thus, through the bluebell, the poet was able to unite with Christ.

An alternative interpretation of Hopkins' "canon of feeling"[19] now presents itself. For clarity's sake I shall quote again the relevant passage and the cuckoo wanted a canon by which to harmonize and round them in -- e.g. one of feeling".[20] As will be recalled, I assumed, in my Introduction above, that the missing "canon" must be the colour red, since it represents human emotion in universal symbology.[21] After the insights provided by an analysis of the poems examined above, this assumption does not appear to be a logical one: the poet's practice of not including the colours red and green in any single poem vitiates such a conclusion. If one were to take blue as the harmonizing (unitive) "canon of feeling", an understanding of the passage more in keeping with the general tenour of Hopkins' colour symbolism emerges. A warm grey day is both overcast and windless; the blue arch of the sky is invisible, and there is no breath of wind (the Pneuma) to disperse the "down-dugged ground-hugged grey". Unspiritualized nature is flat, neutral, enervate and rhythmless. The two-way "stem of stress", represented by the "emotional instress" of blue, is missing.

It is worth noting, in this connection, that various other poets have projected states of intense emotion in the image of

---

[19]See my p.xviii.
[20]See my note 11, p. xviii.
[21]See my note 12, p. xviii.

blue flowers. For Donne and Tennyson it was violets, for D.H. Lawrence, gentians, for T.S. Eliot, hyacinths. All these flowers share with the bluebell a specific tone of blue -- one tending towards indigo, rather than azure. This tone lies somewhere between sky-blue and purple, and thus contains some admixture of red. This natural fact makes it easier to grasp Hopkins' analogy between the heart's tears ("Heart, go and bleed at a bitterer vein", "The Deutschland", 31, 3), and the juice in the veins of the bluebell ("vein-blue").[22]

---

[22]See my note 15, p. 60, above.

CHAPTER V

THE SEARCH FOR THE FATHER (CONTINUED)

From the evidence of the poems analysed in Chapter III above, it would appear that Hopkins saw man as barring himself from any participation in the spiritualization of nature. Three other sonnets of the productive year 1877: "In the Valley of the Elwy" (No. 34), "The Sea and the Skylark" (No. 35), and "The Caged Skylark" (No. 39) present this problem as endemic in the human condition.

No. 34 projects the idea that man is incomplete because of his impermeability to the divine grace, which surrounds him like the air he breathes:

> That cordial air made those kind people a hood
> All over, as a bevy of eggs the mothering wing
> Will, or mild nights the new morsels of Spring:
> Why, it seemed of course; seemed of right it should.
>
> Lovely the woods, waters, meadows, combes, vales,
> All the air things wear that build this world of Wales;
> Only the inmate does not correspond:
>
> God, lover of souls, swaying considerate scales,
> Complete thy creature dear O where it fails,
> Being mighty a master, being a father and fond.
>
> (My italics) (5-14)

By refusing to admit the softening blue of spirit, the "inmate" is unable to perceive the true light (compare the amelioration provided by the Virgin as "atmosphere", in No. 60, discussed in Chapter III above[1]); thus he remains unpurified by the eternal spirit.

Sonnet No. 35 shows the final result of such impurity: "We, life's pride and cared-for crown"

> Have lost that cheer and charm of earth's past prime:

---

[1]See my p. 54, above.

Our make and making break, are breaking down
To man's last dust, drain fast towards man's first slime.

(My italics) (11-14)

The joy of divine grace (blue) offers "cheer" (compare "For how to the heart's cheering / The down-dugged ground-hugged grey / Hovers off", "The Deutschland", 26, 1-3 -- my italics). The "charm of earth's past prime" (Eden) was, by implication (the pastoral world of primal innocence) green. Green symbolizes regeneration, and thence hope, while hope is the antithesis of despair (grey). Thus, without divine grace there can be no hope: only the eternal principle has the power to prevent the dissolution of the flesh. The "strain of the earth's being in the beginning" (No. 33, 10), soured by the sin of unregenerate man, has degenerated into the "first slime" of the inchoate void. Dust and slime are both grey, the colour of despair.

"The Caged Skylark" (No. 39) does allow man a spirit, but a spirit imprisoned in the unregenerate matter of the body. The poem is presented as the conventional dichotomy, and expressed in the traditional spirit/bird metaphor. The octave is worked out in a hopeless colour scheme of brown, grey and black, representative of the human condition (earth, despair, and frustration), very slightly relieved by blue (the spiritual aspiration which "Both sing sometimes the sweetest, sweetest spells", 6, implies).

The transcendence suggested in the sestet is neither through the red of Christian charity and love, nor the purple of sacrifice; it lies in the sudden assumption of the rainbow (all the colours -- God displayed on earth):

> Man's spirit will be flesh-bound when found at best,
> But uncumbered: meadow-down is not distressed
> For a rainbow footing it nor he for his bones risen.
>
> (12-14)

As these lines refer to the Christian belief in the resurrection of the body, the solution offered in this poem remains within a strictly religious context.

A more practical approach to the conflicting exigencies of body and spirit is attempted in "Felix Randall" (No. 53) and "The Leaden and the Golden Echo" (No. 59). Written in 1880 and 1882, respectively, both poems follow a colour progression from grey to gold. Felix Randal "the farrier" has succumbed to "some / Fatal four disorders" (3-4) -- the four elements which compose his physical being have disintegrated into "man's last dust", dissolved into his "first slime":

> How far from then forethought of, all thy more boisterous years,
> When thou at the random grim forge, powerful amidst peers,
> Didst fettle for the great grey drayhorse his bright and battering sandal!
>
> (12-14)

Here "grey" possesses a strength and endurance which amount to a kind of stoic nobility. It certainly does not connote despair. On the contrary, it represents the hardworking and productive "simple" life in a far-different way from the frustration implicit in the "day-labouring-out life's age" of "The Caged Skylark" (4). The product is something inexplicitly splendid: a "bright and battering sandal!" (Compare T.S. Eliot's "inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold."[2]). The image

---

[2]"The Waste Land", Collected Poems, p. 73.

strikes sparks from the imagination, just as the farrier struck sparks from his anvil: images of transcendent power and glory fly up -- Pegasus, wings, saints, halos, angels -- forged, as if by chance ("far from forethought of") by Felix Randal simply following his trade. The colour transition from black to fiery gold is that of "The Windhover" -- from "blue-bleak embers" to "gold-vermilion" (13-14). In "Felix Randal", however, no single image is instressed.

The colour grey in "The Leaden Echo" is different again; it denotes an aesthetic disgust with the process of physical disintegration:

> ... nothing can be done
> To keep at bay
> Age and age's evils, hoar hair,
> Ruck and wrinkle, drooping, dying, death's worst, winding sheets, tombs and worms and tumbling to decay;
>
> (9-12)

"The Golden Echo" pictures beauty residing only in youth and innocence: "The flower of beauty, fleece of beauty" (11) -- the antithesis of age and death. The inevitable flux of time is its destroyer; nature is the natural enemy of man. "Flower" and "fleece" occur in "The May Magnificat" (No. 42), in lines which celebrate an ecstatic union of vegetable and animal nature: "Flesh and fleece, fur and feather, / Grass and greenworld all together" (17-18). Once again Hopkins' exclusion of adult or aged man from any share in a spiritualized world is emphasized. The solution provided in "The Golden Echo" is similar to that in "The Caged Skylark" -- a summons "wonder" (31). While still

in possession of beauty and youth, man should:

Resign them, sign them, seal them, send them, motion them with
breath,
And with sighs soaring, soaring sighs, deliver
Them; beauty-in-the-ghost, deliver it, early now, long before
death
Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, beauty, back to God, beauty's
self and beauty's giver.

(16-19)

Although the transcendence appears to be successful (from lead, base metal, to gold, perfect metal), Hopkins' version is somewhat reminiscent of the parable of the servant who buried his talent in the earth, so that he might return it, on demand, untarnished, to his master. A sacrifice consisting of "soaring sighs" seems somewhat unsubstantial, if not actually self-indulgent, while an eternal preservation of youth (diatonic, static) is in direct opposition to Hopkins' habitual, chromatically fluid, images of youth elsewhere: "wet-fresh" lads (No. 62, 5), and "limber liquid youth" (No. 48, 22), for example.

Maud Bodkin writes: "When doom and fear are lost in the very radiance of the image, there is ecstacy".[3] "The Golden Echo" somehow misses the electric force which "Felix Randal" accumulates and discharges in its concluding lines: "When thou at the random grim forge, powerful amidst peers, / Didst fettle for the great grey drayhorse his bright and battering sandal!" If the forge is viewed as the black half, and "grey" as the white half of the black/white temporal antithesis, then, according to the

---

[3]Bodkin, p. 303.

alchemical progression, the sublimation makes a great jump to gold, skipping red altogether. Perhaps it is for this reason that the gold blazes out with so sudden a glory. The comparison with "The Golden Echo" suggests that Hopkins was more drawn to the heroic, active, masculine principle of God, than to the patient, passive feminine principle (respectively and symbolically, fire and earth).

Hopkins composed two sonnets, "Henry Purcell" (No. 45) and "St. Alphonsus Rodriguez" (No. 73), in 1879 and 1888, respectively, which are complementary portraits of "manscapes" -- that is, of the two ideal human inscapes. Henry Purcell was the type of genius, and St. Alphonsus Rodriguez the type of saint: the first exemplifies Christ through self-realization (the Scotist way), the second through self-abnegation (the Ignation way). A comparison of the two poems, therefore, affords a further insight into the poet's essentially dual nature.

If the unique qualities of genius and saint were united in a single being, that being would be the prototype of Christ, the perfect man, the man-God. Hopkins bifurcated the image of his hero, and "caught" the reflected inscapes in the two poems cited above.

"Henry Purcell" echoes the Christ of the "thunder-throne", symbolized by the royal purple of sublimation and power,[4] energized by the mighty force of the Pneuma, and delivering the dia-

---

[4]See my note 25, p. 31. above.

tonic flash of stress "that stars and storms deliver":

> ... so some great stormfowl, whenever he has walked his while
> The thunder-purple-seabeach plumèd purple-of-thunder,
> If a wuthering of his palmy snow-pinions scatter a colossal
> smile
> Off him, but meaning motions fans fresh our wits with wonder.
>
> (11-14)

-- an embodiment of the masculine principle of fire (light) and air, actively creative.

St. Alphonsus, on the other hand, represents Christ in the violet sweetness of his devotion and self-sacrifice, the still inwardness of his acceptance of the cup of suffering. "Honour is flashed off exploit" (1):

> But be the war within, the brand we wield
> Unseen, the heroic breast not outward-steeled,
> Earth hears no hurtle then from fiercest fray.
> Yet God (that hews mountain and continent,
> Earth, all, out; who, with trickling increment,
> Veins violets and tall trees makes more and more)
> Could crowd career with conquest while there went
> Those years and years by of world without event
> That in Majorca Alphonso watched the door.
>
> (6-14)

Thus Alphonso embodies the feminine principle of earth (fecund receptacle of the seed of the spirit), and water, whose slow chromatic flow flushes nature's veins with the energy for growth.

Purple is ecstasy, compounded of the red of passion and the blue of soaring aspiration ("let him oh! with his air of angels then lift me", No. 45, 9); violet is tenderness, made up of the "pink" colour of human flesh, and the blue of religious devotion -- human tears are suggested in the line "who, with trickling increment, / Veins violets" (No. 73, 10-11). Violet may <u>appear</u> as a faded purple, or a lesser <u>reflection</u> of it,

but the "war within" (6) is a worthy complement ("gash gold-vermilion") to the outward assertion of divine inspiration.

From the evidence of the colour progressions examined up to this point, it would appear that Hopkins' "heroic choice", symbolized, in terms of colour, by the crimson/blue/purple chord of ecstasy in "The Wreck of the Deutschland", which sent him out into the world "in search of the Father", had shifted its focus from outward to inward, under the pressure of experience. Ecstasy had been transformed into patience (purple -- violet) in a paradoxical way: ecstasy had been complete acceptance ("I did say yes / O at lightning and lashed rod"); patience was a "war within".

Since the natural mould of Hopkins' psyche was heroic, it appears to have been inevitable, given his Election of Christ as a model, that his life's pattern (projected in his poetry) should conform, psychologically, with that of his hero. It will be recalled that the "deepest and most universal pattern that the hero-image can reflect" is a tragic tension between "passionate self-assertion and religious loyalty".[5]

---

[5]See my note 1, p. 25, above.

CHAPTER VI

THE DESCENT INTO HELL

From the evidence of the poems analysed in Chapter III, above, it is clear that Hopkins failed to realize fully the inspiration received in the nun/poet vision of "The Wreck of the Deutschland". The ternary, represented in colour by the crimson/blue/purple chord (the idea), did not develop into the quaternary (the realization of the idea), judging by the absence of the colour quaternio (blue-red-yellow-green, symbolizing wholeness[1]) from any poems of the central period, which I have called "The Search for the Father".

The basic dichotomy is between red and green, human nature and external nature, as has been noted. More surprising than the fact that these two colours never appear together in a poem is that green, the central, bridging colour of the spectrum, appears so rarely by itself. From the Journal it is easy to gather ample evidence of Hopkins' response to "gay green". A sampling of entries reads: "bright juice of beautiful green",[2] "voluptuous green ... Hedges springing richly",[3] "the most beautiful bottle-green beam -- as bright as any gems".[4] His sensibility of "growing green" was sensuous in the extreme:

> O if we but knew what we do
> When we delve or hew --
> Hack and rack the growing green!
> Since country is so tender
>
> (No. 43, 9-12)

Red appears even more rarely as a "natural" colour; when it does, it is associated with an intense sensuous appeal: "Beyond the hurst with such a hue / As silken garden-poppies do"

---

[1] See my note 25, p. 52, above.
[2] Journals and Papers, p. 236.
[3] Journals and Papers, p. 134.
[4] Journals and Papers, p. 146.

(No. 21, 6-7), and "The ear in milk, lush the sash, / And crush-silk poppies aflash" (No. 138, 20-21). Red is associated with human passion, and there is evidence that Hopkins shrank from a full response to human, as opposed to "natural" beauty: "To what serves mortal beauty -- dangerous; does set dancing blood" (No. 62, 1). Vegetable lymphs, the "juice" and the "joy" of "Spring" (No. 33) were both safer and purer ("God's better beauty, grace", No. 62, 12).

Hopkins saw man as incomplete because of his lack of grace ("In the Valley of the Elwy", No. 34), and therefore unregenerate matter: " ... the greater part, / But frail clay, nay but foul clay" (No. 63, 2-3). Whereas "average" man was locked in a kind of mortal conflict with external nature, exceptional, spiritualized man seemed to be quite apart from it (the colour green has no place in either "Henry Purcell" or "St. Alphonsus Rodriguez"). Since green symbolizes the working of the Holy Ghost in matter, it would seem that the spiritualized man had no need of this principle of growth; probably Hopkins looked upon him as the diatonic inscape in the chromatic flow of being -- an ideal form. The only hope for unregenerate man lay "yonder".

Only sacrifice could purify human blood, transforming it to correspond with the "right splendour" of Christ's sacrificial stream, and so to regenerate human clay: "Nay do we all, seeing of a soldier, bless him? bless / Our redcoats, our tars? both these being, the greater part, / But frail clay, nay foul clay." (No. 63, 1-3).

Ordinary human blood for Hopkins was probably too closely related to the inevitable flux of time, which broke man down to his essential effluvia, his "last slime". A sense of disgust, rather than of tragic fate, informs "The Leaden Echo", as I have noted. The poet's aesthetic rejection of "man's smudge" and "man's smell" (No. 31, 7) seems to have been a persistent attitude toward the physical body. It is revealing that he expresses despair in terms of physical self-disgust in the "dark sonnet" No. 67:

> I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree
> Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;
> Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.
>
> (My italics) (9-11)

In terms of colour, then, Hopkins' dichotomy centres in the red/green antithesis. Red is a primary colour, that of the sun, the source of light and energy. Green is a secondary colour, composed of a mixture of blue and yellow (the remaining two colours of the quaternio of wholeness), whose existence in nature depends on the light of the sun. Therefore, human blood, by analogy, is superior to vegetable "juice", just as animal activity is superior to vegetable passivity, in the scale of being. As has been noted, Hopkins reversed the natural hierarchic order. He paid for his unconscious hubris with the undoubtedly terrible suffering of his "dark period".

An analysis confined entirely to colour reactions yields a fairly reasonable explanation of what happened to him. If green and red are mixed together, the resulting colour is black. Thus, if the poet were suddenly forced, by circumstances beyond

his control, to realize that he possessed a "merely" human heart, then there would ensue a sudden fusion of spiritual innocence and human passion, which would plunge his psyche into blackness. The shock which split wide the already-existent cleft in his being may well have been a "dangerous" human love. Three lines of Sonnet No. 74 lend support to this theory: "Oh, the sots and thralls of lust / Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend, / Sir, life upon thy cause" (7-8). There is no reference whatsoever, in any other of Hopkins' writings, to lust. The semi-accusatory tone of this poem, which begins ironically "Thou art indeed just, Lord", suggests that the poet had expected the sacrifice of his "lust" would free his spirit to receive divine inspiration. It would be wise to bear in mind that Hopkins' definition of lust would be unlike that of any average man; his refined sensibility was matched by a conscience honed to a mirror-brightness, which the slightest breath of suspicion could darken.

In his rejection of "ordinary" (and unsavoury) humanity, the poet unwittingly rejected his hero, Christ, also: the Christ whose radiant personality epitomized magnetic (rhythmic) energy. The "creature" cannot be completed by the blue of grace unless he is in full possession of his natural energies, just as the "quality of Repose in art demands for its expression the implied capability of its opposite, Energy".[5]

---

[5]See my note 33, p. 17, above.

An early poem (1864), "The Peacock's Eye" (No. 86) indicates that Hopkins must have tended always to emphasize the spiritual aspect of Christ at the expense of the physical. The peacock, like the phoenix, is an ancient Christian symbol of the Resurrection.[6] The poem is an unusual little allegory of Christ's life, expressed in the colours of the peacock's eye, rather than in those of the cauda pavonis, the magnificent fan tail, corresponding to the rainbow (all the colours), which is the traditional symbol:[7]

> Mark you how the peacock's eye
> Winks away its ring of green,
> Barter'd for an azure dye,
> And the piece that's like a bean,
> The pupil, plays its liquid jet
> To win a look of violet.
>
> (My italics)

The colour progression denotes, of course, physical life, spiritual aspiration, and sacrifice. The use of green to symbolize physical life indicates that Hopkins kept his image of the physical Christ in the "green world" of perennial youth and innocence.

The Journal offers an interesting piece of evidence on behalf of the theory that the poet was instinctively attracted to the cool, or spiritual, end of the spectrum, through a natural affinity (rhythm):" ... there was an imitation Turkey carpet in the room we used for chapel in which I saw that op-

---

6Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis, p. 290.
7Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis, p. 290.

tical illusion I have noticed in blue window-glass and in a stencilled wall in the church at Stonyhurst: blue and green stood up inches, scarlet retired."[8]

Physical causes too may have operated to draw the poet towards the restful, as against the energetic end of the colour scale. He suffered from frequent attacks of a type of nervous debility throughout his life, and was disheartened by the sort of adventure which might have exhilarated someone gifted with a more robust physique. A relevant Journal entry for August 16, 1873, reads:

> We went to the College, the seminary being wanted for the secular priests' retreat: almost no gas, for the retorts are being mended; therefore candles in bottles, things not ready, darkness and despair. In fact being unwell I was quite downcast: nature in all her parcels and faculties gaped and fell apart, fatiscebat, like a clod cleaving and holding only by strings of root. But this must often be.[9]

The sensation of physical cleavage of being, "darkness and despair" -- in these identical terms Hopkins uttered the terrifying experience of his descent into the abyss twelve years later. The "war within", noted in the discussion of "St. Alphonsus Rodriguez" above, may have been the psychic response to the sensation of cleavage. However, since spiritual reality appeared to Hopkins as so much more "real" than fleshly reality, it seems more likely that the inner split in his psyche was the cause of the nervous fragility of his temperament.

---

[8] Journals and Papers, p. 252.
[9] Journals and Papers, p. 236.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that the geological meaning of "cleavage" refers specifically to "the fissile structure in clay, slate and similar rocks, whereby these split into thin laminae ... This structure is quite distinct from, and in origin posterior to, the stratification and jointing".[10] Cleavage, then, seems to result from an endemic weakness in the material ("frail clay").

The first effect of the psychic shock, which I have postulated as the immediate cause of the poet's "fall into the abyss", was an agonizing awareness of physical cleavage, of disintegration of being, "all ... in an enormous dark / Drowned" (No. 72, 12-13). This initial blackness, formed from the merging of the red and the green (all the colours mixed up together) represents the "germinal stage of all processes, as it does in alchemy".[11] In Genesis black chaos represents the material mother of the Many, and light the impregnating spirit of God: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."[12] Thus, when the poet projected his sense of cleavage in terms of black and white, in the poem "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" (No. 61), written in 1885, the year of the dark sonnets, black (the earth, the Many) on one side of the cleft, and white (God, the One) on the other, he symbolized the most drastic separation of man

---

[10] Oxford English Dictionary.
[11] Cirlot, p. 55.
[12] Genesis 1:2-3.

and God:

> ... Our tale, O our oracle!/Let life, waned, ah
> let life wind
> Off her once skeined stained veined variety/upon, all
> on two spools; part, pen, pack
> Now her all in two flocks, two folds -- black, white;/
> right, wrong; reckon but, reck but mind
> But these two; ware of a world where but these/two tell,
> each off the other;
>
> (10-13)

Once again, the poet is trapped in the terrible black/white double circle -- but his dilemma is now accentuated by a "bleared" vision which cannot distinguish between "black, white; right, wrong".

If the immediate cause of Hopkins' plunge into the abyss was, indeed, a violent psychic shock, his inner being (the unconscious) must have been already fertile ground for such a thrust. He, himself, finished the account of his sudden burst of tears[13] in the Journal entry of December 23, 1869, with the words:

> On the other hand the pathetic touch by itself, as in dramatic pathos, will only draw slight tears if its matter is not important or not of import to us, the strong emotion coming from a force which was gathered before it was discharged: in this way a knife may pierce the flesh which it had happened only to graze and only grazing will go no deeper.[14]

Northrop Frye's analysis of the masculine and feminine principles, as they appear in religious individuals has a bearing on Hopkins' condition:

> Passive dependence upon an objective and permanent

---

[13] See my note 15, p. 10, above.
[14] Journals and Papers, p. 195.

> support leads not to the Fatherhood of God, but to the Motherhood of nature ... It represents the imagination of the child, or the 'gentle souls' ... who get a job guarding a gate [like St. Alphonsus] or the sick souls who accuse themselves of sin and feel that fear is an essential part of the imagination, or the miserable souls, oppressed by tyranny and calamity. All of these have vision, though of a somewhat myopic kind; they all see images of the truth. But they do not see as clearly and accurately as the exuberent soul glowing with health and energy.[15]

Not only did the poet feel that he had lost touch with the light of God; he felt that he had lost <u>all</u> touch, within and without. His <u>view</u> of the abyss in "Nondum" dizzied his <u>sight</u>; Sonnet No. 65 pictures him clinging, blind and terrified, to nothing, <u>inside</u> the abyss:

> O the mind, mind has mountains! cliffs of fall
> Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
> May who ne'er hung there.
>
> (9-11)

Although the experience is remarkably similar to an attack of schizophrenia, Hopkins is fully aware that the abyss is his own mind. In this connection, it is relevant to note that "cleft" and "cliff" were interchangeable between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries.[16]

In addition to the agony of cleavage of the self, with its accompanying terror of total disintegration, Hopkins experienced the almost unbearable pain of feeling abandoned by God: "... And my lament / Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent / To dearest him that lives alas! away" (No. 67, 6-8).

---

[15]Frye, p. 58.
[16]<u>Oxford English Dictionary</u>.

Cirlot writes: "The symbolism of abandonment [is related] to that of the 'lost object', and they are both parallel to the symbolism of death and resurrection. To feel abandoned is ... to feel forsaken by the 'god within us' ... to lose sight of the eternal light in the human spirit."[17] Jung affirms that the feeling of being abandoned in desolation is a sign that the individual has strayed from the true centre of the self[18] ("astray or aswarm, all throughther in throngs", No. 61, 6). It is this straying from the "true centre" which precipitates the "Journey into Hell", which

> From the symbolic point of view symbolizes the descent into the unconscious, or the awareness of all the potentialities of being -- cosmic and psychological -- that are needed in order to reach the Paradisiac heights, except, that is, the divinely chosen few who attain to these heights by the path of innocence.[19]

Hopkins had rejected the "frail clay" (which so quickly became "foul clay"), in himself, as well as in other men. Through a forced acceptance of the essential human condition, he found "The treasure never eyesight got" (No. 28,26, 3) in the darkness of his own unconscious being. Cirlot writes, in this connection:

> In myths, legends and folktales, the treasure is usually found in a cave; there is a double image here embracing the idea of the cave as the mother-image or the unconscious, containing 'the elusive treasure'. This is an allusion to one of the fundamental mysteries of life -- to nothing less than the mystic'Centre' within the spirit of man, which Jung has dubbed the Selbst, to distinguish it from the mere 'ego'. The trials and tribulations that attend the quest for treasure

---

[17]Cirlot, p. 1.
[18]Jung, Archetypes, p. 166.
[19]Cirlot, pp. 157-158.

> may, up to a point, be equated with the experiments of the alchemists in their pursuit of transmutation. Jung maintains that the treasure which the hero wins only after painful effort is nothing less than himself reborn in the cave in which introversion or regression has confined him.[20]

The actual psychic process by which Hopkins discovered this treasure is projected in the symbolism of two poems: Sonnet (No. 68), written in 1885, the year of the dark sonnets, and the extended Sonnet (No. 72), composed three years later. I shall examine these poems in the following chapter.

---

[20]Jung, Symbols of Transformation (London, 1956), Dirlot, pp. 327-328.

CHAPTER VII

THE RECONCILIATION WITH THE FATHER

The "Search for the Father" is equivalent to the search for identity, for unity of being, for wholeness. The "Treasure" is discovered, at last, in the "mystic Centre" of the Self. Again one remembers T.S. Eliot's verses: "And the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time".[1] The "Descent into Hell" precedes the "Ascension to the Paradisal Heights", just as involution precedes evolution, black chaos, the emergence of forms into the light, and destruction, regeneration. Only that which has been broken can be made whole.

After the crisis of the "dark sonnets" colour returns, gradually, to Hopkins' poetry. Sonnet No. 69 (1885) demonstrates that the poet found his way out of the terrible black/white stasis of "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" (No. 61) through the red of Christian charity towards himself:

> My own heart let me more have pity on; let
> Me live to sad self hereafter kind,
> Charitable; not live this tormented mind
> With this tormented mind tormenting yet.
>
> (1-4)

Sonnet No. 68, written in the same year, symbolizes in colour the completion of the "Work" -- the successful reintegration of the poet's psyche:

> Patience, hard thing! the hard thing but to pray,
> But bid for, Patience is! Patience who asks
> Wants war, wants wounds; weary his times, his tasks;
> To do without, take tosses, and obey.
>
> Rare patience roots in these, ay these away,

---

[1] See p. i, above.

> Nowhere. Natural heart's ivy, Patience masks
> Our ruins of wrecked past purpose. There she basks
> Purple eyes and seas of liquid leaves all day.
>
> We hear our hearts grate on themselves; it kills
> To bruise them dearer. Yet the rebellious wills
> Of us we do bid God bend to him even so.
>
> And where is he who more and more distills
> Delicious kindness? -- He is patient. Patience fills
> His crisp combs, and that comes those ways we know.
>
> (1-14)

Here, for the first time in Hopkins' poetry, red and green appear in the same poem. Not only are they together, they are twined about each other (in the image of "Natural heart's ivy", 6). Since this epithet is applied to "Patience", it might be thought that "heart's ivy" is purple (the colour of suffering and sacrifice), were it not for the deliberate differentiation between "Purple eyes" and "seas of liquid leaves" (8).

For the first time, also, the full complement of the colour quaternio, symbolizing wholeness,[2] is present in one poem: blue (prayer), red (wounds), green (leaves) and yellow (crisp combs, and what they contain -- by implication, honey).

The great crimson/blue/purple sacred chord of "The Wreck of the Deutschland", as a triad, is related to Plato's definition of the Ternary as the idea, and with heaven. The colour quaternio is related (through the number four) to the application of the idea, and with earth. The quaternio may be seen as a re-ordering of the sacred chord, as follows: green is a com-

---

[2]See my note 25, p. 52, above.

bination of blue and yellow, so that a colour analysis reveals that the new chord is simply a progression by the addition of yellow. Cirlot lists yellow as being symbolic of magnanimity, intuition and intellect (the light of the sun).[3] His note on honey is also relevant:

> In Orphic tradition, honey is a symbol of wisdom. ... Honey was also credited with other meanings: rebirth or change of personality consequent upon initiation ... Given that honey is the product of a mysterious and elaborate process, it is easy to understand how it came by analogy to symbolize the spiritual exercise of self-improvement.[4]

One notes that the poet's sense of taste has undergone a total transformation, from the black bitterness of Sonnet No. 67: "I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree / Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me" (9-10), to the golden sweetness of the "Delicious kindness" (No. 68, 13) contained in "His crisp combs" (14) -- by inference, the bread of the Eucharist. The alchemists held that "bitterness and wisdom form a pair of alternatives (an aspect of the black/white antithesis): where there is bitterness, wisdom is lacking, and where wisdom is, there can be no bitterness."[5]

The poet's wisdom has been distilled from suffering by patience. Sonnet No. 68 might be entitled "Patience" --the word occurs six times, and the word "patient" once. The effect is not one of monotony (because of the manipulation of the theme),

---

[3]Cirlot, p. 52.
[4]Cirlot, p. 143.
[5]Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis, p. 246.

but of endurance and acceptance, the two "balance-pans" of patience. Patience is personified as a feminine entity (7), identified with vegetation (8), referred to in the ordinary way as a moral quality (5); "patient" is applied to God (13). Each personification of "Patience" is associated with a different colour of the quaternio, through association with prayer, wounds, leaves and honey (implied): thus the four colours which symbolize wholeness are bound into a single entity through "Patience".

The colour of "Patience" is purple, rooted in prayer and wounds (blue and red); "she" is associated with vision and with solace: "There she basks / Purple eyes and seas of liquid leaves all day" (7-8). The tree of life, whose "leaves were for the healing of the nations", arching above the "pure river of water of life ... proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb"[6] seems to be implied here, together with a memory of the "heavenly balm" dispensed by the angel in "Il Mystico". The weary, veteran, battle-scarred from the "war within", receives a crown, not of gold but of "liquid leaves", and a trophy, not composed of hard metal but of "Delicious"nutriment.

The image at the centre of the poem: "There she basks / Purple eyes and seas of liquid leaves all day" (7-8) is a projection of the poet's "mystic Centre", which he identified with his feeling heart ("mother of being in me, heart", "The Deutsch-

---

[6]Revelation 22:2, 1.

land", 18, 4). When the "heart's eye grieves" its tears are purple, as the first stanza of "On the Portrait of Two beautiful Young People" suggests:

> O I ADMIRE and sorrow! The heart's eye grieves
> Discovering you, dark tramplers, tyrant years,
> A juice rides rich through bluebells, in vine leaves,
> And beauty's dearest veriest vein is tears.
> (157, 1-4)

Tears, which "clear the understanding",[7] thus form a part of the many liquids in Sonnet No. 68 -- blood (from wounds), "Liquid leaves", distilled "kindness". Symbolically, water has three functions: "it fertilizes ... it purifies ... it dissolves ... one constant factor always emerges: the suspension of form -- that is, the lack of any fixed form (fluidity)".[8] The only fixed form which appears in the poem is the "rebellious wills / Of us we do bid God bend to him" (10-11). The "open'd sight" of the bruised heart now sees the human will as the obstacle to union with God. Hopkins seems to be saying with the Psalmist: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint".[9] "Patience" as acceptance is the fruit ("purple eyes") of "Patience" as endurance: "Nay in all that toil, that coil, since (seems) I kissed the rod, / Hand rather, my heart lo! lapped strength, stole joy, would laugh, chéer (No. 64, 10-11).

If the "land of Promise, flowing with milk and honey" is gained through the "Patience" of suffering and acceptance, the

---

[7]See my note 15, p. 10, above.
[8]Cirlot, p. xxxviii.
[9]Psalms 22:14.

honey itself has been distilled from the suffering of God ("Patience fills / His crisp combs", 13-14), and his patient waiting upon the response of his creatures ("He is patient", 13). Thus "Patience", as a shared experience, and a shared quality, reconciles and unites God and man ("And the word of it Sacrificed", "The Deutschland", 22, 4).

Sonnet No. 68 is resolved on the yellow of understanding, signifying the light of eternity. Like God's smile, it cannot be wrung from experience by the stiff straining of the will -- "unforeseen times rather -- as skies / Betweenpie mountains -- lights a lovely mile" (No. 69, 13-14).

"But why do we desire unity?"Hopkins had asked in an undergraduate essay. His first answer was "that the ideal, the one, is our only means of recognizing successfully our being to ourselves".[10] In "On a Portrait of Two Beautiful Young People" he wrote: "There's none but truth can stead you / Christ is truth" (No. 157, 20), but in the same poem he also wrote:

> Man lives that list, that leaning in the will
> No wisdom can forecast by guage or guess,
> The selfless self of self, most strange, most still,
> Fast furled and all foredrawn to No or Yes.
>
> (157, 15-18)

From the evidence examined above, it appears that Hopkins' identification with Christ could be accomplished only through the torment of the "war within". In the end the character of the Saint triumphed over that of the Genius, but he did not deny his

---

[10] Journals and Papers, p. 93.

soul the royalty of purple.

The poem "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection" (No. 72) expresses in symbols the ultimate reward of the "war within". In this sonnet the reconciliation of the god within with the God without is imaged in the dramatic form of diatonic stress, which here follows upon the slow effects of instress. The contrast is best illustrated by the contrast set forth in the sonnet in honour of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez (No. 73), written in the same year 1888. The patient waiting upon the Lord ("those years and years by of world without event / that in Majorca Alphonso watched the door", 13-14) "Could crowd career with conquest" (12) even although "Earth hears no hurtle then from fiercest fray" (8).

Hopkins recreates in poetic form his own finding of the "Treasure", in the extended sonnet "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection" (No. 72), written in 1888, three years after the dark sonnets. The poem begins with the image of clay (earthly human forms), which is formed, obliterated, and reformed, between the elements of wind (the Pneuma) and water (God's spirit on earth). The power and joy of creative energy contrasts strongly with the helpless malleability of the material:

> Delightfully the bright wind boisterous / roves, wrestles, beats earth bare
> Of yesterstempest's creases; / in pool and rutpeel parches
> Squandering ooze to squeezed / dough, crust, dust; stanches, starches
> Squandroned masks and manmarks / treadmire toil there
> Footfretted in it. (5-9)

Not even a great genius (such as Henry Purcell may be

spared so apparently freakish and undignified a fate:

> ... O pity and indignation! Manshape, that shone
> Sheer off, disseveral, a star, / death blots black out; nor mark
> Is any of him at all so stark
> But vastness blurs and time / beats level.
>
> (13-16)

"Million-fuelèd" (9) with its victims, "nature's bonfire burns on" (9).

The key to the metamorphosis which follows is sacrifice, unworded, but understood:

> Enough! the Resurrection,
> A heart's-clarion! Away grief's gasping, / joyless days, dejection.
> Across my foundering deck shone
> A beacon, an eternal beams / Flesh fade, and mortal trash
> Fall to the residuary worm; / world's wildfire, leave but ash!
>
> (16-20)

If the word "Let" is inserted before "Flesh fade", the sacrifice may be plainly seen as a relinquishment of all the poet's poignant regret at the loss of human youth, beauty and genius in death, "the blight man was born for" (No. 55, 14).

Resurrection, according to the Christian faith, is a resurrection of the body. From this tenet of the Creed Hopkins builds the symbolism of the poem, but he works it out in purely scientific terms. Since the chief chemical component of the body ("mortal trash") is carbon, it may be considered to be uncrystallized diamond. Death is, first, the obliteration of of individual forms ("self in self steepèd and pashed", No. 61, 6), and second, their apparent destruction in "nature's bonfire" -- the natural processes of compression and heat which have transformed dead vegetation into coalfields. The ultimate step

in such a process is a crystallizarion of pure carbon:

> In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
> I am all at once what Christ is, / since he was what I am, and
> This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, / patch, matchwood, immortal
> diamond,
> Is immortal diamond.
>
> (21-24)

"Potsherd", it will be noted, is an extremely apt metaphor for fragile human clay.

"Ash" (line 20, above) is also related to such a scientific exegesis. It was one of the principal substances employed in alchemy in the attempt to produce an incorruptible "glorified body". Some practitioners regarded it as being "synonomous with vitrium (glass), which, on account of its incorruptibility and transparency, seemed to resemble the glorified body."[11] Glass, too, is manufactured in the fire, the purifying element; in addition to being transparent, it is reflective. Thus, it may be argued, the poet sees through the grey despair, through the residual ash of "frail clay", and, paradoxically, the medium of his vision is, at the same time, the mirror which reflects back to him its eternal truth.

The symbol of transcendence is the diamond, whose prism, like the rainbow, contains the full spectrum. Thus man's resurrected body will conform to God as he appears on earth (Christ). The diamond is a "symbol of light and of brilliance.... In em-

---

[11]Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis, pp. 235-239.

blems it often indicates the irradiant, mystic 'Centre'.... Like all precious stones, it partakes of the general symbolism of treasures and riches, that is, moral and intellectual knowledge."[12]

Christ, as the lapis of the alchemists, appears in Revelation 2:17: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Khunrath writes:

> When at last the ash-colour, the whitening, and the yellowing are over, you will see the Philosophical Stone, our King and Lord of Lords, come forth from the couch and throne of his glassy sepulchre onto the stage of the world, in his glorified body, regenerated and more perfect, shining like a carbuncle, and crying out Behold, I make all things new.[13]

Hopkins' "transmutation" is remarkably parallel to that of alchemy, on both levels, "scientific" and spiritual. Of the first Cirlot writes:

> The four stages of the process were signified by different colours, as follows: black (guilt, origin, latent forces) for 'prime matter' (symbol of the soul in its original condition); white (minor work, first transmutation, quicksilver); red (sulphur, passion); and finally gold.[14]

And of the second, Jung records:

> When the adept experiences his own self, the"true man", in his work ... he encounters the analogy of the true man -- Christ -- in new and direct form, and he recognizes in the transformation in which he himself is in-

---

[12]Cirlot, p. 77.
[13]Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis, p. 264.
[14]Cirlot, p. 6.

> volved a similarity to the Passion. It is not an "imitation of Christ" but its exact opposite: an assimilation of the Christ-image to his own self, which is the "true man". It is no longer an effort, an intentional straining after imitation, but rather an involuntary experience of the reality represented by the sacred legend. This reality comes upon him in his work, just as the stigmata come to the saints without being consciously sought. They appear spontaneously. The Passion <u>happens</u> to the adept ... Nor does it originate in contemplation of Christ's Passion; it is the real experience of a man who has got involved in the compensatory contents of the unconscious by investigating the unknown, seriously and to the point of self-sacrifice.[15]

Hopkins' heroic nature required of him the sacrifice of the whole man (the "true man") to his ideal; but he was prevented by "The selfless self of self, most strange, most still" (No. 157, 27) from realizing the longing of his conscious <u>will</u>, until he had integrated himself as a "whole" individual by admitting a part of the contents of his unconscious. His completion as an individual, paradoxically, was won by opposition and struggle, in the Scotist way:

> Nay in all that toil, that coil, since (seems) I kissed the rod,
> Hand rather, my heart lo! lapped strength, stole joy, would Laugh, cheer.
> Cheer whom though? The hero whose heaven-handling flung me, foot trod
> Me? or me that fought him? O which one? is it each one? That night, that year
> Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God.
>
> (No. 64, 10-14)

There followed, as noted above, the <u>spontaneous</u> experience of complete identification with Christ, in a diatonic flash of

---

[15]Jung, <u>Mysterium Coniunctionis</u>, p. 349.

revelation; not through the Ignation way of self-abnegation, but as a total self-realization.

Evidence that Hopkins had achieved wholeness of being through the process of individuation outlined above is to be found in the change of tone which is apparent in the three sonnets composed during the last year of his life, 1889. No. 74 begins with a paraphrase from the prophet Jeremiah: "Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend / With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just". Obviously the poet now feels on equal terms with God, so much so that he feels free to call him to task for what appears as injustice in his dealings with his faithful servant: "Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend, / How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost / Defeat, thwart me?" (5-7). However, despite the ambiguity of his Lord, the poet freely acknowledges his steadfast loyalty. The poem ends: "Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain." Here the lower case "l" is notable, indicating the all-encompassing nature of God as both thwarter and inspirer of life.

For some critics sonnet No. 75 has presented difficulties. Bridges refused to include it in his 1918 edition because he felt that this poem "must have been thrown off one day in a cynical mood, which he could not have wished permanently to ~~be~~ intrude among his last serious poems".[16] N.H. Mackenzie, however, includes it in the fourth edition, with this comment: "This son-

---

[16] Poems, Notes, p. 296.

net is the last of five full drafts, so it is obvious that G.M. H. took it seriously. The fourth part of Gulliver is not placed among Swift's fragments, and this poem is important as expressing a mood the obverse of which is the highest Christian idealism."[17] R. Boyle, S.J. goes even further, maintaining that "The poem is not cynical at all. It states a truth ... that the conventional ... Bridges was not likely to want to face. Hopkins faced it fully."[18] What Hopkins was facing was full acceptance of man's, and his own, essential limitations. In other words, he had fully incorporated the dark side of being into ego-consciousness.

"To R.B." (No. 76), taken at face value, is a communication from a "winter world", where "Sweet fire the sire of muse" (9), poetic inspiration, is completely lacking. Hopkins excuses his "lagging lines" (11). However, one has only to read the poem to discover that the lines are instict with rhythmic energy, the counterpart of symbolic images of the creative force of spirit. The final tercet, surely, indicates that the muse is still working in the depths of the poet's psyche. Consider the rising energy encapsulated in the line: "The roll, the rise, the carol, the creation". This crescendo is followed by a decrescendo, it is true; however the prosody would demand this contrast in any case.

---

[17] Poems, Notes, p. 296.
[18] R. Boyle, S.J., Metaphor in Hopkins, p. 132, Notes p. 296.

The sonnet is, in fact, a contradiction in terms. Extremes meet in the delicate tension between what the poet says he is saying, and what the poem actually does say. It must be read in full to appreciate the paradox:

> The fine delight that fathers thought; the strong
> Sour, live and lancing like the blowpipe flame,
> Breathes once and, quenchèd faster than it came,
> Leaves yet the mind a mother of immortal song.
>
> Nine months she then, nay years, nine years she long
> Within her wears, bears, cares and combs the same:
> The widow of an insight lost she lives, with aim
> Now known and hand at work now never wrong.
>
> Sweet fire the sire of muse, my soul needs this;
> I want the one rapture of an inspiration.
> O then if in my lagging lines you miss
>
> The roll, the rise, the carol, the creation,
> My winter world, that scarcely breathes that bliss
> Now, yields you, with some sighs, our explanation.

The humour in the final line, in which the poet may be heard laughing at himself, suggests that his balance has been restored. The daring sexual image of the first quatrain indicates that Hopkins is far from being "Time's eunuch" (No. 74, 13), that he is still "charged with the grandeur of God" (No. 31, 1).

CONCLUSION

Cirlot notes that

> A synthesis is the result of a thesis and an antithesis. And true reality resides only in the synthesis. The basic elements of such antithesis are the positive principle (male, lucid, active), and, opposing it, the negative principle (female, obscure, passive); psychologically speaking, these correspond to the conscious and unconscious components of the personality; and from the point of view of Man's destiny, they correspond to involution and evolution.[1]

As was noted in Chapter VII above, Hopkins felt the need of unity of being for self-identification. Cirlot writes:

> A great many symbols touch upon the great myth of coniunctio or unification, representing the union of opposites. In Jungian psychology, this conjunction has a purely psychological meaning within the psyche of one individual. ... Mystic longing has its being in the profound yearning for absolute unity of all that is particularized and separate. In conjunction, then, lies the only possibility of supreme peace and rest. The union of heaven and earth ... is a symbol of conjunction.[2]

Two of the poems examined in the previous chapter, "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire", and Sonnet No. 68, exemplify the poet's"conjunction" through their manipulation of colour. The first presents a crystallization of all the colours of the rainbow (earthly, chromatic colour) in the "terrible crystal"[3] -- "immortal diamond"; the second, a re-ordering through dissolution, and the addition of green (earthly life, regeneration and hope), and yellow (intuition and understanding), of the crimson/blue/purple sacred chord. The first is diatonic, the second

---

[1]Guenon, Le Symbolisme de la Croix (Paris, 1931), Cirlot, p. 24.

[2]Jung, "Psychology of the Transference" The Practice of Psychotherapy (London, 1964), Cirlot, p. 49.

[3]Letters to Bridges, p. xxxv.

chromatic. Yet each unite heaven and earth, the timeless and the temporal, Christ and Hopkins. In "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" the union is a physical identification with Christ in a flash of "stress" -- "In a flash, at a trumpet crash, / I am all at once what Christ is" (19-20), while in "Patience" (NO. 68) it is a psychic identification, the outcome of the "war within".

The number of the colours of the spectrum comprises a related meaning: the number seven is "Symbolic of perfect order, a complete period or cycle. ... it is the number expressing the sum of heaven and earth. ... with its characteristic quality of synthesis it is regarded as a symbol of transformation and integration of all hierarchial orders as a whole".[4]

Crystallized in "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" (No. 72), the colours mingle chromatically in "Patience" (No. 68), holding in solution, as it were, the three of the sacred chord and the four of the quaternio, thus uniting heaven and earth (the 3 and the 4), and completing, together, the mystic number seven. Understanding is represented by the light of eternity in "That Nature"; in "Patience" by the projection of a process, in which purple (the "mystery of the Passion") leads to the yellow of intuition. It appears, therefore, that Hopkins came to self-realization through two alternate ways: the Scotist way of completion by opposition and bracing (representing the positive

---

[4]Cirlot, pp. 223 and 227.

principle, "male, lucid, active"), and the Ignation way of surrender of the self (representing the negative principle, "female, obscure, passive"). If this was actually the case, then it may be concluded that his "dichotomy" was really only the dualism naturally present in the human psyche, but in heightened form. As Cirlot notes, duality may be seen as complementary, rather than antithetical.[5] "Nevertheless", he adds, "the tendency of opposites to unite in a synthesis is always characterized by stress and suffering", [the two unitive modes of "Nature" and "Patience", respectively] until and unless it is finally resolved by supernatural means".[6]

Since Christ was both God and man, hero and saint, Hopkins was able, through identification with him, to realize his entire being. For an individual who insisted upon the constant ability to say "What I do is me: for that I came"(57, 8) the perilous adventure of self-integration was an essential process.

---

[5]Cirlot, p. 24.
[6]Cirlot, p. 24.

APPENDIX

HOPKINS' DUALISM

	Masculine (Yang) Outer	Feminine (Yin) Inner
Colour	"Advancing"	"Retiring"
Mythic	God as the Creator	The "Great Earth Mother"
Religious	Christ	The Virgin Mary
Social	Civilized	Primitive
Moral	The Will	The Instincts
Functional	Active	Passive
Ethical	Heroism	Patience
Human	Genius	Sainthood
Psychic	Stress	Slack
Scotus	Individuality (through stress)	Personality (spontaneous)
Aesthetic	Diatonic (abrupt)	Chromatic
Qualitative	Static	Fluid
Cosmic	Fire and Air	Earth and Water
Sensuous	Sight	Touch
Affective	Intellect	Feeling
Dynamic	Evolution	Involution

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT

PRIMARY WORKS

Hopkins, Gerard Manley, Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited by W.H. Gardner and N.H. MacKenzie, 4th edition, London, 1967.

The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited by Humphry House and Graham Storey, 2nd edition, London, 1959.

The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, edited by Claude Abbott, London, 1935.

The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Dixon, edited by Claude Abbott, London, 1935.

The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited by Christopher Devlin, S.J., London, 1959.

SECONDARY WORKS

Bodkin, Maud, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry, London, 1963.

Campbell, Joseph, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, Cleveland, 1956.

Cirlot, J.E., A Dictionary of Symbols, translated by Jack Sage, New York, 1962.

Eliot, Thomas Stearns, "Ash Wednesday", Collected Poems, London, 1963, page 100.

"Little Gidding", Collected Poems, London, 1963, page 222.

"The Waste Land", Collected Poems, London, 1963, page 78.

Fiedler, Leslie, "Archetype and Signature", Literature in Critical Perspectives, edited by Walter K. Gordon, New York, 1968.

Frye, Northrop, *Fearful Symmetry*, Boston, 1962.

Heuser, Alan, *The Shaping Vision of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, London, 1958.

Jung, Carl Gustave, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, translated by R.F.C. Hull, New York, 1959.

Man and His Symbols, London, 1964.

Mysterium Coniunctionis, translated by R.F.C. Hull, New York, 1963.

Psychology and Alchemy, translated by R.F.C. Hull, London, 1953.

"Psychology of the Transference", *The Practice of Psychotherapy*, London, 1954.

Symbols of Transformation, New York, 1956.

Two Essays on Analytical Psychology, Cleveland, 1965.

May, Rollo, "The Significance of Symbols", *Symbolism in Religion and Literature*, edited by Rollo May, New York, 1960.

Neumann, Erich, *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, Princeton, 1970, page 369.

Nicolson, Marjorie Hope, *Newton Demands the Muse*, Princeton, 1946.

Partridge, Eric, *Origins*, London, 1959.

Pick, John, *Gerard Manley Hopkins Priest and Poet*, London, 1966.

Ruskin, John, *Modern Painters*, 5 volumes, London, 1897, II, IV.

Woolf, Virginia, *Orlando*, New York, 1960.