HOPKINS' INSCAPE AS ILLUMINATED

BY A CONSIDERATION OF THE CINQUECENTO

ARTISTIC TRADITION AND THE WORK OF MICHELANGELO

by

MARY JANICE MILLARD

B.A., University of British Columbia, 1967

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department

of

ENGLISH

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

September, 1968
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and Study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of English

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date September 25, 1968
This thesis attempts to define Hopkins' use of the word "inscape" in terms of a cultural tradition in which he shares. Inscape is basically a concern for ordering experience in both its temporal and eternal manifestations. Each individual is part of a vast, harmonious whole wherein the parts are related to one another and confront one another with their unique individuality. The order thus envisaged is upheld by God, who sustains relationships and reveals Himself in the communication between man and his world.

The order that Hopkins encounters is the same order working through the artistic movement encompassed by the terms Renaissance, Mannerism, and Baroque. The Renaissance artist thought that man could become a part of that order, using it to reach God, by means of the intellectual contemplation of beauty. The Mannerist challenged his predecessors' logic, suggesting that man's problems were such as to impede the Neo-Platonic progression: if God is to be reached through the beautiful, the individual who cannot penetrate an ugly reality to ultimate perfection, who cannot rest content with a hypothetical ideal world, will fail to find peace or assurance. The Baroque artist admits the Mannerist's list of grievances, but responds with force and plenitude, believing that the emotional impact of a work of art can carry the will in a positive direction. The Baroque artist feels that God is very present in the material world and may be apprehended there. The basic order includes that material world as a necessary and lasting part of God's consistent
and continuous revelation of Himself.

Michelangelo uses the term concetto much as Hopkins uses the word inscape, though more directly in terms of his art. Part of the ordered whole may be grasped and communicated in the hermonious ordering of the sculpted marble block. Michelangelo achieves his goal by working with Renaissance structures and the Manneristic breakdown of those structures. He resolves the Mannerist's conflicts not by turning to Baroque, but by returning to an expression of the Gothic yearnings of an earlier age.

Hopkins is ultimately a Baroque poet, but the Renaissance ordering that must precede the Baroque sensibility is clearly evident in a large portion of his work, as is the disruption of order inherent in Mannerism. What Michelangelo sees as a threat, however, Hopkins sees as a trial of his faith in both God and this world. Michelangelo's retreat, however, serves to clarify Hopkins determination not to retreat. Michelangelo eventually loses the ability to project a concetto, and therefore endeavours to do something less concrete with his medium. Hopkins continually loses his instressing power, but constantly seeks to relate to the wholeness that he knows surrounds him. By postulating a relationship with his environment that demands an ability to meet that environment with an emotional as well as an intellectual stability, he has left himself in a position where often it is only volitional effort that will carry him through any estrangement from his environment. For the sake of his own inscape, as person, priest, and poet, he commits himself to making that effort.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. BACKGROUND</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. RENAISSANCE</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. MANNERISM</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. BAROQUE</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ABBREVIATIONS

(See also Bibliography)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S.:</td>
<td>The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM.:</td>
<td>The Complete Poems of Michelangelo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM.:</td>
<td>The Letters of Michelangelo (2 vols.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

"The greatest artist," we are told (by one who has been frequently so labelled),

has no single concept
Which a rough marble block does not contain
Already in its core.

(PM.76)

Beneath many layers of unwanted stone, the statue waits to be freed. To see it there, in his mind's eye, is the real challenge of the sculptor: he does not build with his material; rather, he fights it, coaxes it to yield not to his tools but to the vision that reaches out from the stone to fill his mind. It is the idea, what Michelangelo calls the concetto, that must be conveyed: thus Michelangelo writes, "one cannot work at one thing with the hands and at another with the head, particularly in the case of marble" (LM.i.163). While painting is concerned with "building up" rather than with "cutting away," the principle is the same, for both painting and sculpture "proceed from one and the same faculty of understanding" (LM.ii.75); thus one also "paints with the head and not with the hands" (LM.ii.26). How well the artist uses his head depends on the scope of his vision:

There is no perfect art
Without the knowledge, first,
Of the extremes of art itself and life.

(PM.73)

To have that knowledge is to penetrate the marble block. The sculptor will find "in stone the statue great or vile" (PM.53): he will draw
forth the shape that he deserves to find; if what he produces is "great," it is so because his insight has been equal to the stone's potentiality, its innate concetto; if "vile", it is because there was for him within the marble block no more than he has forced it to yield. Thus the concetto works two ways: the marble block, like all substances, contains its own concetto; the artist projects another concetto onto it; in the work of the great artist, the two are the same.

Art involves intuition as much as imitation. Involvement in this process of give-and-take makes of any individual an artist, his impact on others depending on his degree of involvement. D'Ollanda records Michelangelo as saying:

I sometimes set myself thinking and imagining that I find amongst men but one single art or science, and that is drawing or painting, all others being members proceeding therefrom; for if you carefully consider all that is being done in this life you will find that each person is, without knowing it, painting this world, creating and producing new form...in dress..., in building..., in cultivating the fields..., in navigating..., in fighting...

It is because they act "without knowing it" that such men are not really artists. The acknowledged artist is one who is able to recognize and communicate the ordering process he is involved in—one who finds order in the world and in himself and is able to release that order for others to appreciate as well. By forging out of the materials at hand a new expression of an abstract ordering or of a formal truth, he is a poet in the etymological sense of the word: one who makes, creates, produces. By seeing that the order, the form, the concetto are
literally "brought down to earth," he awakens the earth to their presence. In so doing, he is very closely tied to his material:

The spirit only intuites in making, forming, expressing...Feelings or impressions...pass by means of words [or colours, or shapes, or sounds, one might add] from the obscure region of the soul into the clarity of the contemplative spirit...Poetical material permeates the souls of all: the expression alone...makes the poet.

The concetto in his mind interacts with that which he has envisioned in and through the medium—through, because mastering that medium is inseparable from grasping the form within it. If the right amount of marble is removed, the form is there for all to see; an inch too much, and it has escaped forever. Thus by words, by colours, shapes, sounds, the artist actually imprisons his forms in his material; he holds them in the temporal world so that men in that world may have a glimpse of the eternal world of forms from which they come. Both the artist and his audience are bound to some extent by their subjective sense experience, but the work of art refers each of them to an objective point from which their individual differences diverge. This objective point—the form, the order, the pattern—as seen by an artist among men or by the artist in man, is Michelangelo's concetto; it is also Hopkins' inscape.

The revelation of an inscape or the conveying of a concetto are intrinsic to the artistic process as it is shared by all men. T. S. Eliot describes a similar experience when he speaks of integrating physical, intellectual, and emotional components into a unified and
unique whole by means of the objective correlative. An experience is crystallized for the artist when he is able to mould his material in a meaningful part-whole balance around his central insight. Just as the diamond-cutter must find the exact point and angle from which the stone will shatter into a new and ordered wholeness, so, too, the artist must be able to approach his subject around and through its essential unity. Neither Michelangelo nor Hopkins discovered this truth for man, but they did discover it for themselves and were able, as many artists are not, to communicate (to a large extent) what this process entails.

Michelangelo was unique in that he can be said to have both embodied and surpassed the artistic development of Western Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Having lived for nearly a century himself, and having, during that time (1475-1564), captured the imagination of his peers and of his public, he not only spoke for the artistic orientations of that century, but set trends more far-reaching than had any of his predecessors or contemporaries. His name is inseparably linked with the Renaissance, increasingly drawn into discussions about Mannerism, and seldom omitted when the origins of Baroque are under examination—though Michelangelo reveals what Baroque is not rather than what it is. Thus he serves not only to illustrate but also to clarify those three styles.

The purpose of this thesis might best be introduced by a statement made by Wylie Sypher:

"English literature seems to represent more fully or exactly than others the stages following each other in the Italian fine arts, which usually evolved more rapidly than the fine arts in northern Europe, and more decisively."
The different art forms are never very far apart. Michelangelo, sculptor, painter, and architect, was also a poet. Hopkins did not devote all of the little spare time he had to writing poetry: he drew, and he composed music. What Sypher and others claim as true for the relationship between artistic eras separated by time and distance is no less true of individual artists separated by degrees of genius as well as by geography and history.

Hopkins was a student and critic of philosophy, literature, art, and music. Essentially, like most artists, he was a student and critic of life. Many of the conclusions he drew were by no means original, just as some of the early poems he wrote were clearly derivative. Where he was truly distinctive—a word he used himself—was in his ability to live into a situation and to communicate it to others. Because he felt himself a part of both the temporal and eternal worlds, he was able to interact creatively with what he saw as other related parts of the vast, ordered whole of creation. This sense of relatedness was not something that he developed towards slowly, but something that was with him throughout his mature years. Because it was so much a part of him, it partook of his frustrations. Relatedness was not a distant ideal but a living reality. When he felt incapable of grasping the wholeness that he had experienced yesterday or last week or—in the final period of his "terrible sonnets"—last month or last year, he did not feel that life had betrayed him, but that he had somehow drifted out of contact with life. He never lost sight of the immanent pattern in all things. If relationships seemed to be falling apart, he knew that they only seemed to be doing so. Thus one cannot trace in his work, as one can in the work of
Michelangelo, a definite trend, a definite movement from wholeness to brokenness to wholeness again: one can only see a very sporadic but always consistent fluctuation from what (in terms that have been applied to Michelangelo) can be called a Renaissance to a Mannerisitic to a Baroque approach to art.

What is seen as a development in the work of Michelangelo and his contemporaries has hitherto been applied mainly to the visual arts or to a definable pattern in the life on an individual literary figure (such as Milton) or in a specific grouping of literary periods (such as the English Renaissance through the seventeenth century to the "Enlightenment"). Precisely because this development can be seen so clearly as a whole, however, it is flexible enough to be used profitably and without confusion to elucidate the varied course taken by an artist whose aesthetic position is similar to that underlying that development. Mannerism and Baroque derived from Renaissance art and cannot be understood apart from it. All three forms are concerned with the central problem of man's coming to terms with two types of order—mortal and immortal—and how they relate. Michelangelo focussed his understanding of that problem on the meaning of concetto, Hopkins on inscape.

The introducing of "art styles" becomes ultimately only a matter of labelling. It does serve the purpose, however, of giving the critic tools with which to activate concepts that would otherwise remain vague generalizations impassable to all but the subjective response. In the field of aesthetics, especially, personal taste must be transcended if any meaningful studies are to be made. Terms like "Renaissance", "Mannerism", and "Baroque" are even less necessary to the appreciation of
the work of Hopkins than they are to the work of Michelangelo. Even "inscape" can serve only as a hinge on which to swing full circle a man's confrontation with life. Yet if descriptive labels facilitate the ordering of a critic who seeks to probe the ordering of a poet, and thereby enrich the reading of his poetry, they have served their purpose. The poet, too, has his inscape—an inscape which once discovered can leave the reader's experience not only illuminated, but also "a billion/ Times told lovelier" (Poems, #36).
CHAPTER I
BACKGROUND

Both Michelangelo and Hopkins centre their aesthetics, for them an ideological structure devolving from a Platonic tradition tempered by Christianity, in the meeting of the temporal and eternal worlds. Michelangelo, however, has a stronger tendency to look through the matter to the form, through this world to the other, than does Hopkins. While Michelangelo generalizes, while he abstracts, Hopkins turns to the individual, to the form as embodied, even as existing, in the matter before him. The difference in emphasis derives mainly from the difference in their background. Hopkins was a man of much Latin, and more Greek: the "Star of Balliol" went to Plato for his Platonism, whereas Michelangelo absorbed most of his by cultural osmosis. While Michelangelo, moreover, found a workable synthesis for Classical and Gothic ideals in Renaissance Neo-Platonism, Hopkins found it in the scholasticism of Duns Scotus. A brief synopsis of these two philosophical positions will clarify the relation between the Italian sculptor and the Victorian poet, and also serve as introduction to a fuller discussion of the importance of inscape to Hopkins' aesthetics.

I

The Platonic Academy of Florence best epitomizes the Neo-Platonic outburst of the Quattrocento. Under the sponsorship of Lorenzo de Medici, it met at the villa of Marsilio Ficino, whose Theologia Platonica is the most representative work of the movement. Consisting of the Florentine literati rather than of dedicated philosophers, the
Academy built with their Neo-Platonism a system that was "as much a cult as a philosophy."

Plato had projected a world of Forms, and an aesthetic consonant with the superstructure he saw in all things: "It appears to me," he had recorded Socrates as saying, "that if anything else is beautiful besides the beautiful itself the sole reason for its being so is that it participates in that beautiful." Thus "the beauty in every form is one and the same." Since beauty as an eternal form partakes of divinity, it follows that

if man had eyes to see the true beauty—the divine beauty, I mean, pure and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality and all the colours and vanities of human life—thither looking, and holding converse with the true beauty simple and divine..."He would become the friend of God and be immortal."

The Alexandrian school had enlarged on the mortal-immortal dichotomy: if material objects become beautiful "by communicating in the thought that flows from the Divine," then "a Soul becomes ugly—by something foisted upon it, by sinking itself into the alien, by a fall, a descent into body, into Matter." The fallen soul, imprisoned in a material world, seeks release, desiring above all else reunion with the Ideal. "Each of us separated from God on earth is not a true man since he is separated from the Form ad Idea of himself." A soul in becoming beautiful becomes like God. To miss this in life is to fail utterly. All else is but a world of shadows, reflections on the wall of Plato's cave. Beauty is identical with Being.
The Florentines, continuing in this tradition, emphasized three principles:

first of all God, as the source of truth and beauty, secondly man's desire for both knowledge and beauty, this being his distinguishing characteristic and the mark of his divine nature, thirdly contemplation of the divine as the means by which the spirit of man can attain to full development.

Ficino defined beauty for the Florentine school as the radiance of divine goodness:

Goodness is said to be the outstanding characteristic of God. Beauty is a kind of force or light, shining from Him through everything, first through the Angelic Mind, second through the World Soul and the rest of the souls, third through Nature, and fourth through corporeal Matter.

Thus, man, in "seeing the glow of God in these, through this kind of glow sees and loves God Himself." Love may be defined, then, as the desire for beauty. If man allows the contemplation of God's beauty to guide his action, moreover, he will seek to do good deeds, for they, too, are beautiful; then man, like God, will radiate an exterior beauty from the goodness of his inner perfection. It is this inner quality that elicits love:

The beauty of some person pleases the soul not insofar as it exists in exterior matter, but insofar as its image is comprehended or grasped by the soul through sight.

Dante, in Vita Nuova, had suggested that amor sensitivo leads to amor
intellectivo; he had found in his love for Beatrice a means of moral perfection leading to celestial vision. Petrarch's Laura was somewhat less ethereal, perhaps because (or perhaps explaining why) Petrarch was less sure of his position:

In his prose as in his verse there is a continual tension between the man of the Middle Ages, who believes his true life to be in another world, and the man of the Renaissance, whose deepest interest centres in the world of human experience.

Petrarch's tension was one that the Neo-Platonists attempted to resolve:

They tried, in the midst of a very real and widespread relaxation of faith and morals, to establish rational bases for religion by showing how the witness of all philosophies pointed to the truth of the Christian revelation.

Humanism, in general, contributed towards conditioning men for the coming Reformation, but perhaps its most specific bequest was the Renaissance cult of beauty and its influence on the arts.

"From art," Aristotle had written, "proceed the things of which the form is in the soul of the artist." Thus art is an imitation not merely of nature, but of ideal nature as apprehended mentally by the artist. But how is he to communicate his vision? Plotinus stated a truism when he wrote that the formal beauty in a work of art reveals itself "only insofar as it has subdued the resistance of the material." The vision must be communicated through that material.

This, the artistic process, was for Alberti a matter of selecting what is beautiful in nature and copying it exactly. Art is an orderly
process and may be approached rationally:

Beauty is a kind of harmony and concord of all the parts to form a whole which is constructed according to a fixed member, and a certain relation and order, as symmetry, the highest and most perfect law of nature, demands.

The artist combines nature's best efforts, working toward the typical to find beauty. Thus art combines science and insight.

Leonardo, too, advocated direct observation, but he did not believe that the less than beautiful must be filtered out in order to create art. A painting is a reflection in a mirror, and what is important is not the beautiful but the individual and the characteristic. While Alberti sought the typical, Leonardo turned to the divergence from the typical with which his senses continuously confronted him. No human figure actually attains ideal proportions; the artist should paint, rather, the gestures and the facial expressions of the individual in society. Sight is the most spiritual of senses; use it, he admonished, for the imagination cannot see the splendour open to the eye.

The most severe critic of the arts of the Quattrocento was Savonarola, who included in his not unwarranted diatribe against Florentine society an unnecessarily harsh view of that society's artistic standards. However spiritual sight might be to Alberti, the eye (like all of the body) was for Savonarola soiled by sin: since beauty is clearest in its spiritual form, no indecent or worldly pictures have any place either in the churches, or—and he grew more bold—in public buildings or in private homes. His appeal went out to a people shamed by conscience or by fear, and the flames leapt higher in the city squares, purging
Florence of her vanity, her luxury, and her splendour.*

To the artisan, all was not lost; he could direct his talents towards the church as easily as towards the court. The true artist, however, was being regarded—and was regarding himself—as a participant not in the manual labour of the craftsman, but in the liberal arts: he was a visual poet. As a student, he knew the great men who went before him; as a man of promise patronized by the elite, he had been able to familiarize himself with contemporary thought. With the scourging of Florence, artists who refused to relinquish the rights and the insight they had won turned to Rome, Michelangelo among them.

The Florentine sculptor took with him to the heart of Italy an impressive training: he had learned the elements of design, drawing, and painting in the studio of Ghirlandaio; in the school of Bertoldo, in Lorenzo's garden of sculpture and antique art, he had begun to control the marble block. Having entered the Medici household, he was the familiar of Lorenzo's family, of the members of the Academy, and of Il Magnifico himself. When Savonarola and the Florentines turned against the Medici, Michelangelo fled the city, but already he was well enough established in both theory and practice to find his way into the good graces of influential patrons—a not unmixed blessing, he was soon to discover.

Until the 1530's, Michelangelo remained a High Renaissance Humanist. Douglas Bush broadly defines such a position as "Christian

*Condivi mentions that Michelangelo studied the writings of Savonarola and intimates that he had heard him preach; Hopkins writes to Urquhart in 1865:

I have just finished Romola and made myself wretched over the fall of Savonarola....I must tell you he is
faith in alliance with God-given reason." The element of acceptance
implicit in the Christian's faith in what has been revealed, and the
element of inquiry central to reason's uncovering of what has not yet
been revealed, are as essential to Michelangelo's aesthetic position as
they are to his philosophy and his theology. Beauty is revealed by
nature as a given product, as something that has been created: "this
flower is beautiful"—and is accepted as such. On the other hand, the
artist must contribute his own imaginative powers to the creation of
beauty: "this ugly flower would be beautiful if...." The two processes—
the acceptance of perceived beauty and the introducing of conceived
beauty come together in the work of art and are conveyed to the artist's
public: "look at this flower as I do and see what you have missed."

Michelangelo moved beyond both Alberti's dependence on selecting from
what was already given and Leonardo's allegiance to the undifferentiated
totality of the given. Michelangelo was interested in neither the typical
nor the characteristic, but in their fusion in the ideal.

If the body is the creation and outward expression of the
soul (a commonly held Neo-Platonic doctrine), then it is the soul that
should be portrayed. The body is thus a means, not an end, to the
artistic purpose. The paradox is inescapable:

Visible things must be loved since they alone
can recall the vision of pure beauty, but to see

the only person in history (except perhaps Origen) about
whom I have a real feeling, and I feel such an enthusiasm
about Savonarola that I can conceive what it must have
been to have been one of his followers. I feel this the
more because he was followed by the painters, architects
and other artists of his day, and is the prophet of
Christian art....The author of *Romola*...does not under-
stand him.

(LL.iii.17-18)
that vision and try to reveal it to men is to know
that matter is forever at enmity with the spirit.
There is a sense in which every work of art is a
betrayal."

The vision, that to see is to love, is the concetto that dwells as
much in man as in the rough-hewn block; thus Michelangelo wrote to
Vittoria Colonna:

My Lady, just as one already sees,
Concealed in the hard marble of the North,
The living figure one has to bring forth
(The less of stone remains, the more that grows);
So does the involucre of our flesh
Hide from the trembling soul,
With its burden of skin, unworked, rough, hard,
Deeds of both light and worth.

(PM.77)

To free the spirit from the flesh requires no less strenuous an effort
than freeing the figure from the marble. Plotinus had written:

...if you do not find yourself beautiful yet,
act as does the creator of a statue that is to be
made beautiful: he cuts away here, he smooths
there, he makes this line lighter, this other
purer, until a lovely face has grown upon his
work. So do you also. 22

"When", Michelangelo asked himself, "freed at last from all this
weary clay,/ Will you return to heaven?" (PM.78) He must escape the
material burden he carries; to do so, he needs help. He, like his
marble, must be sculpted by those he loves: he is the rough stone, his
soul the form within to be freed, but a form that finds its existence in
the goodness and beauty of others, just as the stone’s concetto is
dependent for its release on the concetto within the soul of the
artist. "My lady," he pleaded,

Reveal yourself to me,
Just as I do my thoughts on sheet and stone,—
Oh, blank, until I give them what I own.

(PM.89)

Through creative interaction with other people, he attains spiritual growth: they become part of him, part of the sculpting process. On the death of his father (following that of one of his brothers), he could therefore say:

My brother is now painted in my mind,
But you are sculpted in my deepest heart.

(PM.49)

Just as the artist gives life to the stone--

each act, each limb, each bone
Are given life and, lo, man's body is raised,
Breathing, alive, in wax or clay or stone

(PM.77)

--so, too, do the artist's sculptors give him life. This they do because of the relationship (and here Michelangelo concurred with Ficino) between love and beauty: "Love", which "is a concept of beauty,...A friend of virtue and of gentleness" (PM.51), draws him towards the beautiful concetto he was created to fulfill, a concetto he can envisage in his art, but cannot embody in his own life without the guidance of others:

Beauty alone can lift me to that height
Which I have tried to sculpt and paint on earth.

(PM.82)
That fount of pity, whence we all descend,
We are reminded of by beauty here...
No better token of light can heaven send
To us on earth: and the pure and sincere
Soar to God...

(PM.53)

As heat from fire one cannot divide
So from immortal beauty I, my thirst,
Quenched but a little by its closest flashes.

(PM.81)

It is God, therefore, who through the beauty that Michelangelo finds
in Vittoria, in Tommaso Cavalieri, is the greatest sculptor; He is the
"smith divine" whose hammer for a time was Vittoria, for a time
Cavalieri, but who alone is responsible for both the artist and his art:

...the first worker, God, remains above,
Whose very motion makes all loveliness.
To make a tool I need a tool, but his
Power is the first cause and makes all things move.23

Just as "man's art alone makes beauty live" (PM.111), so, too, it is
God's art that creates and sustains beauty in man. "If it is true a
beauteous thing can bring/ A man from earth to God" (PM.91), then in
loving the beauty that he sees, he is loving Him from whom it emanates:

Through mortal beauty, thus, I can behold
And know my God; and I am free to love
Whatever so superbly mirrors Him.

(PM.134)

Thus all life is an art in the highest sense, and aesthetics something to
be lived as well as systematized. Michelangelo works with his concetti
to create beauty because to do so is part of the larger process of finding
in his own life the spiritual beauty that is envisaged for him in the
mind of God.

II

For Hopkins, as for Michelangelo, what is true of aesthetics is
no less true of life. Beauty, truth, goodness, love: all are inter-
related, all work together to shape socially and spiritually the soul
of man. Michelangelo looked to the transcendent manifestations of those
qualities; he saw the Crucifixion and Resurrection as vindication of
that in man which is eternal. Hopkins, on the other hand, saw man's
ideals as they are realized here and now; he turned to the Incarnation
as sanctification of that in man which is temporal and material.

Augustine distinguishes between "delight of the sense" and
"delight through the sense": the pleasant sound pleases the sense of
hearing, but the sound's significance is found in the meaning carried
to the mind. Natural beauty is not to be dismissed by some fiat of
the imagination, but should be given the sound estimation of its worth
that is due to it. One might prefer mental telepathy to a verbalization
that is often inadequate, but perhaps speech is meant to prepare us for
a more direct method of communication later on. Augustine, who finds
rhythm the hallmark of beauty, feels that rhythm in natural beauty is
inevitably imperfect, but it has its purpose: "We must use such rhythm
well, so that eventually we may dispense with it." Natural beauty
plays, therefore, a rather neutral rôle: it is only what man makes of
it, just as the sculptor's stone can be destroyed by an inept artist or
transformed by a man of genius. Nature is not beautiful in itself:
"What is not produced by the aesthetic spirit, or cannot be referred to it, is neither beautiful nor ugly." The position arrived at by Augustine does not seem very far removed from that of Plato; it is a question of standing in the same place and looking in two different directions. For Michelangelo, the material world is a sacrifice; for Hopkins, it is a sacrament.

Hopkins' basic source is neither Plato nor the Medieval philosophers, but the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. The Society of Jesus (which gained papal approval in 1540) was planned largely in 1534, the year that Michelangelo settled permanently in Rome. Loyola was concerned with many of the issues that confronted Michelangelo. The conflict between two worlds, resolved by the Neo-Platonists by turning to idealism, and by a worldly church by resorting to hypocrisy or blatant corruption, is given a clear statement and direction towards resolution in the opening lines of the *Exercises*, the "Principle and Foundation":

> Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. All other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him fulfill the end for which he is created. From this it follows that man is to use these things to the extent that they will help him to attain his end. Likewise, he must rid himself of them in so far as they prevent him from attaining it.

Hopkins followed Loyola's lead in reading *De Imitatione Christi*, a classic reputedly by Thomas à Kempis, a fifteenth-century ecclesiastic and practical theologian. The Ignatian statement just quoted is clearly in the same tradition as these, from à Kempis:
...if everything that exists appeared before your eyes, it would be nothing but a spectacle that gave no satisfaction.

...If your heart were right, then every created thing would be a mirror of life and a book of holy doctrine, for no creature is so small and mean that it cannot display God's goodness. If your heart were good and pure, there would be nothing to prevent you from looking at everything and really understanding it, for a pure heart can penetrate heaven and hell.

A man's impressions of the world depend on what he is in his heart.28

The tradition is a Scriptural one, perhaps best summed up by the Psalmist:

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth!...

When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast established;
what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him?
Yet thou hast made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honour.

(Psalm 8:1,3-5, RSV)

and by Paul:

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved.

(Romans 8:19-24, RSV)
Condivi tells us that Michelangelo read both the Old and the New Testaments diligently: Hopkins did so by vocation, studying them intensively in his theological training at St. Beuno's, and using them as raw materials for both his sermons and his own spiritual growth.

Hopkins found his modern equivalent to the direct Greek influence with which Michelangelo came in contact in ancient art (Lorenzo being a connoisseur) in the person of Walter Pater. Nor was that influence far removed from the undergraduate meetings that spurred his interest in the theological tradition just discussed: the major stress of the Tractarians of the Oxford Movement was on the ritual of the Church, a stress denoting a change in sensibility as much as in doctrine. Thus Aldington, in his introduction to a selection from the aesthetes' writings, can claim justly:

Nobody can fail to notice how closely the aesthetes were connected with Oxford or how many of them (including Ruskin, Morris, Burne-Jones, Pater, and many minor figures) had originally intended to take Holy Orders.

He goes on to clarify the parallel:

…it was through Pater and J. A. Symonds [both critics of Michelangelo] that English readers were initiated into Goethe's 'ideal of self culture' which formed so essential a part of the aesthetic ideal. This, as many have noted, is a transference of the Christian idea of individual salvation of the soul to the sphere of literature and art.

Pater's Marius is the epitome of the "self culture" ideal. Through him, Pater emphasizes the importance of what a man is rather than what he does, and that the life of an individual can be a work of art. Hegel had written that "art has the vocation of revealing the truth in the form
of sensuous shape"; thus to surround oneself with physical beauty comprises a search for truth. It was Pater's misfortune to be misunderstood, to father by accident a generation of would-be Dorian Grays. In his own mind, he always qualified his statements by an ethical code almost puritanical. To stress individuality may deny any concept of the absolute as being outside of human experience, but it does not deny social obligation as a standard of conduct, or emotional interdependence of individuals as a motivating factor. In writing (in his famous "Conclusion" to The Renaissance), "Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end," Pater did not mean to imply any derogation of responsibility. Beauty, he would admonish, is not circumscribed in definition by that which is merely pleasurable. If "art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake," it may be an intense experience, but it is also a highly ordered one. Pater's "hard, gemlike flame" is akin, though not equivalent, to what Dixon called Hopkins' "terrible crystal" (LL.ii.9). To be very aware of the beautiful is, for Pater, to be very alive; for Hopkins, to be very aware of the beautiful is to be very aware of Life.

As an undergraduate, Hopkins also came under the sway of Ruskin, whose Modern Painters was on Hopkins' list of books to be read (J.56) and whose opinions are occasionally noted in the letters and journals. Ruskin combines to some extent the thought structure that Michelangelo found in Alberti and Leonardo: in stressing the "specific" as opposed to the generic on the one hand and the individual on the other, he advocates a compromise between idealism and naturalism that eliminates
eccentricities but allows for the unique beauties of a given class of objects. Like Leonardo, he is interested in variation, in the distinctive; like Alberti, he is interested in the typical:

Now there is but one grand style, in the treatment of all subjects whatsoever, and that style is based on the perfect knowledge, and consists in the simple unencumbered rendering, of the specific characters of the given object, be it man, beast, or flower.

There is an ideal form of every herb, flower, and tree; it is that form to which every individual of the species has a tendency to arrive, freed from the influence of accident or disease. Every landscape painter should know the specific characters of every object he has to represent. 36

Hopkins' extant drawings, in their concern with the detail of a petal or the movement of a stream, suggest that he has, in Ruskin's words, "received the word of God for clouds, and leaves, and waves, and kept it." The specific for Hopkins actually links the ideal and the individual: a bluebell is that particular bluebell in front of him in the field, but it is also representative of all bluebells everywhere, of the form of "bluebell". It is part of a larger harmony than its own, moreover:

One day when the bluebells were in bloom I wrote the following. I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our Lord by it.

(J.199)

The concrete and the ideal are inter-related.
In his Christian and Classical reading, Hopkins found a focus on the eternal; in Ruskin, and especially in Pater, an emphasis on what the senses tell us here and now. In Duns Scotus, he discovered a philosophy that enabled him to reconcile the two. On August 3, 1872, while on the Isle of Man, he noted in his Journal:

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

(J.221)

To Bridges he wrote (February 20, 1875):

...it was with sorrow I put back Aristotle's Metaphysics in the library some time ago feeling that I could not read them now and so probably should never. After all I can, at all events a little, read Duns Scotus and I care for him more even than Aristotle.

(LL.i.31)

In a sonnet of 1878, he spoke of him as one:

...who of all men most sways my spirits to peace;

Of reality the rarest-veined unraveller; a not Rivalled insight, be rival Italy or Greece.

(Poems, #44)

Two years later, he was concerned with etymology involving Scotus' name (LL.iii.419-424), and in 1884, he comforted Patmore for his lack of reputation by comparing his position to that of Scotus, who "saw too far" and knew too much; his subtlety overshot his interests" and his genius
was lost on the mere talent of little minds, which "less and less able to understand him, voted that there was nothing important to understand and so first misquoted and then refuted him" (LL.iii.349).

"Misquoted" and thereby "refuted", he was still "the one great thinker alive in the West." A scholar of Greek when Europe had turned to Latin, he reveals in his work a mind oriented more towards Neo-Platonism than towards the patristic literature of his Medieval contemporaries. *On the Division of Nature*, his greatest work, postulates an ordering of the universe not dissimilar to that of Ficino. He divides his treatise into four areas of discussion: God, the source of all; the primal causes which mediate between God and creation; the nature of the created universe; and the return of all to God.

Like Plato, Scotus stressed reality as being what is comprehensible to the intellect; all else is mere appearance. "Man is a thought eternally created in the mind of God": the soul is the image of God; the body, the image of the soul. The soul has to the material world a similar relation as has God to the entire creation: the world exists "more truly...in the notions of man" than in the "actual substance" of the things themselves. "The material body"—of man and of nature—"is superadded because of sin, and it is not so much a true body, as a kind of changeable and corruptible vestment of the spiritual body." The universe is a kind of vestment of God, a theophany at the temporal level; it is also a vestment of man, taking shape in his mind. How it actually takes shape is the key to the attraction that Scotus held for Hopkins.

Scotus did not follow the path of the idealists who went before him, ignoring or bypassing all but the pure vision of intellectual essence. This is an ultimate goal, but far removed from man where he is, in this
world. Here and now, it is the unique, individual sense experience on which man must concentrate his efforts. From this he may abstract the form, but that is a secondary process, necessary to man's ordering impulse, but one step removed from the actual revelation of God. The object has a generic, specific, and individual form, and the latter is the most intensive and therefore the most communicative in the relationship between man and his environment. It communicates by its haecceitas, its "this-ness", which is an active principle that interacts with the active creative power of the mind. It was stated earlier in this paper (page 2) that the concept in the material object is the same as that in the mind of him who would free it. It is the same only in the sense that the representation of an object in the mind is the same as the actual physical object: they are equal, but not identical. The two active principles meet, but they do not merge. Gardner, writing of Hopkins' understanding of the principle, describes the process in this way:

It is the Will, and not the Intellect, which 'possesses' a loved object. Intellect is related to the specific, common nature of man; whereas Will is the expression of individuality. 40

The object exists in itself as well as in the mind because it exists basically in the mind of God. But it is real to man only in what he makes of it. He looks for the pattern he expects to find: this for him is the object's haecceitas. When his vision is equal to the truth of the object, then the perception of haecceitas is an overwhelming experience, a kind of mystical insight: it is a direct communion with God, for it is a perception of the incarnate Logos, the Word of God. Thus haecceitas
is an active movement of the will of God interacting with the will of man. To respond to the *haecceitas* is spontaneously to praise God.

Hopkins did not find in Scotus anything particularly new, not even a vocabulary. As early as 1868, in undergraduate notes on Parmenides, he was using his own terms to discuss the problems of orientation towards reality that the philosopher confronted him with:

*His great text...is that Being is and Not-being is not—which perhaps one can say, a little over-defining his meaning, means that all things are upheld by instress and are meaningless without it. An undetermined Pantheistic idealism runs through the fragments which makes it hard to translate them satisfactorily in a subjective or in a wholly outward sense. His feeling for instress, for the flush and foredrawn, and for inscape/ is most striking and from this one can understand Plato's reverence for him as the great father of Realism.*

(J.127)

Inscape, then, is inseparable from reality. It was the Scotian ordering of that reality which so delighted Hopkins; he needed not an explanation of experience but a system of thought by which he could relate his theories to those of the Western philosophical tradition.

To appreciate the position that inscape holds in Hopkins' aesthetics necessitates a preliminary glance at his most sustained discussion on aesthetics itself, an early essay entitled "On the Origin of Beauty: a Platonic Dialogue" (May 12, 1865). His choice of the dialectical form is perhaps as much due to Pater (for whom the essay might have been written) as to Plato, for Hopkins' tutor had the same "appearance of never forcing the argument but letting it go its own
way, lying in wait for the truth to descend” as did the Greek philosopher. Hopkins, too, endeavours to draw out all sides of the discussion, leading the participants (three men of different backgrounds) to the natural conclusion into which the various viewpoints merge. Any one person's viewpoint involves subjectivity. To find an objective standard on which all may agree is therefore prerequisite to any philosophical discussion. Thus the definition of beauty as personal taste alone must be dismissed, for "If a man disputes your judgment in taste, how can you prove he is wrong" (J.86). Sincerity is no guarantee of truth. If the actual process of response to beauty is analysed, however, it will be seen that there exists a common ground for the three men in that very process. In looking at a chestnut-fan, they discover that there is something in the actual leaf that engenders a positive aesthetic response in each of them. The parts and the whole interact in such a way as to set up a harmony, an ordered pattern. "Beauty therefore is a relation, and the apprehension of it a comparison" (J.95). Likeness and difference, regularity and irregularity, occasion that comparison by positing an infinite variety in the part-whole complex, a variety generating the worth and beauty of each individual object. The rest of Hopkins' essay involves a discussion of the ramifications of this point, especially as it applies to poetry.

By introducing the concept of inscape, Hopkins identifies the relation that he has discovered the basis of beauty to be with the formal existence of an object. The "scape" of "inscape" (as of "landscape") derives from the Latin scapus or the Greek skapot, used to refer
to the staff of a column, the tongue of a balance, or a flower-stalk or stem. The role of each of these instances in which the classical word is used is that of holding together the base of the object and the object's functional attributes. If "scape" were to be used as a verb, it would thus have a gathering together or ordering signification. Modified to "inscape", the word takes on the additional meaning of some kind of inner process, of personal involvement. A diary note of Hopkins illustrates the way in which inscape operates:

...before I had always taken the sunset and the sun as quite out of gauge with each other, as indeed physically they are, for the eye after looking at the sun is blunted to everything else and if you look at the rest of the sunset you must cover the sun, but today I inscaped them together and made the sun the true eye and ace of the whole, as it is. It was all active and tossing out light and started as strongly forward from the field as a long stone or a boss in the knop of the chalice-stem: it is indeed by stalling it so that it falls into scape with the sky.

(J.196)

It is as if the artist had suddenly grasped the concetto that would transform his scattered sense perceptions into an ordered work of art. The discovery of inscape is the discovery of relatedness. To see the object as it is, is to see the complete pattern. The relation between the perceiver and the object is complete, and thus becomes, in turn, another ordered whole composed of related parts, a whole that is as unique as both the person and the object that are therein brought together. The successful artist is he who can make of the relation between himself and his environment an ordered whole to be inscaped by others (and so the process goes on). The artist fails when he is
unable to relate the parts to each other and to the whole: his work is not beautiful because it is incomplete. Croce writes that the beautiful does not possess degrees, although there are degrees of ugliness (from the rather ugly—or almost beautiful—to the extremely ugly):

if the ugly were complete, that is to say, without any element of beauty, it would for that very reason cease to be ugly, because it would be without the contradiction in which is the reason of its existence.  

Just as ugliness in a work of art is an incomplete expression, so, too, ugliness seen in the world is an incomplete vision. Differences in taste are therefore differences in perception. If beauty is the relation inherent in the order of being, then ugliness does not exist outside of man's incapacity to see clearly. The degradation inherent in the material world is a result of man's limited vision; to fall short in obedience to God is to fall short in all things; to be blind to His glory is to be blind to the glory of creation. Thus Ruskin wrote: "To see clearly is poetry, prophecy and religion all in one." Hopkins would concur with Pater about the importance of fully appreciating the aesthetic experience, but he would modify Pater's sense of relatedness: for Pater, subjective limitations imply that beauty, de riqueur, is relative, that man is part of no whole not of his own making; for Hopkins, however, a true perception of beauty comes only with the perception of God, in whom the infinite number of individual part-whole relations are bound together in an absolute whole.

Perhaps inscape can best be described as the glory of the word made flesh: the essential nature of the object—that is, the object as
it is perceived by God and as it reveals Him—has been conveyed through
the object's material components. The individual who is searching for
or discovering inscape undergoes a process, but it is a structure that
he encounters, what Hopkins calls the object's distinctive "design" or
"pattern" (LL.i.66). We tend too often to take an object for granted,
thus losing the sense of its unique place in our and its surroundings.
In refusing to become personally involved with the object, we degrade it
to its quantitative rather than its qualitative value. To perceive the
structural whole that is an inscape is to interact with the object not
in an "I-it" relationship, but one that—going even further than did
Martin Buber, who spoke of human relationships—could be called "I-Thou".
Nothing is exempt from this approach, for to be is to assert one's
individuality and to demand recognition:

Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selvess--goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying What I do is me: for that I came.

(Poems, # 57)

The uniqueness of an object so perceived is sometimes such that the
noun ordinarily applied to it is inadequate, so Hopkins coins a new
name, one that captures the peculiar "thisness" of the object in all its
intellectual and emotional ramifications for man: the poet "tends to a
fusion of all that words can utter."

Hopkins' concern with words extends to the concept of inscape
itself: the pattern, the beauty, and the reality encompassed by the
term are structural entities, but inscape, it has been noted, is attained
by a process. This process Hopkins labels "instress". The English word
"stress" derives from the Old French equivalent of the Greek word *energeia*, the "principle of actuality in a thing." Once again, the prefix "in" connotes personal involvement: the poet does not just observe an inscape, he experiences it: he enters the relationships working within the whole and thereby enlarges the pattern. The actualizing principle is both encountered and shared: the poet participates in it. Instress thus relates the perceiver and the object perceived. It is a two-way process: "What you look hard at seems to look hard at you" (J.204). Instress is the dynamic constituent of the relationship, inscape the static element. Instress is more truly the verb (although Hopkins is not grammatically consistent), inscape the noun.

The sense of personal involvement in relationship, of "felt thought", and of communication with another part of the whole of which one is oneself a part is most clearly expressed by the poet in a stanza from *The Wreck of the Deutschland*:

```
I am soft sift
In an hourglass--at the wall
Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,
    And it crowds and it combs to the fall;
I steady as a water in a well, to a poise, to a pane,
    But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall
Fells or flanks of the voel, a vein
Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift.
```

(Poems, #28:4)

The first image--sand slowly but irrevocably falling through the narrow part of an hourglass--describes the lack of relatedness that precedes the inscaping experience. Man is subject to the laws of time and space; there is nothing to cling to, and no way to put the situation in a perspective where man is in control. Like Alice falling down the rabbit-hole,
one receives no answers to all one's questions but "Down, down, down."
There is no "stress"; there is only what Hopkins calls "slack". The
movement of the second image—the pressure of an artesian well—is,
conversely, upwards. The turning factor is the discovery of the
relating principle that produces wholeness: it is the gospel, "Christ's
gift"—"The water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of
water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14, RSV). The poet feels that
he has found the ordering principle of the universe—the Logos, the
Word of God—and thus the key to the inscaping process:

tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,
His mystery must be instressed, stressed.

(Poems, #28:5)

The movement from hourglass to well is a movement from passivity to
action, and thus a movement from death to life.

Communication—the purpose of inscape—demands commitment—an
act of will, of assent, and of trust. Man is by nature involved in
the inscaping that constitutes universal order; if he wishes to catch the
instress as it comes to him from other inscapes, however, he must make a
conscious effort to meet it:

...I must have the centre in my heart
To spread the compass on the all-starr'd sky.

(Poems, #102)

Passivity is a relapse into neutrality or even denial: "Unless you
refresh the mind from time to time you cannot always remember or believe
how deep the inscape in things is" (j.205).
Inscape, haecceitas, Form, concetto: four terms that are parallel if not synonymous. What they embody for both Hopkins and Michelangelo comprises a theology and a philosophy as well as an aesthetic. Neither man compartmentalized his mind or his life. If I have stressed Michelangelo the artist and Hopkins the thinker, it is because art was Michelangelo's world--

With so much servitude, with so much anguish,
And with false concepts periling my soul,
Sculpt I must, here on earth, bright things of heaven.

(PM.151)

--while it was only a secondary concern of Hopkins': "Our Society values... and has contributed to literature, to culture; but only as a means to an end" (LL.ii.93). When the end could be better achieved than in the writing of poetry, then poetry was put aside. What Michelangelo sought to express in stone and what Hopkins sought to express in his life—and thus indirectly in his poems—are nevertheless related, not because of any influence Michelangelo might have had on Hopkins (although Hopkins was familiar with his work)* but because of their similar aesthetic orientation. The difference in emphasis already noted—Michelangelo's stronger tendency towards otherworldliness—will culminate in the diverse directions taken as the two men find their way through the breakdown of their systems to a final resolution. How they withstand the test in terms of their chosen media will be the subject of the succeeding chapters.

*See Appendix.
CHAPTER II
RENAISSANCE

Inscape is an attribute of the Word of God. Its purpose is to uphold the relatedness between the world and its Creator. Hopkins paraphrases (perhaps unconsciously) the Ignatian "Principle and Foundation" in a manner consonant with his aesthetic philosophy:

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

(S.129)

Man, in hearing that utterance, responds similarly with praise and becomes part of the universal harmony of inter-related inscapes. "When a man sees all things as that one Word, refers all things to that one Word, views all things in that one Word," writes Thomas à Kempis, "then he can be inwardly stable and rest at peace in God." An equilibrium is set up between man and his world, for he has found the centre of the whole in which he is a part.

Gothic art, claims Wylie Sypher, set up an equilibrium that was too delicate, too easily disturbed; he quotes Henry Adams to illustrate this precariousness as it is manifested in the Gothic cathedral:

The delight of its aspirations is flung up to the sky. The pathos of its self-distrust is buried in the earth as its last secret.

The strain comes from trying to contain the human in the abstract; space was a backdrop rather than an environment, and freedom of movement
...in truth gothic art gave us dramatic episodes with very human actors, but could not furnish the proper stage, the proper space, for an entirely humanist drama....The gothic figures are secular, but their world is not.

The Renaissance sought to reconcile actors and setting not by tearing down the backdrop, but by introducing an intellectualism that rendered man sophisticated enough to actually go backstage and discuss the backdrop's construction with the properties manager. The world did not cease to be a stage, but the actors who saw their rôles clearly were no longer afraid to move, were no longer dwarfed by the immensity of the painted sky. The Gothic age felt that no-one but God could create; the Renaissance artist discovered that he, too, had tools to work with; he had been given a mind, to be used not in assenting blindly to dogma—be it religious or artistic—but in working together with God in creating an infinite harmony, a stable balance of all aspects of life. He no longer tried to look in two directions at the same time, for truth is one: "the single vision of the renaissance humanized the world."

This process of humanization involved many components. The artist's general concern seems to be with conveying through his work a sense of real people in situations where they are free to experience real emotions. Pater wrote of the Italian sculptors of Renaissance Florence:

Their sculpture shares with the paintings of Botticelli and the churches of Brunelleschi that profound expressiveness, that intimate impress of an indwelling soul, which is the peculiar fascination of the art of Italy
in that century....The whole essence of their work is expression, the passing of a smile over the face of a child, the ripple of air on a still day over the curtain of a window ajar.

Men like Fra Filippo Lippi were not afraid to introduce local models into sacred subjects. Donatello dispensed with the idea that a statue was a kind of clothes-horse and even went so far as to create, in his David, the first life-size, free-standing nude since antiquity. Paolo Uccello worked with volume and foreshortening to produce a sense of solidity; Sandro Botticelli used line to create movement. These artists projected figures that were ready to step into life, to enter the world, and to share man's mastery of his environment; these were not figures preparing themselves, as did their Gothic forerunners, to launch themselves into some ethereal sphere. They are no longer frozen by the solemnity of ritual but are concerned with stressing that they are at least as important as the scene that they illustrate.

The painters and sculptors share the concern of the architects for humanizing man's environment, as well. There is a movement away from the soaring Gothic arch to the balance of horizontal and vertical. Proportion becomes of prime importance. Fra Angelico's Annunciation shows the same awareness of perspective as do Lorenzo Ghiberti's Gates of Paradise, and a similar adoption of regular classical forms as that evident in the work of Brunelleschi. Man can measure space and therefore feels freer to entrust himself to it. The artist has turned from the extension of space to its composition. Because he feels more at home in God's cosmos, he tends to feel that it is his own cosmos as well as God's. True, lines move towards a vanishing point, but they do so
in an organized fashion. Besides, if man can cope with quadrilaterals, God can certainly take care of the vanishing point. The artist organizes space in such a way as to record the organization he sees in nature, thus producing what Sypher calls "the strange renaissance synthesis of seeming naturalism with a highly theoretical closed system. It is vision and design at once." If the perspective seems artificial in theory—and in the practice of lesser artists—the great artists of the Quattrocento knew how to transcend the letter of the law; they knew how to convey unity without its seeming forced. And this they were able to do because they believed in that unity. Colour and light flood their canvasses and courtyards because Renaissance man was no longer afraid of interacting with his environment; the artist was able to bring his figures (as in the work of Domenico Veneziano) out of the candle-glow gloom of the cathedral into the light of day. The stiff, two-dimensional outline now flows into a dimension of both depth and free play. Coherence is achieved not by stylization but by a parallel development of form and content towards a positive statement about man and his world.

Michelangelo's best known works, the David and the Sistine Ceiling, belong to his Renaissance period. So, too, does the Pietà in St. Peter's. The Pietà, probably completed by the end of 1499, is the only sculpture that he signed (and that, Vasari relates, because he heard it praised but attributed to someone else); once the artist and this work had been connected, his fame was assured, and his signature henceforth superfluous. Galli, Michelangelo's sponsor, had given assurance in the
contract that "this will be the most beautiful work in marble that Rome has ever seen." Rome had seen many pietàs, but none carved in stone: the subject had become popular in painted altarpieces in Florence during the last decade. Michelangelo breaks the tradition in interpretation as well as in medium: the Virgin no longer weeps, as in Northern European pietàs, but confines her grief to the gesture of an outstretched hand. Reflective rather than emotional, she is the young Virgin of the artist's earlier Madonna of the Stairs. Her son is once more a child in her lap; the inevitable has come to pass. Mary bows her head to accept her fate: "Don't worry, for God has not created us in order to abandon us" (LM.i.55), the sculptor was to write to his father eleven years later. Moreover, "If life pleases us, death, being made by the hands of the same creator, should not displease us." Her trust in God gives her a nobility of spirit echoed in her graceful features: "Do you not know," Michelangelo asked in defending her youth, "that chaste women retain their fresh looks much longer than those who are not chaste?" In the theme as presented here there are no questions asked because none need to be. The suffering of man is overpowered by the suffering of God for man. The metaphysical point of view, like the physical, is frontal, the statement is clear. The unnatural proportions required to achieve the unified outline of a pyramidal composition do not detract from the serenity of the work. Stability is inherent in triangular design; here, the heavy draperies keep the centre of gravity low, while the oblique line of Christ's body is lightened by its nudity and the ease with which it is held. The limp arm is arrested by a fold of cloth, the hanging left leg by a tree stump; thus the eye is directed
downwards by the weight of death and caught to move upwards again by the
mute acceptance of that death. The long curve of the hem moves up Christ's
arm and Mary's sleeve, either to circle the group (past the carefully framed
forehead of the Virgin and down her left arm and Christ's leg), or
from Christ's head falls down the line of his body to the parallel
gestures of both his and his mother's hands and down the legs again.
There is no strain, no need to change viewing positions; both eye and mind
are left in equipoise. The highly polished marble balances the warmth of
flesh with the coolness of the emotional distance; it enhances rather
than impedes the expression of the form within the artist's mind.

A different kind of balance, dynamic rather than static, is
achieved in the David (1501-1504). Demanding rather than suggesting a
strictly frontal viewpoint, it nevertheless contains within the bounds
set for it by the artist (or by the already roughly shaped block as
given to him) a maximum of potential movement consonant with the great-
est possible use of material within the block itself. He does not
relax in triumph as do the Davids of Donatello or Verrocchio, as they
are caught in a transitory moment of well-being, but stands poised for
action, a young Hercules mentally weighing the dangers involved in the
Labor that is soon to tax all his strength. Vasari describes the wax
model as "a youthful David holding the sling to show that the city should
be boldly defended and righteously governed." The rhythmic forces
of Michelangelo's earlier work have been transformed into an exact
anatomy, but naturalism yields to idealism not only in the concept of
David as defender, as fortitude personified, but in the closed outline of
the right side, under divine protection, and the open left, exposed to
the powers of evil towards which he looks in anger and strength. Michelangelo does not look back in history to the defender of the Israelites, but within himself for the concept of the heroic. The tension is resolved not by our looking forward to the victory, but by the young man's pride in himself as God's noblest creation, by a confidence equal to the challenge of any enemy. The statue was called "the Giant" long before its exposure (in front of the Palazzo Vecchio) to public acclaim: great things were expected of a work so long (two and three-quarter years) in genesis and by an artist of Michelangelo's reputation. That expectation was fulfilled because Michelangelo's power of execution was equal to his belief in the vigour of youth and the nobility of man.

Michelangelo's greatest achievement—in spite of himself (for he continually repudiated any title but scultore)—was the relatively early painting, from 1508 to 1512, of the Sistine Ceiling, which de Tolnay interprets as a visualization of a Neo-Platonic ascension to the divine origins of man. The entire vault, he feels, "is neither a logical crowning of the room nor a vista into the universe but is rather a second reality," a reality moving from the daily vicissitudes of the human condition (the lunettes and spandrels), through those who are inspired by God (the Prophets, Sibyls, and Genii of the architectural skeleton), to the prototypes of man in direct relation to the Divine and the history of God Himself (behind the architectural framework).

Structurally, the work is unified by "a kind of stone trellis" which serves as an architectural setting—a system of niches—for the sculptural forms seated therein. The whole thing, "suspended over the chapel in defiance of the law of gravity," "appears curved by its own weight and
supported by the inherent tension of its own bands—an autonomous and sovereign world." The marble merges into human forms as the caryatids give way to the ignudi; the ornate, seemingly carved spandrel frames enclosing carefully grouped figure compositions point to the softer outlines of the nine distant narratives. Klein describes the initial impact in these terms:

At first I saw only geometry: triangle consorting with square, circle rolling in rectangle, the caress parabolic, the osculations of symmetry: as if out of old time Euclid were come to repeat his theorems now entirely in terms of anatomy. Theorems they are, but theorems made flesh.

The histories begin at the entrance to the chapel, but perspective leads the observer first to the seers and the ignudi, to the wealth of larger, more physical forms. De Tolnay's apotheosis is achieved by diminuendo, as the line of vision retreats further and further into the distance, out of the realm of the material into the sphere of the Ideal.

In the histories at the height of the ceiling, Creation is balanced by Destruction: in the centre is Eve, first flesh to be created out of flesh; as the Ideal becomes increasingly chained to mortality, the suffering of man grows. The ignudi delight in their new-found flesh, but writhe under the weight of manacles they weave around themselves: their "gaze is Eden-rapt," but "they know themselves earthlings." The ancestors of Christ await the release they are unable to achieve in themselves; the seers look on, appalled at what man is doing to himself, assured of what God will do for man. Pater has written of Adam: "he has hardly strength enough to lift his finger to
touch the finger of the creator; yet a touch of the finger-tips will suffice"; that gap between the finger-tips, so easily closed (making of man an agent of creation in his own right, as in the next panel), is widened to the distance between Paradise and Mount Ararat when Adam chooses to withdraw his just-touched hand. He is given a new start once the world has been washed clean, but he does little to prove that he merited the encouragement. His body fails him, drags him down farther (the shame of Noah): his only hope is in his mind. He can no longer walk with God in the garden in the cool of the day, but he can seek to find Him in the nebulous figure of the first and final history poised above the enraptured face of the prophet Jonah:

the true concept—the form of formlessness, unphrasable, infinite, world-quickening anima, the shaped wind!—not in any manner image, nor body, nor the similitude of body, but pure pervasive Spirit intelligential, the One (oh, musculature of flame!) the First, the Last (oh, uncontainable fire unconsumed!) Cloud numinous with Creating, Omnipotent, yes, and All-Compassionate...

It is because God is "All-Compassionate", because He is Love as well as Beauty, that He draws men's hearts as well as their minds, enabling them to transcend their limitations and mutability in a stable and free relationship with Him. The chains of the ignudi are, after all, only garlands of leaves and diaphonous ribbons.

Michelangelo's first subject is always man: his environment is only a barren hillside, a tree stump, a doorway. He was concerned, moreover, with generic man, not with individuals. He refused to paint portraits, and was interested in individuals only as models. The
infinite variety that others (like Leonardo) found in nature he transposed into the inexhaustible number of positions that the human body is able to assume in order to express the soul it contains. Partly this was a result of his customary choice of medium, for marble lends itself more easily to man than to nature; even when he turned to fresco, however, he kept to a modicum of scenic decoration. D'Ollanda quotes his saying "good painting is nothing else but a copy of the perfections of God and a reminder of His painting;" since God's supreme artistic creation was man, and since he was sculpted out of clay, it follows that sculpture is the highest art and its limitations really virtues:

He who created all, created first each part  
Then chose the one most beautiful and bright,  
To show therein the limit of his might  
And the divine achievement of his art.

(PM.22)

Klein's modern Euclid went one step further: if sculpture and painting grow out of the human frame, so, too, does architecture:

The central features of a plan are always as independent as one chooses—just as the nose, being in the middle of the face, is related neither to one eye nor to the other, owing to their being at the sides and having counterparts.
It is therefore indisputable that the limbs of architecture are derived from the limbs of man. No-one who has not been or is not a good master of the human figure, particularly of anatomy, can comprehend this.

(II.ii.129)

Man is the microcosm of all creation; thus with Shakespeare Michelangelo would say:

What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form, in moving, how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!

(Hamlet, II.ii.173)

If man remains no more than "this quintessence of dust," it is because in denying the touch of the supreme artist he has allowed his spirit to be stifled within the marble block.

II

Hopkins, too, finds Beauty's supreme revelation in man, but in individual man. Where Michelangelo portrays a Christ, or an Adam, or a hero, or a patriarch, Hopkins dwells on Felix Randal, the bugler boy, the tall nun. The inscape does not dwell in the type, but in the particular concretization of the type. The poet's passion for variety thus extends to the infinite number of extensions of the Word throughout the world, to leaf and bird and starlight as part of God's expression of Himself. To turn to nature is not to turn away from man, for nature is part of man (rather than man being part of nature). To perceive God's
abundance in nature is to perceive the richness of the relation that can exist between the Creator and His greatest creation.

This sense of richness spills almost uncontrolled through the Keatsian luxuriousness of the early poems. Hopkins is precise, like Ruskin, in his sense of significant detail, but his control is not such as to prevent the overall effect of colour and light from breaking through:

Plum-purple was the west; but spikes of light Spear'd open lustrous gashes, crimson-white.

(Poems, #2)

In his diary for 1869, he records a similar visual impact:

When you climbed to the top of the tree and came out the sky looked as if you could touch it and it was as if you were in a world made up of these three colours, the green of the leaves lit through by the sun, the blue of the sky, and the grey blaze of their upper sides against it.

(J.192)

By 1877, he has decided what it is about the sensuous richness of the world that especially pleases him: its dappledness, its diversity; the irregular part of the regular-irregular pattern he described in his early essay as being key to the relation that is Beauty. Geoffrey Tillotson suggests that Ruskin's lecture on "The School of Athens," the most famous and most characteristically Renaissance of Raphael's works, could have had a part in the conception of "Pied Beauty" (Poems, #37), for Ruskin there uses the word "dappled", and speaks of trout and of crafts:

Glory be to God for dappled things—

...
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout 
that swim;

... And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

The conclusion of the poem is also in the spirit of Ruskin—and of Raphael, for as the geometric lines on the floor of Raphael's "School of Athens" are carried by perspective to a distant meeting point, so, in this poem, "All things counter" come together, however scattered they may look on the surface:

He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change: 
Praise him.

Similarly, the abundance of imagery in these lines--

When drop-of-blood-and-foam-dapple 
Bloom lights the orchard-apple 
And thicket and thorp are merry 
With silver-surfed cherry 

And azuring-over greybell makes 
Wood banks and brakes wash wet like lakes

(Poems, #42)

--is in celebration of "Spring's universal bliss," of an "ecstasy all through mothering earth," centering on the joy of Mary—whose month May is—at the coming birth of "her salvation". Even the wilderness is part of the design: "When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush" (Poems, #33), they are an expression of the "juice" and "joy" of Spring; even "Wiry heathpacks" and "flitches of fern" are vital to the "wildness and wet" of a world which bereft of its "weeds" and its "wilderness" (Poems, #56) would lose its spontaneity and sense of surprise,
so much a part of the thrill of discovering inscape.

When Hopkins turns from the variety of small things to the grandeur of nature's more monumental works, he still concentrates on the unique:

I have particular periods of admiration for particular things in Nature; for a certain time I am astonished at the beauty of a tree, shape, effect etc, then when the passion, so to speak, has subsided, it is consigned to my treasury of explored beauty, and acknowledged with admiration ever after, while something new takes its place in my enthusiasm.

(LL.iii.202)

Ruskin's "word of God for clouds" is stored in that "treasure of explored beauty" as "heaven-roysterers" in their "wind-walks", as "Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows" that flaunt forth, then chevy on an air-built thoroughfare,
or as "silk-sack" and "meal-drift", "moulded" and "melted across skies" (Poems, #38, 72). The sky in storm is to man "Wiry and white-fiery and whirlwind-swivelled snow" (Poems, #28:13); to nature, raindrop-roundels, looped together That lace the face of Penmaen Pool.

(Poems, #30)

The "word of God for...waves" becomes

a tide rolls reels
Of crumbling, fore-foundering, thundering all-surfy seas in...

(Poems, #141)
And that word for "leaves":

The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness.

(Poems, #33)

Of the tree itself, he writes:

Not of all my eye sees, wandering on the world,
Is anything a milk to the mind so, so sighs deep
Poetry to it, as a tree whose boughs break in the sky.

(Poems, #149)

He finds that same "poetry" in the "azarous hung hills" (Poems, #38): they are not for him a distant skyline, but have been drawn into his own sensibility, as he sees in their majesty the strength and gentleness of "a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet!" As Christ's "world-wielding shoulder," they are part of the theophany he sees everywhere. "The world is charged with the grandeur of God." He is present at the heart of every object: "There lives the dearest freshness deep down things" (Poems, #31). In a cloudy summer day's sky he finds an inscape that tells of that freshness, that grandeur, as a personal message from God to man:

I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes,
Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour;
And, eyes, heart, what looks, what lips yet gave you a
Rapturous love's greeting of realer, or rounder replies?

(Poems, #38)

Hopkins interprets the presence of God as the presence of love because for an object to reveal God, that object must for the perceiver be in
relationship with God; that relationship is love, for it is beauty, and
love is the instressing power of beauty: "All things therefore are
charged with love, are charged with God" (S. 195)—the equation is clear.
Because God's greatest expression of his love was the Incarnation, the
Word become flesh, it is Christ that Hopkins responds to when the
instress is most intense: it is "our Saviour" that is gleaned. The
stars seem to tell of him more than most things:

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
...it is all a purchase, all is a prize.
...Christ and his mother and all his hallows.

(Poems, #32)

I kiss my hand
To the stars, lovely-asunder
Starlight, wafting him out of it; and
Glow, glory in thunder;
Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:
Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,
His mystery must be instressed, stressed;
For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand.

(Poems, #28:5)

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

(J.253-4)

The sun, too—as in Michelangelo's Apollo-Christ of the Last Judgment--
inscapes him; thus Mary "leaves his light/ Sifted to suit our sight,"
by giving the Word flesh, thus letting "all God's glory through" in
a medium that tempers that glory to the comprehension of man (Poems, #60).

But all these are visual images; to the musician's ear, nature is
also harmonious and also communicative aurally, be it in the "tiniest
sound"—

The bats' wings lisping as they flew
And water draining through and through
The wood...

(Poems, #21)

--or in the "heart-song powerful peals" of "a jaunting vaunting vaulting assaulting trumpet telling" (Poems, #141). While the publication in 1957 of an article concerned mainly with Hopkins' ornithological interests seems rather superfluous, its author does point out Hopkins' interest in the unique songs of the individual species of birds. He listens to the woodlark's "So tiny a trickle of song-strain" (Poems, #138); the "magic cuckoocall" that "Caps, clears, and clinches all" of the beauty of May (Poems, #42); the nightingale which "might have strung/A row of ripples in the brook,/ So forcibly he sung" (Poems, #21). Sound blends with sight and the sense of touch in the song of the thrush--who "Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring/ The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing" (Poems, #33)--and in that of the skylark:

...I hear the lark ascend,
His rash-fresh re-winded new-skeined score
In crisps of curl off wild winch whirl, and pour
And pelt music, till none's to spill nor spend.

(Poems, #35)

Sight is the foremost of the senses, but all five can work together to strengthen the inscape, just as in Jesuit meditation each sense focussed on brings an added insight and involvement. In looking at a bluebell like the one by which the year before he knew "the beauty of our Lord" (J.199),
he describes the visual complexities involved, but also notes the feel of
the blossoms as "you draw your fingers through them," the noise they make
when shaken, their "faint honey smell" and the taste of "sweet gum":
"The bluebells in your hand baffle you with their inscape, made to
every sense" (J.209). Synaesthesia is perhaps most effectively used
in an image from The Wreck of the Deutschland—

How a lush-kept plush-capped sloe
Will, mouthed to flash-burst,
Gush!--flush the man, the being with it, sour or sweet,
Brim, in a flash, full!

(Poems, #28:8)

--where a man's sudden total involvement in a sensuous experience is
similar to the sudden explosion of meaning when the inscape of a situation
becomes clear, or when the confusing lines of an obscure poem all at
once fall into place.

The degree of concentration required for that overwhelming
communion with an inscape ("as if my eye were still growing") is such
that "with a companion the eye and ear are for the most part shut and
instress cannot come" (J.228). Hopkins was well aware of the consequences
of becoming lost in a world of his own as he sought such inscapes:

Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or inscape
to be distinctive and it is the vice of distinctiveness
to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped.

(LL.i.66)

It is a "vice" that did not escape the attention of others, as well:

After a shower, he would run and crouch down to gaze
at the crushed quartz glittering as the sun came out again.
Pointed out as a great scholar to the gardener at Stonyhurst, he elicited this reaction:

Pas possible! répond le jardinier; je l'ai observe l'autre jour, il regardait un morceau de verre dans l'allée en tournant tout autour. Je l'ai pris pour un innocent, a natural.  

The early reception of his poems is in the same vein: Bridges condemns him for his "Oddity and Obscurity" (Poems, p. 240), and the first reviews of the 1918 edition do the same. It is not surprising that Michelangelo, following a similar singlemindedness, knew that men "find me in some way strange and obsessed, which harms no-one but myself" (LM.i.153). The pursuance of inscape or concetto took priority over social graces. What was terribilità (LM.i.xxxix) or queerness to other men was to the artist the urgency of participating in God's Word in the discovery or creation of beauty:

These things, these things were here and but the beholder
Wanting; which two when once they meet,
The heart rears wings bold and bolder
And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him
off under his feet.

(Poems, #38)

The "thisness" in nature reveals the importance of the individual, the "virtue" as well as the "vice" of inscape; distinctiveness in the natural world is a statement of value.

What God values most, however, is man; nature is merely a reminder, an expression of human worth:

And what is Earth's eye, tongue, or heart else, where Else, but in dear and dogged man?

(Poems, #58)
Michelangelo concentrates entirely on man; Hopkins, as he was taught
by nature's inscapes, turns to individual men:

Love what are love's worthiest, were all known;
World's loveliest—men's selves. Self flashes off
frame and face.

(Poems, #62)

"Men go by me," he writes, seeing beauty in their "mould or mind or what
not else makes rare" (Poems, #40); they go by him and become inscapes
to be captured for God (in his work as a Jesuit) or captured in verse
(in his work as a poet). The bugler boy, "Breathing bloom of a chastity
in mansex fine," might someday be "our day's God's own Galahad" if
his inscape holds together:

How it does my heart good, visiting at that bleak hill,
When limber liquid youth, that to all I teach
Yields tender as a pushed peach,
His headstrong to its wellbeing of a self-wise self-will!

(Poems, #48)

Being himself to the fullest extent is that for which he was created.
A man's characteristic action most fully reveals the inscape of his
humanity. The poet remembers Felix Randal, the farrier, in his
customary rôle,

When thou at the random grim forge, powerful
amidst peers,
Didst fettle for the great grey drayhorse his
bright and battering sandal!

(Poems, #53)

He sees Harry Ploughman organize ("one crew, fall to") his "sinew-service"
to give of their best:

Back, elbow, and liquid waist
In him, all quail to the wallowing o' the plough.

As his "frowning feet" carry him down the field, he instresses his "Churlsgrace,...child of Amanstrength" (Poems, #71). A sailor, "all of a manly mould," finds himself in being "Every inch a tar":

Look, foot to forelock, how all things suit! he
Is strung by duty, is strained to beauty,
    And brown-as-dawning-skinned
With brine and shine and whirling wind.

(Poems, #41)

The body, however, is most beautiful when it expresses a beautiful soul:

...even bodily beauty, even the beauty of blooming health, is from the soul, in the sense, as we Aristotelian Catholics say, that the soul is the form of the body...

(LL.i.95)

Thus "no one can admire beauty of the body more than I do," but

...the beauty of the mind, such as genius,...is greater....And more beautiful than the beauty of the mind is beauty of character, the 'handsome heart'.

(Ibid.)

"The Handsome Heart" (Poems, #47) is "more than handsome face," which is, after all, only "Beauty's bearing." "It seems to me," he tells Patmore,
that nothing in good women is more beautiful than just the absence of vanity and an earnestness of look and character which is better than beauty.

(LL.iii.308)

Even though beauty comes from the soul,

the soul may have no other beauty, so to speak, than that which it expresses in the symmetry of the body—barring as would Ruskin those blurs in the cast which wd. not be found in the die or the mould.

(LL.i.95)

That "symmetry" is basic to the pattern that makes him man, that enables him to exist even when he does not really live.

The "blurs" are part of an incomplete relation, one where man does not seek God but turns from the vision above the altar on the Sistine Ceiling to walk back towards the door, past the Fall of man to the irresponsible (not "self-wise") "self-will" of Noah. Men (like the David) find their true strength in the knowledge of themselves in relation to God, their only real stability (like that of the Pietà) in concord with His will. To lose that sense of relatedness is to lose the inscape:

Bright sunset: all the sky hung with tall tossed clouds, in the west with strong printing glass edges, westward lamping with tipsy bufflight, the colour of yellow roses....But we hurried too fast...candles in bottles, things not ready, darkness and despair. In fact being unwell I was quite downcast: nature in all her parcels and faculties gaping and fell apart, fatiscabat, like a clod cleaving and holding only by strings of root. But this must often be.

(J.236)
The Word holds all things together: if this is lost sight of, they collapse; the balance tips over, the stability becomes frighteningly precarious, colours turn sour or sickly, lines move in conflicting or aimless directions, and the burden of flesh becomes too much to bear. The ideas underlying Renaissance art are parodied and denied by the subsequent development of art known as Mannerism.
CHAPTER III

MANNERISM

Some critics (notably de Tolnay) would argue that Michelangelo cannot properly be called a Mannerist, that his works so labelled are part of his shift from Renaissance to Baroque, that they do not depart from his Neo-Platonic ordering except as it fades into a growing Catholicism and tendency towards mysticism, and that they are concerned with the inner realities of the human predicament rather than with being merely decorative. Thus Wölfflin claims of the age which Michelangelo helped to shape that:

The High Renaissance does not pass over into a clearly defined late period, the climax leads directly into the baroque, and where something new appears, it is a symptom of the coming baroque style.

He admits the term Mannerism, but as an aberration from the general trend on the part of inferior artists:

Spaciousness and beauty of proportion became alien concepts; the feeling for the potentialities of a plane surface or spatial area became completely atrophied. Painters began to rival one another in the atrocious overcrowding of canvasses, in a dissolution of forms which deliberately sought a contradiction between the amount of space available and the objects in it.

Such critics, however, are still relying on the old definition of Mannerism as that which is mere di maniera ("mannered"), that is, a kind of intellectual pseudo-artistic game where anything goes in the contortion of the human figure as long as it displays the dexterity
and sophistication of the artist concerned:

Art became completely formalized and no longer paid any attention to nature, constructing motives of movement according to personal formulae and making of the human body a purely schematic machine of joints and muscles.

A kind of "anatomical pedantry" was the result.

It is true that this is what Mannerism degenerated into as the style caught on in its mechanics but not its ideology. Friedlaender distinguishes between the Mannerism of the 1520-1550 period and that from 1550 to 1580; the latter was truly di maniera in its "repetition, cleverness, and playful exaggeration" and by its making "weak concessions". A similar dissolution, however, had occurred in Renaissance art, and it was this which the early Mannerists were reacting against; Mannerism was, to them,

A style which, as part of a movement purely spiritual in origin, from the start turned specifically against a certain superficiality that exuded from an all too balanced and beautiful classic art.

If one immediately thinks of Raphael as a Renaissance artist too perfect in style, so did Michelangelo: "I have heard him say," writes Condivi, "that Raphael had not his art by nature, but acquired it by long study." Logic, harmony, and stability, which were once meant to express man's reascent intellectual relation to his environment, now began to seem somehow false; it was too easy to map out a perspective in quadrilaterals and proceed to fill it in with the best that man and nature had to offer.
A generation of humanistic optimism was giving way to a generation that having no quiet villa to retreat to for the discussion of metaphysical problems was inclined to be more down to earth, to demand a concrete human quality rather than idealism in its art, to see the underside of the carefully arranged scaffolding. What happens, one might ask, if the players, perturbed about the stage set, go backstage and cannot find the properties manager? and voices in the pit are becoming louder and more demanding? Even the most logical of arguments cannot stand against fear or despair or even cynicism, for then logic itself is questioned.

In Mannerism, there appears:

a rhetorical and dramatic logic that does not operate by transition and sequence but by circulating through extremes, opposites, and divergencies.

Renaissance logic is not ignored (for what other kind of logic is there?); total chaos is not yet felt to be a proper aesthetic form. Instead, the mannerists take a more subtle approach: they postulate an "if-clause" and underline the "if". The Renaissance structure is there, but has begun to settle at strange angles, as if it were built on sand rather than on bedrock:

Mannerism canvasses the elements of a fixed traditional pattern, unexpectedly combines them to achieve effects of dissonance, dislocation, and surprise, and illuminates the reader's mind, enabling him to reconsider the whole traditional pattern of their relationship.

More specifically,

We find restless though decorative areas of light and shade and color, forms elongated to the point
of distortion, and hollow-eyed haunted expressions externalizing some inner fear or anxiety. We find, too, that the sense of space is almost entirely blocked by shadowy and abstract backgrounds; figure groups are crowded into the front plane; verticality and two-dimensionality are stressed.

The foremost proponents of this style—Pontormo, Rosso, Parmigianino, Bronzino—were greatly influenced by Michelangelo's treatment of the human body, especially as presented in his Battle of Cascina cartoon (1504). If the human body could be made to express the nobility of man, it could also portray his darker side. This Michelangelo himself was discovering in the three decades following the completion of the Sistine Ceiling.

The Neo-Platonic ascension of the Sistine Ceiling can, it has been noted, all too easily work the other way; when Michelangelo, in the New Sacristy of the Church of San Lorenzo (the Medici Chapel), attempts a similar statement in terms of the soul's progress to God, he never actually escapes the over-riding sense of the mortality of man. Standing behind the altar of the Chapel, the observer achieves the ideal point of view, but even there all is not resolved. The figures seem to be cut off from the architectural frame they are meant to blend with (shades of white marble being chosen for both). Wölfflin says of this strange discrepancy:

it almost seems as if the figures were intended to appear too big for the room and it will be recalled how difficult it is to get far enough
away to see them properly, how one feels hemmed in; what, then, are we to say on learning that four more figures of river-gods, lying on the floor, were to be included as well?

In the room as a whole, it is true, there are two harmonious lines of focus: the two captains turn to face the Madonna and Child; the pillared and arched lines of the architectural frame carry the eye upwards to the diffused light of the pantheon-like dome. It is the monumental sarcophagi, however, to which the eye returns. If the tomb had been completed according to Michelangelo's plans, the tortured bodies of the times of day would perhaps be less conspicuous. Even then, however, they remain at eye level, most immediate to the observer. There they carry on the conversation that Michelangelo imagined for them:

The Day and the Night speak and say:

"With our swift course we have led Duke Giuliano to death.
Now it is right that he should take his revenge as he does. And his revenge is this:
Because we have killed him,
He, being dead, has stolen the light from us and, by closing his eyes,
Has closed our own, which now no longer shine on the earth.
What, then, would he have done for us, if alive?"

(Pl. 28)

Death, at this level, brings only despair, a despair even deeper in the lines Michelangelo later wrote for the Night when the appreciative Giovanni di Carlo Strozzi suggested the statue only slept, that one could awaken her, so real was she; the sculptor replied:

Dear to me is sleep: still more being made of stone.
While pain and guilt still linger here below,
Blindness and numbness—these please me alone;
Then do not wake me, keep your voices low.

11
Night sleeps on restlessly, aware, but not wanting to be aware; Dawn is awakened in spite of herself and turns away from the weight of a world from which Day seeks to hide and from which Dusk sinks back, exhausted. The heaviness of the marble is too much for their contorted, flabby bodies. The distribution of weight in pairs holds them back from sliding to the floor, but their position is a precarious one. If they tip forward, the volutes will spring back to leave a gaping tomb. They are caught by matter and held there against their will, and against any artistic logic, not balancing lightly as did the almost carefree Sistine ignudi or even taking the active rôle of the Sistine bronze nudes, caught in the sphere of Shadow and Death as well. Their features echo the anguish and uselessness of their powerless though powerfully moulded bodies.

Above them, Giuliano and Lorenzo meditate on the Virgin, pondering the mystery of the Word becoming the flesh they have escaped by death. Above the level of the temporal world, free of their physical limitations (they are not true but idealized portraits), they assume the poses of the active and contemplative lives by which man while still in this world may seek to reach God. The baton of power, the money-box lie neglected, useless; both men seem far away from their immediate surroundings. Their Roman armour clings to them, rendering them imperial, aloof. The framing pillars, tall and slim as their own delicate proportions, intensify in them the abstract rather than the concrete. Yet even they are not entirely free: the line of Lorenzo's right leg runs down through the body of Dawn to the ground; the curve of Giuliano's central axis ties him to that of Day. They float above the opening of the sarcophagi
but Time still tries to pull them down, back through the tomb in which they found release. The temporal intrudes on them still, for the sarcophagus figures push through with their heads and shoulders the line of the ledge on which the captains sit. The original design showed crouching children, afraid and unhappy, in the zone above the captains: Panofsky interprets them as unborn souls doomed to descend into the material world; there, Plato claims, they will remember and yearn for, but not obtain, the bright world from which they came.

The Medici Madonna gives herself physically to the sucking Child, but like the captains, she cannot grasp mentally the reality of the Incarnate Christ before her. Her elongated body a figura serpentinata, contorted but still somehow relaxed in the close, compact lines of the block, she exists passively in two worlds and cannot be viewed clearly from the point of view of either. The Child is very much alive, very physical, in comparison, but is he turning his back on the world to gather strength for what is before him, or is he afraid of what is to come? He is less protected—and at the same time less aggressive—than the Child of the Bruges Madonna; also, his mother is more casual (with her swinging leg and tilted head) than that majestic Virgin. The stability of the earlier group is gone, too: it is with an effort that Mary holds her position, a kind of imposed discipline with no logical explanation.

The Chapel that she guards so ambiguously also achieves no resolution:

There is an insoluble conflict between logic and appearance, horizontal and vertical movement, motion and rest, energy and paralysis.
Meant to be a tomb in its entirety, the Chapel fails to bring together its architectural and sculptural elements. From across the room, the figures which up close overwhelm the viewer are dwarfed by their setting. The white marble is neither entirely wall nor entirely sculptural frame. The doors are out of proportion to both the sculpture beside them and the niches that surmount them. The moulding of those niches flows in and out of the pediment and loses direction completely when it reaches the door. The volutes on the door frames are parallel to those on the niches beside the captains, but here serve only to disrupt the flowing lines of the frame and emphasize the weight of the pilasters above the already overburdened doors. The window pediments are too cumbersome for the windows: they, too, seem top-heavy even though the windows are narrowed to accentuate the upward thrust. The pilasters have a dubious value: are they supports, or merely decorative? The cupola was to be frescoed with birds, masks, and garlands; de Tolnay suggests this would have added to the "effect of lightness," but could it possibly have avoided clashing with the stern black-and-white contrast of the marble and the pietra serena? The springing curves of the pietra serena arches suggest buoyancy, yet their very heaviness of colour drags them down, freezes them against the white background. There were to have been empty thrones (suggesting the invisible soul) above the pilasters flanking the captains: their backs have been left off; they are unsatisfactory as decorative devices and remain nonentities. The diffused light from the cupola leaves strange shadows, like high noon on a wintry day, more a reminder of the presence of death than of immortality; its coldness led Pater to write:
I suppose no one would come to the sacristy of San Lorenzo for consolation; for seriousness, for solemnity, for dignity of impression, perhaps, but not for consolation.

It is that overpowering lack of consolation as much as anything that denies the Medici Chapel the classification of either Renaissance or Baroque. The acceptance of the early Pietà or even of Adam expelled from the Garden is missing. Death is no Neo-Platonic triumph: the conqueror looks around dissatisfied like the young man of Michelangelo's most Manneristic of statues, the Victory. There is no longer a single way of looking at the fact of death or at the battle between the physical and spiritual aspects of man. Ascent is impeded on every side and somehow made to look irrelevant. All but the priest must turn their back on the altar in order to face the Madonna and Child. There is no place to stand where the tension is not all-encompassing. Sypher calls the over-all effect one of active forces frozen by system. And to go out, to escape, one has first to find the one right door among eight that look deceptively the same.

The sense of everything working against the spectator to disrupt his complacency is also present in the anteroom to the Laurentian Library, a work issuing from the same era as the Medici Chapel, but not actually completed until a few years before Michelangelo's death. The sense of constriction derives mainly from the powerful lava-flow of the stairs, which threaten to fill the room, but the vestibule itself is cramped laterally, as though in being drawn up vertically the ornamentation of the walls was pulled together, tabernacle crowding column, and column crowding doorway. The pilasters framing the tabernacles are strangely distorted:
they narrow towards the base and the capitals shrink from crowning the shaft: they "depend from the entablatures which they ought to support." The large recessed columns vie with the walls for support of the roof, yet perched on their frivolous volutes they can support nothing. The doorway into the Library proper is less a goal to be reached than the source of the stairs' movement: the frame is minimized and understated, the pediment broken and held back from uniting with the frame to form an organic whole. It is an effort, a mental burden, to reach the Library. And crossing the threshold is somehow an anticlimax: one moves from exertion to passivity; the strain is suspended rather than resolved.

Michelangelo was called away from his work in Florence to execute what became the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel. For the last thirty years of his life, he did not return to the city which was always to remain to him "A jewel far beyond all price." The change in environment, however, did not provoke a corresponding change in mood: it was while he was working on the Last Judgment that he met Vittoria Colonna and became involved with the reform movement in the Roman Catholic Church. The sense of despair and bitterness evidenced by his work at San Lorenzo was heightened by a growing sense of sin and guilt. A letter of Vittoria (probably to Bernadino Ochino, a central person in the Counter-Reformation movement), reads:

Christ comes twice, the first time he is all gentleness;...he comes for the sinners and the sick, to give peace, light and forgiveness,
all glowing with charity, clothed in humanity.

...The second time he comes armed and shows his justice, his majesty, his grandeur and his almighty power, and there is no longer any time for pity or room for pardon.

Rolland describes the fresco as "a mass of wrath, vengeance and hate which is suffocating. If it was not purified by colossal and almost elementary force it would be insupportable." Michelangelo must have felt that suffocation: the flayed skin in the hand of St. Bartholomew is the artist's own—a grim joke, but a defensive one.

Any compassion in the Virgin had been eradicated in the Medici Chapel; in the Last Judgment, she cowers beneath the damning arm of her enormous Son. The martyrs are too concerned with their own salvation to listen to the rest of mankind; they seem almost to threaten Christ with the instruments of their torture. There is no-one to intercede for man: he stands or falls by his own faith. Anonymous groups—for they are man, not men—crowd behind identifiable heroes towards Christ as they crowded towards the Brazen Serpent in the corner spandrel to the above right. The blessed elect, de Tolnay suggests, are "like people suffering from fever, awakening at dawn after the nightmare of their terrestrial existence;" they are the survivors of a shipwreck in which even the angels "cling to the instruments of the Passion like flotsam." There is no anger on Christ's face: he executes, rather than generates, the Will of God; his arm parallels impartially the upward and downward lines of movement echoed by the cross and column. There is no overall perspective, for size is decreed by spiritual rather than physical laws. The whole painting is held together less by a meaningful theme than by a universal sense of fate. Sypher's description of a Mannerist tenet
holds true:

The neat mechanics of the renaissance Order have been disturbed by the power of a capricious divine will, whose activity means that all relationships within the soul and the universe are no longer a harmony, a congruity, an ideal proportion, but a mere possibility, or at best a probability.

The conflicting tensions between the hope of resurrection and the despair of the resurrected are not resolved; they are merely (Sypher's term) "accommodated". Rolland's "colossal and almost elementary force" is an arbitrary and a meaningless one. Friedlaender sums up:

All this—the unreal and unconstructed space, the building up of the bodily volumes, especially the whole overwhelming predominance of the body, especially the nude, and finally the powerful emphasis of the anatomical at the expense of the normal and the proportional—all these things made the Last Judgment the principal work of the anticlastic Mannerist attitude, surpassing all else in spiritual depth and formal construction.

The frescoes of the Pauline Chapel are still Mannerist in their composition and effect, but they are neither as overwhelming nor as expressive of dissonance as is the Last Judgment.

The concetto underlying each of Michelangelo's Mannerist works reveals a disruption of order and its consequent despair: the artist's own feelings of failure have affected his work, have affected his ability to perceive and create wholeness. He has taken on too much and is unsure of the merit of what he has done. Thus he writes of the ill-starred project commissioned by Julius and his executors, "It is borne upon me that I lost the whole of my youth, chained to his Tomb" (L.M.ii.27): he feels himself an old man when his life is barely half over. His increasing
ill-health makes his body disgusting to him, a "grave-dungeon," yet is afraid of dying, afraid of that upraised arm of Christ:

Death is an inn
In which I live and eat my food in fear.

"Discomfort and trouble" touch all he does, even the beauty that he creates:

All my love verses, all my drawings bright,
Have gone to fold guitars, wrap meat for stews,
And to embellish cesspools with their sight.

(Theodore W. 74-6)

The beauty itself is suspect. He fails to fulfil his vision or even to grasp it: in 1554, he sends Vasari a sonnet that includes these lines:

O now I know how foolish and how stark
My art has been, so far from its true source,
And how I made an idol and a monarch
Of something that, alas, gives but remorse.

(Theodore W. 151-2)

Death haunts him:

Of all my thoughts of love, once gay and light,
What will now be, if to two deaths I'm near?
Of the first I am sure, the second I dread.

(Ibid.)

I know that you realize from my writing that I am at the eleventh hour and that I conceive of no thought in which Death is not engraved. God grant that I may keep him waiting for another year or so.

(Theodore W. ii. 155)
The death of Vittoria (in 1547) has deprived him of a spiritual guide and consoler and what happiness he knew is gone:

While I was happy and the world was bright
With a new sunshine smiling everywhere,
I should have left the earth, that morning air,
Spurred by the splendor of her happy sight.
Now all is over...
...and heaven's doors are tight.

(PM.87)

He feels that Death is hounding him, forcing him to choose between the beauty of this world and that of the next. He still "fears the final step," the final choice, and pleads for help from God:

The soul gains more, the more it quits the world;
My art and death do not go well together:
What shall I do? From me what do you hope?

(PM.151)

He is wholly satisfied by neither world: his heart and mind conflict, and his will is torn between them. If the problem is one of obedience, he is unable to obey. When he finally makes a tentative choice, it is partly because the frailty of old age (he is nearly ninety years old when he dies) forces him to do so.

II

Hopkins' choice is more clear-cut as far as he himself is concerned: he has chosen immortal beauty and does not doubt his choice. But he does not resort to feeling (as does Michelangelo in his later work) that the choice of immortal beauty means the denial of what is beautiful in this life. His problem is not how to escape from the
allurement of art, but how, once it has been put in the proper perspec-
itive, to hold on to it:

How to keep—is there any, any, is there none such, 
nowhere known some, bow or brooch or braid or 
brace, lace, latch or catch or key to keep 
Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty,...from 
vvanishing away?

(Poems, #59)

Thus what Michelangelo interprets as a sign that natural beauty 
because tainted must be avoided, Hopkins takes as a situation parallel to 
man's own: the mortal is (by definition) limited by mortality, but 
whether or not it is therefore to be damned remains to be seen. If 
it is, man is left with the sense of all earth's beauty going to waste.

Beauty, according to most aestheticians, does not exist unless 
its ordering of otherwise neutral elements is perceived by man. Yet man 
misses much of the ordering that underlies what his senses tell him, and 
is blind to the world's inscapes. A problem already alluded to ("being 
unwell I was quite downcast," etc., page 56) is that of sickness or 
despair: a man turned in on himself cannot possibly respond to an inscape 
for he has no instress of his own to offer and there is nothing to hold 
relations together. Much beauty, therefore, goes unappreciated because 
it remains only potential:

...I thought how sadly beauty of inscape was 
unknown and buried away from simple people and 
yet how near at hand it was if they had eyes to 
see it and it could be called out everywhere again.

(j.221)
These things, these things were here and but the beholder
Wanting...

(Poems, #38)

That is a very minor area of dissatisfaction, however; beauty as perceived by man is far more vulnerable than is man himself; man, after all, has his artists to perpetuate what he finds lovely.

The most invidious attack that Mannerist art can make on the Renaissance is mockery: the beautiful, the balanced, the harmonious in mortal beauty never stand alone; the design is always susceptible to destruction because mutability is inherent in whatever is limited by the temporal and spatial manifestations of the eternal world. At the material level, the Word is vulnerable, as vulnerable as was the Incarnate Christ—who was more often jeered at than cursed. The forces of Death which cross so easily the "broad and beat'n way/ Over the dark Abyss," are everywhere. Hopkins emphasizes their ubiquity by turning not to Winter (where Death is expected) but to Spring (where, if anywhere, Death should be held at bay):

'Death,' said I, 'What do you here,
At this spring season of the year?'
'I mark the flowers ere the prime
Which I may tell at Autumn-time.'

Even in their freshness, their new life, things are bound with a "subtle web of black" (Poems, #4):

A juice rides rich through bluebells, in vine leaves,
And beauty's dearest veriest vein is tears.

(Poems, #157)

As death wounds most deeply in Spring, so, too, does it win an added
poignancy when it touches a young child. Margaret (Poems, #55) does not know why she weeps, does not understand the strange, unnamed force that carries the leaves away. She sees decay, but does not know yet how closely it touches her. Another young girl hears in the song of the nightingale the voice of destruction, as the bird strangely foretells the loss of her lover at sea, Death once more claiming that which is beautiful:

I thought the air must cut and strain
The windpipe when he sucked his breath
And when he turned it back again
   The music must be death.
With not a thing to make me fear,
A singing bird in morning clear
To me was terrible to hear.

(Poems, #21)

Keats' nightingale, not having known the "weariness, the fever, and the fret" of mortality, pours out his soul "in full-throated ease." Hopkins reinterprets the nightingale's song; he twists it, as death twists life, into a denial of its usual connotations.

The fragility of beauty is such that it easily succumbs to the imminence of the Destroyer, and man is helpless to save it:

The ashtree growing in the corner of the garden was felled. It was lopped first: I heard the sound and looking out and seeing it maimed there came at that moment a great pang and I wished to die and not to see the inscapes of the world destroyed any more.

(J.230)

Even the inscapes themselves fade with time and cannot be lured back:
I remember that crimson and pure blues seemed to me spiritual and heavenly sights fit to draw tears once; now I can just see what I once saw, but can hardly dwell on it and should not care to do so.

(LL. ii. 38)

Confirmed beauty will not bear a stress;--
Bright hues long look'd at thin, dissolve and fly:
Who lies on grass and pores upon the sky
Shall see the azure turn expressionless...

(Poems, #117)

Time, moreover, has a distinct movement, one that Hopkins chooses to illustrate by the drawing together of evening and death. Poets generally use the comparison in terms of a peaceful close to life, in which evening brings sleep or at least a quiet disintegration. Hopkins, however, combines the two aspects of evening--light and darkness--to find something abruptly frightening in such a death of day and of man as that in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves":

Let life, waned,
ah let life wind
Off her once skeined stained 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...

(Poems, #61)

In evening's light, the glory of dappled things is lost: all is black or white. All, too, is right or wrong (not, as one would expect at evening, gray); with evening the mortal world fades and takes its colours with it. Man seeks only light, caring no more for mortal beauty, but only that which is immortal. Michelangelo lived in such an evening
world; for him, "time's vast, womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night" was also the womb, home, and hearse of time itself, the time that destroys and is destroyed in the dialogue between Night and Day in the Medici Chapel. For Hopkins, the key word, "waste", is isolated at the beginning of a line:

Her fond yellow hornlight wound to the west,
her wild hollow hoarlight hung to the height
Waste...

If beauty is to be lost with the coming of death, why appreciate it at all? If the Word is spoken in the language of nature to be heard and then forgotten, why is it spoken in that language at all? With sorrow, he hears its echoes die away. Or, even worse, he learns to distrust it:

And you were a liar, O blue March day.
Bright sun lanced fire in the heavenly bay;
But what black Boreas wrecked her?

(Poems, #41)

Even though the pattern may look invincible, its destruction is near at hand:

The cold whip-adder unespied
With waved passes there shall glide
Too near thee.

(Poems, #106)

The Word functions only in a very limited way, for "everything is full of fault, flaw, imperfection, shortcoming,...a shattered frame and a broken web" (§.90).
Man, like all of nature, is entangled in that web. Part of the problem lies in his environment, especially that of industrial England, where "all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil" (Poems, #31). While Michelangelo reacts against self-indulgence, Hopkins fights a pseudo-ascetic denial of the beautiful, a denial perhaps unconscious, perhaps provoked by greed. The poor, "Undenized, beyond bound/ Of earth's glory, earth's ease, all" (Poems, #70), are marked by "dirt, squalor, and the ill-shapen degraded physical (putting aside moral) type" (LL.iii.293). Spiritually, such men are "by Despair, bred Hangdog dull; by Rage, Manwolf, worse; and their packs infest the age" (Poems, #70). At one point, Hopkins looks on in sympathy (with Communist leanings, much to Bridges' horror):

it is a dreadful thing for the greatest and most necessary part of a very rich nation to live a hard life without dignity, knowledge, comforts, delight, or hopes in the midst of plenty...The more I look the more black and deservedly black the future looks.

(LL.i.27-28)

That blackness is already too present; the sympathy turns to disgust at what man is doing to himself:

And the drunkards go on drinking, the filthy, as the scripture says, are filthy still: human nature is so inveterate. Would that I had seen the last of it.

(LL.i.110)

Man makes the worst of a bad environment because it is his nature to destroy; ultimately, the responsibility is his alone. He cannot even
claim a kind of majesty (as does Milton's pseudo-heroic Satan) in the pride that occasions his fall, for he is far removed from the "just" and "giant groans" of the fallen angels:

But man—we, scaffold of score brittle bones;  
Who breathe, from groundlong babyhood to hoary Age gasp; whose breath is our \textit{memento mori}—  
What bass is our viol for tragic tones?  
He! Hand to mouth he lives, and voids with shame;  
And, blazoned in however bold the name,  
Man Jack the man is, just; his mate a hussy.  

\textit{(Poems, \#75)}

He deserves only scorn for his pretensions, the laughter of Michelangelo's Minos in the bottom corner of the Last Judgment. His would-be "tragic tones" are indeed played in a key both base and vile:

\ldots We, life's pride and cared-for crown,  
Have lost that cheer and charm of earth's past prime:  
Our make and making break, are breaking, down  
To man's last dust, drain fast towards man's first slime.  

\textit{(Poems, \#35)}

There is no pity—

My prayers must meet a brazen heaven  
And fail or scatter all away.

--and no healing repentance:

Nor tears, nor tears this clay uncouth  
Could mould, if any tears there were.

\textit{(Poems, \#16)}

Thus all the promise of beauty—"Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and
boy"—comes to nothing in the self-willed man, and the poet pleads with Christ to win it "before it cloy, / Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning" (Poems, #33). The body goes the way of the soul in decay, or, more appalling, fails to keep pace with it in goodness, at the mercy of those "dark trampers," the "tyrant years" (Poems, #157):

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...

(Poems, #59)

Felix Randal and the sailor of the Eurydice are admired, but the occasion is their death. The beautiful body that served them so well returns to dust:

    Flesh falls within sight of us, we, though our flower the same,
    Wave with the meadow, forget that there must
    The sour scythe cringe, and the blear share come.

(Poems, #28:11)

    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.

(Poems, #72)

Once gone, he is forgotten; the species carries the inscape in nature, but even a man's children can never replace him:

...Million-fueled, nature's bonfire burns on,
But quench her bonniest, dearest to her, her clearest-
    selved spark
Man, how fast his firedint, his mark on mind, is gone!

(Ibid.)

He does not even live for long in the hearts of those who cared for him:

My love is less, my love is less for thee. I cease the mourning and the abject fast, And rise and go about my works again And, save by darting accidents, forget.

(Poems, #14:1)

And there is, as well, the fear of the second death that haunted Michelangelo:

Heart, go and bleed at a bitterer vein for the Comfortless unconfessed of them.

(Poems, #28:31)

These daredeaths, ay this crew, in Unchrist, all rolled in ruin.

(Poems, #41)

Hopkins pities them but he also can empathize because of the death, the utter hopelessness, that he has felt within himself.

The sterility deplored by the poet in his "terrible sonnets" is part of the general destruction of that which is created—he can no longer claim "a working health, a working strength" (Ll.i.251)—but it is more; it is the inability to put into effect the creative impulse itself. Even worse than not having the will to achieve beauty ("the impulse to do anything fails me"—Ll.i.83) is having that will and being blocked on every side:
I am now working at examination papers....It is great very great drudgery. I cannot of course say it is wholly useless, but I believe that most of it is and that I bear a burden which crushes me and does little to help any good end....I labour for what is worth little. And in doing this almost fruitless work I use up all opportunity of doing any other.

(LL.liv.184-185)

He has attempted—in spite of his grief over the way Ireland is going, his physical and spiritual separation from family and friends, and his almost intolerable work load—to make the best of the situation where he believes God has placed him. He accepts that situation but cannot comprehend any reason for it, telling Bridges with heavy irony directed against his defeat:

Tomorrow morning I shall have been three years in Ireland, three hard wearying wasted years.
...In those I have done God's will (in the main) and many many examination papers.

(LL.i.251)

Even though separated from "England, whose honour 0 all my heart woos, wife/ To my creating thought," he knows that he should be able to "Kind love both give and get." But any "word" that his heart at its wisest can breed is barred by "dark heaven's baffling ban," or thwarted by "hell's spell"; he keeps it within himself, unheard, or, worse, unheeded. Not being able to utter it, he is left "a lonely began" (Poems, #66). The word that is an expression of himself, an inscape, a response of both love and beauty, is caught within the mortality of his being and cannot escape. He is impotent as both poet and priest:
...what is life without aim, without spur, without help. All my undertakings mascarry: I am like a straining eunuch.

(P.262)

See, banks and brakes
Now, leaved how thick! laced they are again
With pretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes them; birds build--but not I build; no, but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.

(Poems, #74)

I cannot produce anything at all....Nothing comes;
I am a eunuch--but it is for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

(LL.i.270)

That he is doing it for that Kingdom is all that sustains him; why, then, he asks, cannot its King help him? He is left alone, to his own resources:

God's most deep decree
Bitter would have me taste; my taste was me.

Bones, flesh, and blood build the curse in him, a "dull dough" turned sour by the "Selfyeast" of a sick spirit within him (Poems, #67). Yet he receives no encouragement:

...why must Disappointment all I endeavour end?

Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,

Sir, life upon thy cause.

(Poems, #74)
God not only does not help him, but becomes his adversary:

...O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me
Thy wring-world right foot rock?

(Poems, #64)

When he cannot flee, he prays for peace, and, when that does not come, for patience (Poems, #51 and #68). "Thoughts against thoughts in groans grind" (Poems, #61), and "We hear our hearts grate on themselves" (Poems, #68), yet he will not despair,

Not untwist--slack they may be--these last strands
of man
In me or, most weary, cry I can no more. I can;
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.

Through it all he feels that there is a purpose, unfathomable though it may be at the time: "Why? That my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear" (Poems, #64). The "age-old anvil" (Poems, #65) is that on which the "high hammer beyond stars and space" of which Michelangelo speaks, "Makes self, and others, with each stroke, more great/ And bright" (PM. 86). Fury, though "fell", will be "brief", and Hopkins chooses to hang on the mountains of the mind, the "cliffs of fall/ Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed" until he is rescued, even if his only hope ("a comfort That serves in a whirlwind") is death or the oblivion of sleep (Poems, #65). And he thinks again of that second death:

I see
The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.

(Poems, #67)
In his life as in his poetry, "my soul needs this;/ I want the one rapture of an inspiration" (Poems, #76): he must live in his "winter world" by will-power alone if he is to defeat that second death. He must regretfully watch pass by the "things done with lost pains and disappointed hopes by man" (LL.ii.7), by himself, by nature, must ignore the collapsing of the inscapes, must watch mortal beauty die, if he is not, in his wasteland world,

to despair, to despair, to despair, to despair.

For there is no way to "keep Back beauty...from vanishing away" (Poems, #59). The inscapes tell of immortal beauty, but their every note is a swan song.

The Neo-Platonists, in their belief that man could do all things, left little room for frustration. They postulated a world order where if man only wanted to escape his mortality, he could. It is difficult to climb, however, when the stairs themselves flow down against you, difficult to appeal to a Christ whose raised arm is as impersonal as it is implacable, difficult to appeal to a Virgin shrinking under that arm for protection, or staring out into space, oblivious to the Child at her breast, difficult to soar to the sunlit vault when you are chained by the weight of your flesh to the tomb. Michelangelo tries to escape the demands of a world seen through Mannerist eyes by escaping from the world altogether; Hopkins, in the strength of his will alone, tries to meet those demands and to resolve them, to hold back the beauty that would succumb to its mortality, just as he holds himself back from succumbing
to despair. Michelangelo's art becomes increasingly ethereal, a kind of super-Gothic; Hopkins resolves the tensions inherent in the movement from Renaissance to Mannerism by turning to Baroque.
CHAPTER IV
BAROQUE

The "central motive" giving rise to the Baroque movement, it has been suggested, is "a desire for power, an intense desire to assert the predominance of the will." The players on the stage have given up trying to find the production manager, have postulated that his silence means assent to their taking the stage design into their own hands: the painted birds on the backdrop seem inadequate, yet no real birds are to be found; the problem is solved accordingly by the impressive tour de force of having mechanical birds sent on invisible wires across richly painted skies. The cynical and intentionally tenuous hypotheses of Mannerism are transformed into a dogmatic statement of faith. Loyola writes:

> Putting aside all private judgment, we should keep in our minds prepared and ready to obey promptly and in all things the true spouse of Christ our Lord, our Holy Mother, the hierarchical Church...

> If we wish to be sure that we are right in all things, we should always be ready to accept this principle: I will believe that the white that I see is black, if the hierarchical Church so defines it.

Hopkins accepted the dictum of obedience to superiors completely: "I have never wavered in my vocation," he informs Dixon, "but I have not lived up to it" (LL.ii.88).

That Michelangelo could sympathize with the Jesuits up to a certain point, we see in his offering "to Ignatius Loyola in 1554 'per sola devozione' the execution of a plan and model for the church of the
Gesù." Michelangelo, however, was closer to universal catholicism—that shared by Protestants and Orthodox—than to the aggressive Romanism of the Counter-Reformation. Vittoria Colonna was told "that she should believe as though only by faith could she be saved and, on the other hand, she should do /good/ works as if her salvation consisted of works /alone/." This was Michelangelo's position. While he admired the Jesuit spirit, at the same time he felt powerless to assume a similar militancy for himself. His letters testify to his concern for giving alms (he worried about his nephew in this regard as Hopkins worried about Bridges), and to his certainty that the abandonment of St. Peter's "would lay a grievous sin upon my soul" (LM.ii.153): he was aware of his responsibility. Nevertheless, he was also very much aware of his helplessness. In the last of a series of drawings on the theme of the Crucifixion, "The Virgin and St. John press against the legs of Christ as if they were looking for protection and for a remedy for their despair." He allows himself to be pulled into the vortex spiralling around the merciless Christ of the Last Judgment because he, too, is drowning and can only hope that that Christ is the same person as he who when crucified forgave his murderers. He feels himself broken and powerless, a passive instrument of God's will (as in the supervising of St. Peter's) rather than the active agent that the Jesuit endeavours to be. He does not seek to counteract death, but accepts it. According to Giannotti,

Michelangelo sums up his wisdom in this way:
'If a man wishes to find himself and to enjoy his individuality he must not give himself up to joys and pleasures, but must think of death. ...The effect of this thought on death is marvellous, for just as it destroys everything else, it preserves and maintains those who think of it and protects them against all human passions.'
His final period is in direct opposition to the spirit of Baroque.

By a pontifical letter of Paul III in 1547 (renewed in 1552 by Julius III), Michelangelo was appointed architect of St. Peter's. Ackerman's description of how Michelangelo utilized the work already done by his predecessors, Bramante and Sangallo, suggests that by this time he had begun to find some unifying factor in his life and therefore in his aesthetics:

Michelangelo, by merely walling off the entrances to each of Sangallo's disconnected spaces, made one church out of many; he surpassed the clarity that he admired in Bramante's plan in substituting for the concept of major and minor crosses a more unified one of an integrated cross-and-square, so that all circulation within the Basilica should bring the visitor back to its core.

The dominance of the verticals that are calmed and resolved by the (as originally planned) hemispherical dome, yet are also climaxed in the lantern, suggests a Gothic inspiration more than a Neo-Platonic ascension because man is very removed from the upward surge encompassing him. The individual is directed, but he is also dwarfed. Perhaps the transcendent centrality is a reflection of Michelangelo's taking the position as architect only at the Pope's command. He complains, but he obeys: he is powerless to do otherwise. He is in constant conflict with those working under him, who are careless or even corrupt (hoping to use inferior materials and methods for the sake of profit), just as the soul struggles against the betrayal of the body in its greed for the good things of this life. He cannot rely on his own rational powers to lift him above that struggle, just as he cannot, because of old age, keep
a constant watch on those raising St. Peter's. He refuses to return to Florence to end his days in rest as all his friends, including the Duke of Florence, beg him to do, "because", as he writes to Vasari (in 1557),

many people believe, as I do myself, that I was put there by God.

...Because I am an old man and have no-one to leave in my place, I have not wished to abandon it, and also because I serve for the love of God, in whom is all my hope.

(LM.ii.177)

Five years earlier, he had advised his nephew to "Commend yourself to God and believe that what ensues is for the best" (LM.ii.140); with the death of Urbino, who had served him faithfully for twenty-six years, his confidence grows:

You know that Urbino is dead; through whom God has granted me his greatest favour, but to my grievous loss and infinite sorrow. The favour lay in this—that while living he kept me alive, and in dying he taught me to die, not with regret, but with a desire for death.

...nothing is left to me but the hope of seeing him again in Paradise. And of this God has given me a sign in the happy death he died; for he was far less grieved at dying than at leaving me here in this treacherous world with so many burdens; though the greater part of me has gone with him, and nothing but unending wretchedness remains to me.

(LM.ii.161)

He had once written to Cavalieri, "A man can only fall in love and yearn/ For as much heaven as he understands" (PM, 45). He has, he feels, now gained a new understanding. Once, he had felt with the Neo-Pleatonists that:
Love awakens us, and gives us wings for higher
Heavens, ennobling our initial aim;
Is the first step through which the soul, in shame
And weariness, forgets the earth for its sire.

(PM.80)

Now he feels that he was deceived: "I know how love is wrong/ On earth,
and recognize how wrong was I" (PM.102). A similar movement occurs in
his aesthetics:

My eyes, in love with all beautiful things,
And my soul, eager for eternal bliss,
Can both ascend to God
Only on beauty's wings.

(PM.130)

becomes:

O make me see you, Lord, in every place!
If mortal beauty burns me with its flame,
My fire is ember when at yours I aim,
And in your love I shall be still ablaze.

(PM.141)

and finally:

Make me hate what the world thinks great and new,
And all its beauties which I honor still,
To earn, before I die, eternal life.

(PM.153)

Mannerism has meant for Michelangelo not just a challenge, as it was for
Hopkins, but finally a total collapse of Renaissance values. His last
Pietàs, much more than St. Peter's, are a visual statement of this
sacrifice of mortal beauty and human value for immortal beauty and
divine evaluation.
If in his earlier sculptures matter was a burden weighing down the form, in the Pietà it becomes an intolerable limitation. Vasari reveals Michelangelo's impatience with his medium in relating an anecdote involving Michelangelo and a Florentine sculptor, Tiberio Calcagni:

One day, in Michelangelo's house, where the Pietà [now in Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence] was, he asked the master why he had broken it and ruined such marvellous work. He replied it was because of the importunity of his servant Urbino, who urged him to finish it every day, and in hurrying he had removed a piece of the Virgin's elbow; he had come to hate it, and had been much bothered by a vein, and losing patience he broke it and would have smashed it to atoms had not Antonio his servant asked for it.

It was Tiberio who put the pieces together (the left leg of the Christ, which was to be a separate piece of marble, is missing) and worked on the Magdalen, but he, too, died before it was completed. Michelangelo had meant the work (which is really a Deposition and Lamentation, not a Pietà) for his own tomb, and inscribed his own features on the figure of Joseph of Arimathea. It is a composition in which the artist is no longer emphasizing the beauty of human form but trying to bypass the body in order to reveal the spirit. Wolfflin calls it "the formless collapse of a heavy mass": the weight of the marble has at last been too great for the statue to bear. The artist has abandoned the Mannerists' effort to sustain a structure in which the tensions forcefully held together all work against stability: he no longer tries to convince himself or his audience that "if these tensions were controlled, the structure would stand." It is in the denial of that "if-clause" that the tensions are relaxed. The very collapse has brought release. The artist
admits that he can do nothing and waits for it to be done for him.

He finds peace, but it is the peace of death:

Human pain seems to be overcome; the living figures are filled with same mysterious sweetness and sense of blessedness that can be read on the serene features of the dead Christ.

The artist has surrendered his will: he does not seek to work with God in this world, for he does not seek to work at all unless it be in another sphere. He no longer wishes to create beauty, but only to suggest that it might be found elsewhere.

De Tolnay (among others) feels that the Palestrina Entombment cannot be Michelangelo's because (aside from its late attribution) it is so poorly executed. He tentatively assigns it to a pupil, but perhaps it represents one of Michelangelo's less successful attempts to spiritualize his material.

The Rondanini Pietà is Michelangelo's last work. It is an attempt to recover a work he began about 1552 but spoiled. Having repositioned the right arm, he found that the head and torso were out of proportion to the legs and that there was no room for Mary's right arm. Part of the Christ is actually carved from what was his Mother's body. Preparatory drawings for the work exist, but it seems he chose to improvise rather than work from a model. He no longer works from a concetto to be expressed in the stone but from a vague longing for an expression that is anything but material; Wölfflin thinks that this is a natural outcome of Michelangelo's method: he "treated forms with a violence, a terrible seriousness which could only find expression in formlessness."
The composition is both incomplete and inadequate. And yet it is beautiful. It is beautiful because both emotion and motion work together in the sweeping curve climaxed by the Virgin's tenderness, to form a unity, a part-whole relationship that knows no tension but only release: "Both of the bodies, completely without force, with their flat, simplified forms suggest with great intensity the fusion of Mother and Son." There is nothing to break their communion. Even the weight of the marble (and this in Michelangelo!) is not apparent: gravity can no longer hold the dead Christ—so soon to be resurrected—and the corpse is lifted without effort. Hauser calls the work a

transition from a work of art to an ecstatic confession; a unique exposure of that spiritual interrugnum where the aesthetic meets the metaphysical; an act of expression which, hovering between the sensual and the supersensual, seems to be wrested from the mind by force. What is finally produced here is near to blankness—shapeless, toneless, and without articulation.

It is inarticulate, but not uncommunicative: a gesture suffices. It is the Word disincarnate.

II

In a letter of 1556, Michelangelo informed Vasari:

Recently, at great inconvenience and expense, I have had the great pleasure of a visit to the hermits in the mountains of Spoleto, so that less than half of me has returned to Rome, because peace is not really to be found save in the woods.

(LM.ii.169)

He has chosen, finally, the contemplative rather than the active life.
"Few people," claims Thomas à Kempis, "know how to cut themselves off completely from all that is perishable and created," yet "Only if a man is loosed from all created things is he free to direct his will to the things of God." In a similar vein, Hopkins complains:

when one mixes with the world and meets on every side its secret solicitations, to live by faith is harder, is very hard; nevertheless by God's help I shall always do so.

(LL.ii.93)

To choose a place "where flies no sharp and sided hail," "Where no storms come" (Poems, #9), is the easiest path: men did not move from a Gothic through a Renaissance to a Mannerist world view because the latter was most pleasant. Nor does Hopkins turn to a Baroque angle of vision because a "Heaven-Haven" has become any less appealing. He makes his choice because a fugitive and cloistered virtue is a self-deceiving virtue, one that closes its eyes to experience in hopes of regaining innocence—an innocence that is no longer available to man, who, whether he likes it or not, has eaten of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. Death to this world is no solution to the problems raised by that knowledge, to the vulnerability inherent in the movement from innocence to experience: death is an escape from seeking solution. Thus Hopkins even in one of his darkest moments writes:

I wish then for death: yet if I died now I should die imperfect, no master of myself, and that is the worst failure of all. O my God, look down on me.

(S.262)

To be master of himself is to accept the burden of free will, a burden
that became too heavy for Michelangelo. "Heaven-Haven" is countered with a poem parallel in structure but directly opposite in mood and theme:

I must hunt down the prize
Where my heart lists...

Must see the green seas roll
Where waters set
Towards those wastes where the ice-blocks tilt and fret,
Not so far from the pole.

(Poems, #88)

Similarly, in The Wreck of the Deutschland:

I did say yes
O at lightning and lashed rod...
And the midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with fire and stress.

(Poems, #28:2)

To be fully a man, one must accept the "stress" in "instress"; one must be willing to hold the relation together even when it threatens to collapse; one must demand beauty, luring it back with sheer will power if need be; above all, one must insist on the immanence of the immortal in the mortal as a realized fact, and therefore on the unimpeachable and indestructible value of the mortal itself because it does hold the immortal. For Michelangelo, the outward manifestations wither away to reveal the Forms; for Hopkins, inner form explodes into life as it takes on sensuous attributes. Mortal beauty will not die, because it is more than merely the language of nature: it is the chosen language of God. In affirming and reaffirming this, one cannot insist too much: overstatement becomes synonymous with Baroque.
In introducing his discussion of Baroque as reintegration, Sypher comments:

the Council of Trent announced its decrees with majestic voice; it overwhelmed heresy by splendor; it did not argue, but proclaimed; it brought conviction to the doubter by the very scale of its grandeur; it guaranteed truth by magniloquence. 15

Plenitude, luxuriousness, even redundancy and hyperbole are part of an appeal that is far removed from the subtlety of the Mannerists: Baroque statement is direct and unavoidable. Mannerism pointed out the emotional barriers to Renaissance logic; Baroque, bypassing logic, appeals directly to man's emotions by means of sensuous richness. There is a new emphasis on movement, derived from Mannerism but without Mannerist contradictions being predominant. Renaissance perspective and Mannerist surface convincingness have interacted to produce a new concern with what appears to be; thus there is a shift from silhouettes to boundary areas, to the colours and lighting of what Wölfflin calls the "painterly style". The intoxication with three-dimensionality carries over into sculptural forms, in any media: the angular becomes rounded. The resulting massiveness leads to a subordination of parts to the whole, of an irregular distribution of ornament. The overall effect of these changes Wölfflin sees as an open, upward movement: "The church interior," Baroque's greatest achievement,

revealed a completely new conception of space directed towards infinity: form is dissolved in favour of the magic spell of light. 16

Frescoed domes open up into a view of heaven, with angels ascending and descending; "Sculpture flies, architecture grows wings, paintings
Diagonal lighting accents curves and three-dimensionality; one almost
sees shadows move out of the corner of one's eye. There is a sense of
submersion in an environment almost organic. The austerity of sculpted
forms has given way to an effect of modelling. Bernini's compositions
represent something never before attempted to this extent in free­
standing sculpture: the portrayal of an incident (as The Ecstasy of St.
Theresa) rather than a character. His portrait busts have a new emphasis
on the flesh rather than the spirit, on the personality rather than the
inner soul. Since the "if-clause" of Mannerism is a formal device, it is
by means of these innovations in form that Baroque artists seek to tone
down the "if" in the "if-clause" and make the hypothesis totally
convincing. Thus the "act of faith can be performed and terminated,
literally, in the senses" —an aesthetic principle parallel to the
post-Tridentine concentration on the reality of transubstantiation in
the Mass. That the Jesuits were intensely involved in the flourishing of
Baroque art is not surprising. Bernini's Jesuit education was a major
factor in his gaining papal patronage. Theologians like the Jesuit
Suarez were claiming that essence and existence cannot be distinguished,
a basic tenet of the Baroque artist's philosophical position. The
Jesuits, especially by means of the involvement of the sense in the
meditational practices of the Spiritual Exercises, were doing for the
Church what Baroque was doing for art:

they set about making religion more accessible,
not by giving it a more rational foundation as the
Protestants /and Neo-Platonists/ had done, but by
making it appeal to the emotions.
The Counter-Reformation, in which both Jesuits and Baroque artists were very much involved, achieved in Rome a situation similar to that of the Tractarians in Victorian England. Since Hopkins embraced both the Jesuit and Oxford movements, it is not unnatural that he should also share their participation in the Baroque spirit.

"Freedom", Hopkins tells Bridges, with reference to Scotus, "is compatible with necessity" (LL.i.169). To surrender the will to God is not the same as to give up all volitional effort: it is an assent rather than a negation. Hopkins moves towards clarification of this point in a note on the "Principle and Foundation" of the Spiritual Exercises:

The sun and the stars shining glorify God. They stand where he placed them, they move where he bid them. 'The heavens declare the glory of God'. They glorify God, but they do not know it....they do not know him, they never can, they are brute things that only think of food or think of nothing. This then is poor praise, faint reverence, slight service, dull glory. Nevertheless what they can they always do.

(S.239)

Man can choose to not glorify God. Or, knowing what he does, he can choose to join in nature's psan. One might say, à propos of the element of choice involved, that paradox is the language of Mannerism: two conflicting elements are brought together for the sake of the effect they produce on each other and are accepted as possible because they are, in fact, possible: one can have happy tears, or an unhappy smile. Baroque, on the other hand, uses oxymoron: the opposites have been taken to the extreme where they are not experientially possible: "darkness visible", for example, can exist only as a metaphor. Hopkins' linking
of freedom and necessity cannot be understood except in terms of oxymoron. He cannot actually experience liberation and obedience at the same time; he can only postulate their conjunction and make it an article of belief—something he knows without being able to explain. He gives his assent deliberately to something obscure because he feels there is a place for that obscurity, a place where man comes up against his own limitations. Hopkins corrects a misinterpretation of Bridges' in regard to this kind of obscurity:

You do not mean by mystery what a Catholic does. You mean an interesting uncertainty....But a Catholic by mystery means an incomprehensible certainty...the clearer the formulation the greater the interest. At bottom the source of interest is the same in both cases, in your mind and ours; it is the unknown, the reserve of truth beyond what the mind reaches and still feels to be behind....How must it then be when the very answer is the most tantalising statement of the problem and the truth you are to rest in the most pointed putting of the difficulty.

(LL.i.187)

Euclid assumes that a straight line is an extension of a point, even though an infinite number of points can have no linkage except in other points; he assumes it because, in terms of experience, it works. Likewise, Hopkins (in a sermon given in 1880) assumes the following:

...as many marks as there are of God's wisdom in providing for us so many marks there may be set against them of more being needed still...

Let us not now enquire, brethren, why this should be; we most sadly feel and know that so it is. But there is good in it; for if we were not forced from time to time to feel our need of God and our dependence on him, we should most of us cease to pray to him and to thank him....And God desires nothing so much as that his creatures should have recourse to him.

(S.90-91)
The broken relation of Mannerism, then, is for Hopkins not a matter of destruction, but of trial: if man truly wants the relation to be held together, he can will it to be so—in spite of doubt, in spite of discouragement. Mortal beauty can be rescued. Its centre in God can be reaffirmed—and reaffirmed boldly. There is resistance involved in Baroque because man is convinced in spite of himself:

Authority is not accepted passively. It is accepted—and resisted, and it is this that gives the literature its life, its high degree of emotional vitality combined with a high degree of order.

The assent does not come naturally, it is imposed; imposed, however, to the extent that the tension between assent and rebellion is quelled by the very power of the assent-demanding statement.

By asserting the supremacy of will, Hopkins is able to answer the question "To what serves mortal beauty?" (Poems, #62). He cannot deny that beauty's inscapes are being destroyed by human blindness or by a nature red in tooth and claw; what he can do is claim that wholeness and order need not be permanently broken, that as they disappear from the temporal they are caught up in the eternal. The Renaissance equivalent of this position would be that since it is only the Platonic Form that really exists, the destruction of its material manifestations is of no consequence. Hopkins, however, demands the redemption of the actual physical beauty, cleansed of all its imperfections, but recognizably physical nevertheless:

See; not a hair is, not an eyelash, not the least lash lost; every hair
Is, hair of the head, numbered.

(Poems, #59)
He takes the Incarnation as an affirmation of the flesh, of God's seeing (Genesis 1:31) that "it was very good" and worth creating:

Of her flesh he took flesh...
So God was god of old:
A mother came to mould
Those limbs like ours which are
What must make our daystar
Much dearer to mankind...

(Poems, #60)

—and the Resurrection as a vindication of the flesh:

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

(Poems, #39)

"Our passion-plung'd giant risen" reveals that God is truly "throned behind/ Death" (Poems, #28:33,32):

Enough! the Resurrection,
A heart's-clarion!...

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, pour potsherd, patch, matchwood,
immortal diamond,
Is immortal diamond.

(Poems, #72)

Essence and existence combine to form inscape, and neither is lost.

Since it is the individual who perceives the inscape, it is the individual who is responsible for its safe-keeping. Obviously there is nothing he can do himself to "Keep/ Back beauty," but he can, by an act of will, transfer that responsibility to God as a continuous instressing
of his concern for beauty to be met by God’s instressing of His concern for man:

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

(Poems, #59)

It is a movement upwards—as into a Baroque dome—to the "Yonder", to the source of beauty, to what Augustine described as "beyond...even the rational and intellectual rhythm of blessed and saintly souls," where one finds "the very Law of God, by which a leaf falls not, and for which... the very hairs of our head are numbered" —a quotation from the De Musica, with which Hopkins was certainly familiar (J.273). The richness of the lines' appeal, almost a hypnotic chant (Hopkins writes "I never did anything more musical"—LL.ii.149), entices the will, through a sensuous and emotional appeal, to forego any rationale of resistance. It is the logic of Mannerism, but it is pointed in a positive direction. In claiming that God is completely in control, Hopkins is free to dismiss the concept of mortality's being the final end of beauty; he asserts, rather, that it is Christ towards whom all beauty moves. In giving beauty back to God that He might save it from destruction, man acknowledges the need of a Saviour to make the relation whole. The Word is accepted,
heard, received: the two instresses—of man and of God—meet:

What do then? how meet beauty? Merely meet it, own,
Home at heart, heaven's sweet gift.

(Poems, #62)

The tension disappears, becomes the give-and-take of love. The over-concern is resolved in the self-imposed (or God-given, depending from which side one looks at it) perspective; man can "then leave, let that alone," and go on to the pursuit of "God's better beauty, grace" (Ibid.), the search for the immortal beauty that both transforms and transcends all mortal beauty without, however, negating it.

Hopkins considered "The Windhover" (Poems, #36) "the best thing I ever wrote" (LL.i.85); it can also be expanded into his best statement of the need to perfect man's relation to beauty by an act of will. What he responds to in the "dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon" is the inscape of the bird, the "rehearsal/ Of own, of abrupt self" like that which he sees in the magnificent bird to which he later compares Purcell, his favourite composer (who, it might be added, was a Baroque musician):

The thunder-purple seabeach plumèd purple-of-thunder,
If a wuthering of his palmy snow-pinions scatter a colossal smile
Off him, but meaning motion fans fresh our wits with wonder.

(Poems, #45)

It is the "meaning motion", the swoop of the bird battling the wind to stay in flight, that releases and spells out the "achieve of, the mastery of the thing!" As Purcell's notes reveal the "very make and species of
man" (Poems, #45), the windhover's flight reveals what "Brute beauty" is, offering it to the poet's "heart in hiding", where it is to be brought "home" (Poems, #62), to be "buckled" (compare the "bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace, latch or catch or key" that would "keep/ Back beauty" if they could, Poems, #59). As part of an instressing relationship it is "a billion/ Times told lovelier, more dangerous," because once there, in his heart, it is hardest to relinquish. It is "dangerous" because while it "does set danc-/ing blood" (Poems, #52) in the joy it brings, it can all too easily become part of "The deathdance in his blood" (Poems, #62) if he is not careful, if he does not seek to relate it to the source of its (and his) life. Mortal (or brute) beauty is meant to keep "warm/ Men's wits to the things that are; what good means" (Poems, #62); if the poet dedicates not only the poem but the experience "To Christ our Lord," the experience will become part of the "things that are": the will creates out of the aesthetic experience something that though costing a great deal (the relinquishment of part of oneself) will be immortal. The danger is overcome, the "fire" burns without consuming, only if man rescues it from the "Heraclitean Fire" of nature, the World's wildfire" that will "leave but ash" (Poems, #72). It is only the act of will that can truly create (as it alone can accept) beauty. The "vital candle in close heart's vault" (Poems, #46) is kept burning only if fed by a beauty that is indestructible no matter what it is threatened by. Sometimes the effort required is enormous: it is "sheer plod" that "makes plough down sillion/ Shine" and "blue-bleak ambers" must "Fall, gall themselves" to "gash gold-vermilion." And "be the war within" (Poems, #73), be the enemy despair, as it was for Hopkins, "God's better beauty,
grace (Poems, #62) is not easily come by: it may involve the almost unselving experience of that which introduces The Wreck of the Deutschland:

Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh,
And after it almost unmade what with dread,
Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?
Over again I feel thy finger and find thee.

(Poems, #28:1)

—a movement from Michelangelo's languid Adam to Bernini's St. Theresa. Grace, even in its plenitude, demands an absolute orientation—nothing held back—towards the source of that grace.

The grace itself, Hopkins feels, has been shown abundantly in the presence of Christ in this world. He does not doubt that "God shall strengthen all the feeble knees" (Poems, #11), will help man to "brace sterner that strain!" (Poems, #47), because he feels that God who "was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19) has shown, in "Lovescape crucified" (Poems, #28:23), that He feels the "Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy...worthy the winning" (Poems, #33). "Christ minds," he asserts in contradiction to the old adage, "out of sight is out of mind":

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

(Poems, #40)

He will "easter imus, be a dayspring to the dimness of us" (Poems, #28:35), because God
takes more interest in a merchant's business than the merchant, in a vessel's steering than the pilot, in a lover's sweetheart than the lover, in a sick man's pain than the sufferer, in our salvation than we ourselves.

(G.89)

God's "smile/ 's not wrung," the poet tells his jaded soul; therefore "leave comfort root-room" (Poems, #69). What has been true of others and true for Hopkins in the past, will be true for this "poor Jackself" casting for "comfort" as well, if he refuses to listen to the voice of "carrion comfort, Despair" (Poems, #64). He can, if nothing else, continue to be just, thereby acting "in God's eye what in God's eye he is--/Christ"; in allowing the Word to act in him, he will be in relation to that Word no matter how empty he feels at the time. The emptiness is, after all, part of the "world-sorrow" (Poems, #65) that is to be overcome. Thus he stresses what he must sometimes believe in spite of his experience, that

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

(Poems, #57)

It is an indwelling that he can imagine in all its richness and its abundance, even if he cannot always participate in it. That imaginative experience, more than anything, is what holds his will to the faith he cannot always feel: he can live into the situation as he lives into Biblical situations in following the Spiritual Exercises. He can appreciate, with all of his senses, by an act of will alone, the presence of
God on earth, which is the principle and foundation of the Baroque sensibility.

When Bridges complained of Hopkins' "Oddity and Obscurity," he referred to his style, but that style grows out of a complete imaginative involvement in his subject (as in the earlier discussion of inscape) even to the extent of a glorification of the senses in order to convey a resolution that is not entirely worked out but only carried by force. The reader is caught up in what Hopkins calls "bidding?—"the art or virtue of saying everything right to or at the hero,...making it everywhere an act of intercourse" (LL.i.160). This is largely accomplished by "repetition, oftening, over-and-oftening, aftering of the inscape" which "must take place in order to detach it to the mind" (J.289), setting up a kind of rhythm between the parts and the whole. The movement created, however, stays well within a well-defined ordering of the poem as a whole; thus Hopkins writes regarding his style, "my apparent licences are counterbalanced, and more, by my strictness" (LLi.45), and, similarly, "where there is much freedom of motion the laws which limit it should be strict" (LL.iii.335). Sprung rhythm, for example, combines opposite and, one wd. have thought, incompatible excellences, markedness of rhythm—that is rhythm's self—and naturalness of expression...

(LL.i.46)

His strict control of rhythm and sound patterns (as in his use of counter-pointing and consonant-chimes) suggests a mode of verse-mechanics superficially very easy to copy (as the post-war generation of poets
discovered), but just as Renaissance can degenerate into a frozen composi-
tion, Mannerism into that which is mannered, and Baroque into the
extravagances of Rococo, so, too, the would-be poet who adopts only
the style without the vision, is subject to the vice of what Hopkins calls
Parnassian, a poetic diction that misses Olympian heights because it does
not go by way of the Muse:

The world should know by this time that one
cannot reach Parnassus except by flying thither,
yet from time to time men go up and either
perish in its gullies fluttering excelsior
flags or else come down again with full folios
and blank countenances.

(J,23)

To adopt Hopkins' method of word-coining, his verbal ellipsis, his
heavily packed sound structures, his interchanging of parts of speech,
without also adopting the firm sense of control by which he ordered
these elements is to gain not the plenitude but the chaos of obscurity.
Similarly, to take his luxuriousness of imagery without his seriousness—
"the being in earnest with your subject—reality" (LL,i.225)—would be
to ignore the underlying significance in Baroque art of man's power to
assert, in terms of physical beauty, his relation to Truth in spite of the
encroachments made on Truth by relativity and circumstance.

Baroque is an affirmation centred on the Incarnation, the meeting-
point of the "yes" of God and the "yes" of man, in spite of a chorus
of minor, drowned-out voices saying "no". For Hopkins, the element
of trust involved in that affirmation touches his evaluation of his poetry
as it does that of his life, for he is able to say in spite of having
often to deny himself poetic activity and in spite of having a sympathetic
but demanding audience for his poetry largely denied him, "in all of this our Lord goes His own way" (J.250)—and Hopkins with Him. Of the actual fate of his poems, in spite of the many frustrations both in creating and communicating them, he writes to Dixon:

Now if you value what I write, if I do myself, much more does our Lord. And if he chooses to avail himself of what I leave at his disposal he can do so with a felicity and with a success which I could never command. And if he does not, then two things follow; one that the reward I shall nevertheless receive from him will be all the greater; the other that then I shall know how much a thing contrary to his will and even to my own best interests I should have done if I had taken things into my own hands and forced on publication.

(LL.ii.93)

—and, more personally, in his private diary:

...today I earnestly asked our Lord to watch over my compositions,...that he should have them as his own and employ or not employ them as he should see fit. And this I believe is heard.

(S.253-4)

When he does get the encouragement he needs "as much as crops rain" (LL.i.219), it does not always show up in his poetry:

Feeling, love in particular, is the great moving power and spring of verse and the only person that I am in love with seldom, especially now, stirs my heart sensibly and when he does I cannot always 'make capital' of it, it would be a sacrilege to do so.

(LL.i.66)

When encouragement fails him, he does his best to do without it, not by
pretending to a lack of need for it, but by making as great an effort as possible to strengthen his faith that encouragement will be given to him in the end. He tries to maintain a balanced picture of man's relationship with God, sees the peace thus set up threatened, and patiently turns around to set up the relationship once more, more strongly than ever. His art (as a reflection of his life, just as his aesthetics is a counter-part to his theology), is part of this process, and part of a larger process in the history of art similarly concerned with the tenacity and meaningfulness of a traditional value structure. Part of that process he shares with Michelangelo. And part stems from his Jesuit, Catholic, Judaeo-Christian, Western European background, with not a small dose of Victorian England thrown in for good measure. The rest, however, is simply Hopkins, the man who wrote that "The effect of studying masterpieces is to make me admire and do otherwise" (LL.i.291), and "What I do is me: for that I came" (Poems, #57).
CONCLUSION

Perhaps a brief apologia is in order at this point. Is there any value, it might be asked, in the comparison and contrast of two men centuries apart in time and innumerable degrees apart in merit, especially when there is no direct influence involved? Does a classification of literature in terms of artistic categories imply anything more than an organizational caprice on the part of the critic?

The first question is answerable in that methods used in understanding Michelangelo are also used in understanding Hopkins. Ideological similarities, shared religious convictions and practices, and, in both men, a separation from their peers--Michelangelo by his chosen self-sufficiency, Hopkins by an enforced poetical isolation--serve to modify, by reference to their artistic temperament, any overly facile charge of unnecessary oddity: tradition and the individual talent are not incompatible. As far as their work and their aesthetic position is concerned, parallels in the two men widen our appreciation (by extension and analogy), while differences clarify our comprehension, pinpoint the individual's position more exactly. In comparing the different directions the two men eventually took, for example, one understand more clearly why Hopkins' position was that of adherence to the sacramental nature of beauty rather than to the sacrificial approach that has too often, especially in terms of the so-called "poet-priest" conflict, been ascribed to him. A comparison of the rôle played by inscape for the poet and concetto for the sculptor helps to relate Hopkins' nomenclature to a standard Western European philosophy and to justify thereby his use of terms such as inscape as more than just a personal idiosyncracy. In the
light cast on him by the greater artist, Hopkins is brought one step further out of the shadows in which many people find him hidden.

The second question is easier to answer convincingly because of the precedents that have been set. It, too, has a rationale, however: one cannot really describe any work of art except in terms of itself. The best explication of a poem is to write the poem out, of a painting, a trip to the art gallery. If criticism is to be more than subjective impressionism, however, some objective criteria for discussion in terms of a versatile but ordered system is an indisputable necessity if criticism itself is to be accepted as a valid discipline. Since most poets and artists (Hopkins and Michelangelo not excepted) are critics on the side, it can be assumed that there is, to say the least, some liaison between the two fields.

In postulating a Renaissance-Mannerist-Baroque pattern of development in Hopkins, the critic immediately realizes that Hopkins, unlike Michelangelo, did not move in any kind of consistent growth pattern: one cannot say definitely "this is Baroque" or "this is a Renaissance trait" with any sense of drawing a heavy line between them. The jumping from stable to unstable orientation and back again, the over-lapping and merging of artistic sensibilities involved, however, does serve to point out the necessary inter-relatedness and the process of synthesis inevitably involved in the three art styles. The development of Baroque art was partially due to the need to solve problems raised by Mannerism and is oriented strongly towards concretized Renaissance ideals. Where decadence set in, the process began again with a reversion to Neo-Classic art.
The tensions inherent in any movement towards stabilization are as obvious in the Greek and Christian ideologies of Western culture as they are in Western art. Yet the demand for stability is equally apparent. Michelangelo chose one way of finding it, Hopkins another. Both died in peace. Both found their orientation, the relation that creates and redeems beauty—for Michelangelo immortal beauty, for Hopkins mortal beauty made immortal—in

Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' chivalry's throng's Lord.

(Poems, #28:35)
NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Francisco d'Ollanda, as translated by Charles Holroyd, in Michael Angelo Buonarroti, with Translations of the Life of the Master by his Scholar, Ascanio Condivi, and Three Dialogues from the Portuguese by Francisco d'Ollanda (London: Duckworth & Co., 1903), p. 296.


CHAPTER I


5. Ibid., p. 77.


7. Ibid., p. 146.


11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., p. 220.


17. Plotinus, p. 151.


29. Holroyd, p. 87.


31. Ibid., p. 19.


34. Ibid., p. 239. 35. Ibid., p. 236.


37. Ibid., p. xliv.


39. Ibid., pp. 63-64.


43. Croce, p. 79.


CHAPTER II

1. Thomas à Kempis, pp. 40-41.

2. Sypher, p. 37. 3. Ibid., p. 54.


6. Sypher, p. 73.


12. de Tolnay, I, 95.

14. Ibid., p. 15. 15. Ibid., pp. 15, 17.


17. Ibid. 18. The Renaissance, pp. 75-76.


24. Denis Meadows, as quoted by the editor of the Journals, p. 408.


CHAPTER III


3. Ibid.


7. Sypher, p. 119.


10. Classic Art, p. 188.
15. Renaissance, p. 95.
17. Daniells, p. 17.
20. Ibid., p. 94.
22. Sypher, p. 133.

CHAPTER IV

1. Daniells, p. 54.
2. Spiritual Exercises, pp. 139, 140-1.
3. de Tolnay, V, 8.
4. Ibid., V, 55.
5. Ibid., V, 81.
10. de Tolnay, V, 87.  
11. Renaissance and Baroque, p. 82.


16. Renaissance and Baroque, p. 64.


BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. HOPKINS

A. WORKS


B. CRITICISM AND BACKGROUND

(i) BOOKS


(ii) ARTICLES IN PERIODICALS

Allison, Alex W. "Hopkins' 'I wake and feel the fell of dark,'" *Explicator*, XVII, Item 54.


Baum, Paul F. "Sprung Rhythm", *PMLA*, LXXIV (September, 1959), 418-25.


---


---


Durr, Robert A. "Hopkins' 'No worst, there is none,'" Explicator, XI (1952), Item 11.


---

"A Note on Hopkins and Duns Scotus," Scrutiny, V (June, 1936), 61-70.

---


---


Holloway, Sister Marcella. "Hopkins' 'Sonnet 65,'" Explicator, XIV (May, 1956), Item 51.


King, Anne R. "Hopkins' 'Windhover' and Blake," English Studies, XXXVII (December, 1956), 245-252.


Leavis, F. R. "Gerard Manley Hopkins," Scrutiny, XII (Spring, 1944), 82-93.


Miller, J. Hillis. "'Orion' in 'The Wreck of the Deutschland,'" Modern Language Notes, LXXVI (June, 1961), 509-514.


Schneider, Elisabeth. "Hopkins' 'My own heart let me more have pity on,’” Explicator, V (May, 1947), Item 51, and VII (May, 1949), Item 49.


Schoeck, R. J. "Peine Forte et Dure and Hopkins' 'Margaret Clitheroe,'" Modern Language Notes, LXXIV (March, 1959), 220-224.


Stevens, Sister M. Dominic. "Hopkins' 'That nature is a Heraclitean fire,'" Explicator,XXII, Item 18.


Tillemans, Th. "Is Hopkins a Modern Poet?" English Studies, XXIV (March, 1942), 90-95.


------. "The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins (II)," Hudson Review, II (Spring, 1949), 61-93.


II. MICHELANGELO AND ARTISTS OF HIS ERA


Beall, Chandler B. "The Literary Figure of Michelangelo," Italica, XLI (September, 1964), 235-251.


III. AESTHETICS AND PHILOSOPHY


APPENDIX

REFERENCES TO MICHELANGELO IN HOPKINS' WRITINGS

1865. A booklist begins with "Grimm's Life of Michael Angelo" (J.60).

1873. A trip on September 18 to the Kensington Museum, where he saw: "Michael Angelo's paintings at the Vatican: the might, with which I was more deeply struck than ever before, though this was in the dark side courts and I could not see well, seems to come not merely from the simplifying and strong emphasizing of anatomy in Rubens, the emphasizing and great simplifying in Raphael for instance, and on the other hand the realism in Velasquez, but here force came together from both sides" (J.237).

1874. February 16: "We also visited the National Gallery. Especially notice (to be renewed, I hope) of two new Michael Angelos not seen before: touches of hammer-realism in the Entombment (also a touch of imperfection or archaism) and masterly inscape of drapery in the other--But Mantegna's inscaping of drapery (in the grisaille Triumph of Scioio and the Madonna with saints by a scarlet canopy) is, I think, unequalled, it goes so deep" (J.241). The editor notes: "'Hammer-realism' probably refers to the angles of limbs, feet, &c., and the dead heaviness of flesh in the body of Christ. 'Imperfection and archaism' may be a partial recognition that it is a very early work (c. 1495), derived from a print by Mantegna" (p. 429n). The two works are not generally accepted as Michelangelo's.

1879. August 14. "I should be very glad to see your prose of Michelangelo's sonnets and also your verse, for though I do not like verse-renderings of verse (according to the saying Traduttore traditore), yet I think you could do them if anyone can. I have seen something of them, in particular a most striking one beginning--

Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto."
(LL.i.88-89)

1882. February 1, visit to South Kensington Museums. "Amidst the bewildering wealth of beautiful things my attention was fixed by the casts from Michael
Angelo, the David, two figures of slaves for Julius II's tomb, a Madonna, and others. I thought of the advantage, for which nothing can completely make up, you have of seeing these things on the spot. In the arts of painting and sculpture I am, even when most I admire, always convinced of a great shortcoming: nothing has been done yet at all equal to what one can easily conceive being done. For instance for work to be perfect there ought to be the sense of beauty in the highest degree both in the artist and in the age, the style and keepings of which the artist employs. Now the keepings of the age in which for instance Raphael and Angelo lived were rich, but unsatisfactory in the extreme. And they were both far from having a pure sense of beauty. Besides which they have several other great shortcomings. But in poetry and perhaps in music unbetterable works have been produced..." (LL.i.142).

1889. February 23. "'The first touch of decadence destroys all merit whatever': this is a hard saying. What, all technical merit—as chiaroscuro, anatomical knowledge, expression, feeling, colouring, drama? It is plainly not true. And, come to that, the age of Raphael and Michelangelo was in a decadence and its excellence is technical. Everything after Giotto is decadent in form, though advancing in execution. Go to" (LL.i.300).