

THE FALL INTO MODERNITY

A Thesis Submitted in part fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Philosophical Foundations

at the

Institute for Christian Studies

Toronto

May, 1989

by

Nigel Charles Douglas

Friend, your fugue taxes the finger.

Learning it once, who would lose it?

Yet all the while a misgiving will linger--

Truth's golden o'er us although we refuse it--
Nature, thro' dust-clouds we fling her!

Hugues! I advise *meã poenã*

(Counterpoint glares like a Gorgon)

Bid One, Two, Three, Four, Five, clear the arena!

Say the word, straight I unstop the Full-Organ,
Blare out the *mode Palestrina*.

(Robert Browning)

"To tell a man to study, and yet bid him, under heavy penalties, come to the same conclusion with those who have ~~not~~ studied, is to mock him. If the conclusions are prescribed, the study is precluded." (Frederick Temple to Archbishop Tait, February 25, 1861)

"For my part, I love neither reformers nor counter-reformers; but, given that there was to be a reformation, both one and the other bowed to an inexorable historical necessity and became, in consequence, most unpleasantly militant." (A.J. Balfour to Wilfrid Ward)

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?

(Robert Browning)

THE FALL INTO MODERNITY

Contents

Introduction p. 1

Part i: Images of Paradise p.7

Part ii: section i, Thomas More on tyrannous kings

and chaotic religion p. 38

section ii, Disenchantment and the death of

the politics of 'pity, love and fear' in

Shakespeare's English history plays and King Lear p. 62

section iii, Gerard Manley Hopkins: on

finding God in a wintering world p. 82

section iv, Labyrinths, complexity and the

poetry of Edwin Muir p. 114

Part iii: Simplicity; the contest; epiphanies; wisdom p. 137

Endnotes p. 155

Bibliography p. 176

Key works cited:

1. Thomas More:

The Collected Works (New Haven: Yale University Press):

CW 2: History of King Richard III.

CW 3: Latin Poems and Epigrams.

CW 5: Responsio ad Luther.

CW 6: Dialogue concerning heresies.

CW 9: Apology of Sir Thomas More.

CW 11: Answer to the poisoned book.

CW 13: Treatise on the Passion.

"Letter to Frith" in The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More.

Edited by Elizabeth Rogers (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947).

U: Utopia. Translated and edited by H.V.S. Ogden (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949). (All references are to this translation unless otherwise specified.)

2. William Shakespeare:

The Histories. Edited by Peter Alexander (London: Collins, n.d.).

The Tragedy of King Lear. Edited by G.B. Harrison (Hammonds-worth, Middx.: Penguin, 1949).

3. Gerard Manley Hopkins:

Poems. Fourth Edition. Edited by W.H. Gardner and N.H. Mackenzie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).

J: Journals and Papers. Edited by Humphrey House and Graham Storey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959).

S: Sermons and Devotional writings. Edited by Christopher Devlin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953).

LRB: Letters to Robert Bridges. Edited with notes and an introduction by C.C. Abbott (London: Oxford University Press: 1935).

FL: Further Letters. Edited by C.C. Abbott (London: Oxford University Press, 2nd. edition, 1956)

4. Edwin Muir:

Collected Poems (1963; London: Faber, 1984).

A: An Autobiography (1954; London: The Hogarth Press, 1987).

"Bolshevism and Calvinism" European Quarterly 1. May 1934,
p. 3-11; reprinted in Edwin Muir: Uncollected Scottish Criticism.
Edited and introduced by Andrew Noble (London: Vision Press,
1982) p. 123-130.

S&F: The Story and the Fable. (London: Harrap, 1940).

Introduction

This essay is an attempt to analyse some of the major characteristics of what I shall call 'modernity'. By 'modernity' I mean, in general, the period that extends from the Renaissance to the present day. For the sake of convenience I am inclined to accept the Marx-Weber chronology which sees a major transition in the 16th or 17th century. But the transition may be perceived to be earlier or later: dates are not important for my discussion. What is important is the remembrance of a 'pre-modern' period and the transition to a 'modernity', which is the author's contemporary situation; whether the transition occurred in the 13th century or earlier as Alan MacFarlane, for example, argues in the case of England¹, or whether it occurred in the 19th century, as David Jones rather off-handedly claims in the preface to The Anathemata², matters little for my purposes.

My discussion focuses primarily on four authors, all of whom see the transition from the 'pre-modern' to the 'modern' in terms of a decline, a fall from paradise: their descriptions of 'modernity', which for all is their contemporary situation, are deliberately set against, and judged by, an imagined or idealised golden age. It is not my concern to ask how true to life this imagined paradise is. I understand it not so much historically as rhetorically: that is, as providing the background against which the salient characteristics of the 'modern' may be judged. I suggest that when these writers imagine a perfect or near perfect past, they are in fact using this primarily as a device by which they may illustrate the imperfections of the present--indeed it is arguable that the paradises that they recreate are specifically to be understood as reactions to the perceived

imperfections of the present. Of the four writers who provide my major focus, two wrote in the 16th and early 17th century, one in the 19th and one in the 20th century. As might be expected, the earlier pair concentrate on the contrast between the present and a not-too-distant idealised past. Recovery would be for one the restoration of this past, while for the other recovery itself seems a political impossibility. The later pair, retaining the notion of a golden age from which the 'modern world' has fallen, emphasise the possibility of recovery. Thus taking all four writers together we find ourselves able to tell the story of the 'modern world' in terms of paradise, fall, and recovery, where 'modernity', always the writer's present situation, is the name given to the 'post-lapsarian' and 'unredeemed' world.

The four writers who provide my principal focus are Thomas More, William Shakespeare, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Edwin Muir. For More, 'modernity' is characterised by the confusion and tyranny portrayed in his History of King Richard III, the caesaro-papal ambitions of Henry VIII, and the scepticism, dogmatism, and heresy he associates with Protestantism. Recovery, for More, would be the restoration of the Catholic tradition of 'these past fifteen centuries' and a return to 'inherent meaning', as symbolised in the Catholic understanding of the eucharist, as a bulwark against scepticism, tyranny, and heresy. For Shakespeare, I shall concentrate on the English history plays³ and King Lear. Both cycles of history plays are set against backgrounds of sacred politics, symbolised in the one case by the godly Henry VI, and in the other by the England portrayed in John of Gaunt's speech in Richard III Act 2, scene 1, 1.40-58. In King Lear the 'ideal background' is represented by Cordelia--who is, of course, exiled from the kingdom in the first scene. The 'post-lapsarian' world is one where 'com-

modity' reigns supreme: the characters, whether good, like Henry V and Kent, or bad, like Edmund, Regan and Goneril, are all 'machiavels' who fully accept unconstrained power politics and whose dramatic lineage goes back to Richard III, the first machiavel in Shakespeare's histories, who symbolically is the murderer of the godly Henry VI. In the histories, the modern is never effectively challenged: Henry VI was not an effective king; Henry V was supremely so. This sense that the good machiavel is the best possible ruler is genuinely questioned in King Lear. But here, despite the eventual defeat of the evil figures, and despite Lear's conversion to all that Cordelia represents, yet the restoration of a 'pre-modern' politics is an impossibility. Power falls on the good machiavels, Kent and Edgar. Shakespeare's hope for political recovery, I suggest, dies with Cordelia and Lear. Yet we are, of course, left with images of what such a recovery would be: a restoration of the politics of 'pity, love and fear', the rule of Cordelia and the converted Lear, the society described in idyllic terms by John of Gaunt.

Turning now to more recent times, we look at the writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins. For Hopkins, the ideal past is medieval, and, perhaps especially, pre-Reformation England--"So at home, time was, to his truth and grace/ That a starlight wender of ours would say/ The marvelous Milk was Walshingham Way/ And one..."--the "one" is Duns Scotus, promoter of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Yet apart from this, the paradise-fall motif appears again and again in small ways: the Binsey Poplars; Duns Scotus's Oxford--now with Cowley, its "base and brickish skirt"; man, the cause of nature's decline (Ribblesdale) and himself in decline (Sea and Skylark). Recovery for Hopkins is, in part, of course, simply restoration of the idealised past --"Our king back, oh, upon English souls". But it is also, though this is a byproduct of a return to Catholicism, a recovery or development of a

sacramental view of the world that Hopkins captures so powerfully in many of the works of his 'middle period', particularly the 1877 nature sonnets. The paradise-fall-recovery cycle is present in its entirety in God's Grandeur: the glorious creation is dragged down by man's vulgar practices-- "seared with trade: bleared, smeared with toil ..."--yet recovery is ever present in the renewing power of the Holy Ghost.

Lastly, we turn to the 20th century poet Edwin Muir. Muir too sees 'modernity' as a fall from an idealised 'pre-modern'. But in this case it is a fall that he himself experiences. The 'pre-modern' is represented by his childhood on the Orkney Islands, still a 'traditional' society at the end of the 19th century when Muir was born. It is against this 'idyllic' background that Muir portrays the evils of the 'modern world'. For him the Fall was a personal experience, exemplified in the natural process of growing up, but also in the transition, made at the age of 14, from the Orkneys to Glasgow. Reflecting on that experience later he could write, "I was born before the Industrial Revolution and am now about 200 years old. But I have skipped a hundred and fifty years of them." (S&F: p. 263). The dramatic plunge into the modern city, into death (four members of his immediate family died within a few years of the transition), and into some degree of poverty, left Muir in a slough from which it took some time to emerge. Recovery for him was, of course, in part a restoration of lost childhood, of the harmony, unity, timelessness and security of the life he had known. But it is also very much linked with a piercing vision that sees all and learns, in some way, to accept it: "Acceptance, gratitude:/ The first look and the last/ When all between has passed..." For Muir, as for Hopkins, the restoration was to some extent personally experienced. Yet Muir's recovery, a slow groping process over many years, seems more stable

than Hopkins's; it involved a gradual re-appropriation of Christianity though this never seems to have expressed itself much in dogma. And his poetry is delightfully free of the wilful assertion of Christian truths that mars so much Christian writing. Muir's own life acts out the cycle of paradise-fall-recovery; which is not to say that Muir is able to transcend 'modernity', but by re-appropriating his past, he is able to reach a wisdom that goes some way towards overcoming a world in which he is still, of necessity, very much a part.

The structure of the essay is as follows: Part i. looks at the various images of an ideal past offered by these writers, and points out how those ideals are shaped by the problems perceived to be most serious in the present; Part ii. looks in some detail at the accounts of fallenness and hopes for recovery; and Part iii. discusses the various characteristics of 'modernity' that emerge, and asks what, on the basis of our discussion, recovery might be for us today.

In these discussions we shall see various characteristics of 'modernity' emerge: a scepticism-dogmatism or chaos-tyranny dialectic; appeals to simple absolute authorities; dissociation of sign and signified; and an increasing attempt to restructure the world along the line of instrumental reason (i.e. reason as a means to mastery and control). Behind all these, I shall suggest, lies a profound drive to simplicity, which has dictated the characteristics of the dynamics, or 'agonistics', of 'modernity'. This drive is colored by anxiety in the face of seemingly hopeless confusion, and desperation in the search to find some escape into certainty. What interests me especially about the four writers under discussion is that, to a greater or lesser extent, they went against the simplicities of their own age. In

Part iii. I explore how they can help us cope with a confusing world without resorting to the 'easy answers' that characterise 'modernity'. Drawing on ideas from these writers, and some insights gleaned from Nietzsche's writings, I explore how we might develop new understandings of authority by looking briefly at 'wisdom' understood as incorporating authority in a manner analogous to 'taste'--an internal discernment--fostered and guided by intimations of inherent meaning, or, as I shall call them, epiphanies. In such a way I hope to steer a middle path between chaos--the absence of authority--and tyranny--the violent imposition of absolute authority.

Part i. Images of Paradise

1) Sir Thomas More

In discussing what might be the nature of More's ideal, his picture of paradise, one's thoughts naturally turn to his Utopia. For what is a utopia if it is not an imaginary ideal by which the present may be criticised and transformed? However, the meaning of the Utopia is by no means straightforward. There is, among the critics, no agreed interpretation. No doubt, aspects of the work reflect what, one can imagine from other of his writings, More's own opinions might be. Yet there is much of which he must have been critical, and we must do full justice to the ambiguous note on which the book ends, "I admit," says 'More', "that not a few things in the manners and laws of the Utopians seemed very absurd to me..." 'More' wants to debate these things with Hythloday, but forbears, seeing that his friend is tired; he concludes, "I cannot agree with everything that he said, though he was singularly well informed and also highly experienced in worldly affairs. Yet I must confess that there are many things in the Utopian Commonwealth that I wish rather than expect to see followed among our citizens." (U p. 82-3) Even the character 'More' is a discriminating listener, and it seems necessary to be cautious before we attribute to More all the opinions held by Hythloday. As Chambers commented,

When a sixteenth century Catholic depicts a pagan state founded on Reason and Philosophy he is not depicting his ultimate ideal. (Chambers, p. 128)

But it does not do justice, I think, to conclude, as C.S. Lewis did, that the work is a 'jeu d'esprit', lacking any serious thread that might

bind it all together. Taken seriously, it is confusing, claims Lewis, but,

On my view, however, it appears confused only so long as we are trying to get out of it what it never intended to give. It becomes intelligible and delightful as soon as we take it for what it is--a holiday work, a spontaneous overflow of intellectual high spirits, a revel of debate, paradox, comedy, and (above all) of invention, which starts many hares and kills none. (Lewis, quoted in Adams, p. 219)

Lewis is correct to see the "intellectual high spirits" of the book, but wrong, I think, to neglect its underlying significance. My own thoughts suggest that Utopia (the country) and its spokesman, Hythloday, are absurdities whose purpose is to criticise the present both by revealing the injustice of the present and by exposing the folly of trying to correct these matters purely by reason. Utopia is a new version of Plato's ideal republic, but Utopia is Hythloday's story, and it is, More is saying, an absurd impossibility. Thus one might say that, for More, there is no utopia in the Utopia.¹ Both present day Europe and Utopia are foolish, one because of corruption, the other because of the want of a Christian tradition to provide bounds for the operation of reason. My discussion of the book here will be brief: all I shall attempt to do is show how sharp a contrast there is between the characters 'More' and Hythloday, and then give an example of how More uses Hythloday's absurdities to highlight present problems.

There are two main characters in the dialogue that forms the first book. One is 'More', the other is Raphael Hythloday. 'More' is portrayed as a man of some importance, one who has been sent on a mission by his king; he associates with learned men such as Tunstall and Giles; he mentions

his distress at being away from his wife and children--he is a loyal and faithful man with roots and a home; he attends mass; he is one to whom Giles wishes to introduce Hythloday, and is eager to learn new things; he proves loyal to his former employer, Cardinal Morton. This 'More' (and there is no reason to suppose that More did not see this as an accurate portrayal of himself) is a man of the world, yet learned and religious; he is a man who is happily bound by specific ties--to family, king, country, and church.

Hythloday, on the other hand, is quite different. He is in service to no man, he does what he chooses ("I live as I will"); he is a learned man, but his learning is skewed towards the Greeks, particularly Plato (Plato is, explicitly, **Hythloday's** friend); he has no roots--it is mentioned, in parentheses, that he is Portuguese by birth, but that is of no importance; he has no family, and had divided up his possessions among his relatives while young and healthy, so that he should not be encumbered by obligations--he is "not greatly concerned about" his friends. He is quite free from any of the specific ties that we noticed in the case of 'More'. Although he is not portrayed as unfaithful to the Church, yet it is not specifically asserted of him, as it is of 'More', that he has just come from mass.

The contrast between Hythloday and 'More' is considerable. Both are learned men, but 'More' is learned in the ancients **and** in the practical wisdom of civil affairs. 'More' is a man bound by loyalties and obligations (as is Giles, the third character in the dialogue, who is in

the service of a city), but Hythloday is in service to no one and no thing other than himself, he is dependent on no one, and there is no one dependent on him.

One may get some insight into the role of Hythloday in the dialogue from an understanding of his name: Adams offers the following exegesis,

The first root of "Hythloday" is surely Greek *huthlos*, "nonsense", the second part of the name may suggest *daien*, to distribute, i.e. a nonsense peddler. A fantastic trilingual pun could make the whole name mean "God heals (Hebrew, Raphael) through the nonsense (Greek, *huthlos*) of God (Latin, *dei*)" (Adams, p. 6)

This pun actually comes close to my own reading of Hythloday's function: God heals through nonsense. More uses Hythloday's absurd ideas to bring out into the open serious problems in the commonwealth. Consider the discussion in Book 1. about the punishment of thieves. Hythloday speaks at some length (he is relating to 'More' and Giles the conversation he had with Cardinal Morton at dinner one day): he criticises severely the idle nobles and their unproductive retainers; he attacks the practice of enclosure; he criticises the wasteful luxury of the rich and their pastimes of idle games such as dice, cards, football, tennis and quoits. Yet when Morton asks Hythloday to propose some remedy, Hythloday talks of a Persian tribe called the "Polylerites"--a name made from the Greek 'polus leros', meaning 'much nonsense'. This proposed remedy turns out to be quite fantastic and far more complex to administer than the present systems of justice. Moreover, Hythloday's remedy comes close to contradicting the grounds for his complaints, for whereas he rails against the practice of executing thieves, on the grounds that the

value of human life is greater than any amount of money stolen, yet the "Polylerites", whom he so admires, will execute any criminal who disobeys the various artificial technicalities that surround their captivity. By this ridiculous remedy More defuses the offence of the indictments he makes against his society. Hythloday's remedies are absurd and objectionable: the superficial reader has the option of rejecting the problems raised on that account. Yet the wise reader will have been made to think about them and sense that they are real problems--while indeed laughing at Hythloday's ideas.

One could continue this discussion of the Utopia showing how real problems are raised and yet their threat is defused by the nonsense that Hythloday often talks. However, for the moment, all I want to do is try to indicate why I do not think that the Utopia can be taken as More's ideal society.

If not in the Utopia, then where do we find images of More's ideals? We find them, I think, in two places: one is in England prior to the death of Edward IV, and the other is in the Christian tradition embodied in the Catholic Church over the centuries. More opens his account of the terrors of Richard III's rise to power with a description of England under Edward IV. More doesn't hesitate to describe Edward's faults, nor to point out the origins of the subsequent struggles in divisions present earlier. But, nevertheless, Edward is credited with bringing

peace and prosperity to the realm:

In whych tyme of hys latter daies, thys Realm was in quyet and prosperous estate: no feare of outwarde enemyes, no warre in hande, nor none towarde, but such as no manne looked for: the people towarde the Prynce, not in a contrayned feare, but in a wyllynge and louinge obedyence: amonge them selfe, the commons in good peace. (CW 2, p. 4)

This is the real (but precarious) peace that Richard, in his lust for power, destroys. Of the ideal nature of the Christian tradition we shall speak more in the later section. For the moment it is sufficient to say that though More recognised the existence of abuses in the church, he had tremendous faith in the tradition--the consensus of Christendom over the fifteen centuries, characterised

by such multytude of myracles, by so moche bloode of holy martyrs, by the vertuous lyvyng of so many blessyd confessours, by ye puryte and clennes of so many chast widowes and undefouled vyrgyns, by the holsome doctryne of so many holy doctours and fynally by the hole consente and agrement of all chrysten people this fyften hundred yere ... (CW 6, p. 355)

This tradition, identifiable by such signs, is an ideal normative past that More calls upon in order to cope with the challenges of his time, in order to distinguish the faithful body of the church from the "other wytherynge branches" which will be "blowen away by ye deuyll" (ibid.).

Essential to More's understanding is that this tradition is one, one body, a consensus. This 'oneness' provides its authority--for there are no alternatives except outside of Christianity itself--and More's apologetic, being primarily an appeal to consensus needed to believe in the unity of the tradition. The tradition guards certain

things, matters of the highest importance. Notably, for More, there is the 'real presence' of the body and blood of Christ in the eucharist. This, as we shall see later, is the assertion of a real connection between sign and signified. The eucharist, as a sign, is one of the anchor points for this principle. Another such point of concern is language: More revelled in the evasive but limited distance between words and meaning: too little distance and language is univocal, there is freedom for nothing but the surface meaning; too much distance and it is equivocal, alternative meanings get lost in a sea of possibilities; but a controlled distance allowed him to delight in verbal play.

Yet both in the eucharist and in language the participation of sign in signified² was also a bulwark against tyranny. It guaranteed the integrity and autonomy of the sign; it was not malleable, it was not open to redefinition. The autonomy of the church seems, for More, to be guaranteed, at least in part, by the 'real presence' of Christ at the heart of its liturgy, and its continuity with the tradition that asserted this; without these it is a prey to the tyrannous king. The independence of language--language as a place in which one could take refuge, as More did--is guaranteed if meaning has some real connection to the word. But the weaker that connection becomes, the more the word becomes liable to external definition, at the whim of the powerful. Naturally, language and the eucharist are intimately connected, for it is, according to More, only when the inherent

meaning is ignored that the words of the institution of the eucharist can be interpreted in such a way as to deny the 'real presence'.

2) William Shakspeareare

Shakespeare's second cycle of history plays, the second tetralogy, from Richard II through the two parts of Henry IV to Henry V, is the story of the fall of England. The background paradise, already scarcely more than a memory, is portrayed in John of Gaunt's famous speech in Richard II, Act 2, Scene 1. There, England is explicitly likened to Eden:

This royal throne of kings, this scept'red isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Fear'd by their breed and famous by their birth,
Renowned for their deeds as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son,
This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world ...

In this description England actually is a sacrament, "a visible manifestation of God's power and grace ... England, in Gaunt's equation, is a "holy land"" (Coursen, p. 23). This is emphasised in various ways. England is set apart from all other nations by virtue of it's being an island; it is protected from the ravages of fallen nature--"infection and the hand of war." It is the "royal throne of kings," not least because there is a direct line of rightful succession dating back to William the Conqueror--something that comes

to an end with the murder of Richard II, and in coming to an end is the cause of a century or more of intermittent strife. The likening to Eden is re-inforced by other references to England as a garden. In this speech, England is "This blessed plot," and a "plot" is, if not necessarily a garden, then at least a domesticated piece of land, one that is measured and known. The original Eden had no walls. But "this other Eden" is pictured as a walled garden--and a walled garden is a reference to virginity (see Song of Songs 4:12, "She is a garden enclosed, my sister, my promised bride," and also 8:9-10). So England is a 'virgin land,' not in the modern sense of being wild, untamed, and unproductive, but because she is pure and innocent. Yet this virgin is a well tended garden, that bears and nurses royal kings and "a happy breed of men." Hence, England becomes a shadow of Mary the Blessed Virgin, and her kings the shadow of Christ, who with their subjects are renowned for their Christian service--the crusades--where they sought to release from captivity the Holy Land, attempting to save even their Saviour's tomb. So England is likened not only to Eden, but the Holy Family--the Blessed Virgin, and Christ himself. England is indeed a sacrament. Needless to say, this is all in the past. The 'fall' has begun, and is well under way as Gaunt speaks. And the play Richard II charts the fall of England to the nadir of the murder of a rightful king.

The image of England as a garden occurs later in the play, notably in the allegorical scene at the end of Act 3. Here England is

described as a "sea-walled garden," though indeed fallen. The fall is not described as a breakdown of the walls, but as a disorder internal to the garden itself. Even Eden needed to be tended faithfully, but Richard II is a "Wasteful (devouring) king" (Act 3, Scene 4, l.55). The garden is well on the way to becoming a wilderness. The characteristics of the well tended garden are given as "Evenness," "Law and form and due proportion": these are achieved by tying up unsupported branches, pruning, weeding and other such tasks. The gardener and his servant do such things, just as Adam and Eve did in Eden; but Richard II has neglected his tasks. He has allowed weeds to grow--weeds "which without profit suck/ The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers"--and the caterpillars to swarm. Both "weeds" and "caterpillars" refer to flatterers who consume the soil's fertility, or the wholesome herbs, but bring forth no good in return. Richard II has a divine mandate to tend the sacred garden of England, to ensure fairness, equality, and justice, to root out the parasites and all corruption, to prune and ensure good and steady growth; the king is God's annointed and appointed to care for God's special garden. Such it was, but is, alas! no more.

The earlier tetralogy (Henry VI parts one, two and three and Richard III) is set against a more dubious perfection. This sequence focuses less on the fate of England than on the transformation of politics. The contrast that, I think, Shakespeare wants us to

contemplate is that between Henry VI and Richard III. If the state of England was the main focus of these plays, then Henry VI's reign would have to be seen as a almost unmitigated disaster in comparison to the glories of his father (Henry V) and the relative stability of Edward IV's rule. What, however, we find is that while indeed there is some nostalgic reference to the glories of Henry V, there is very little attention given to the reign of Edward IV. In Henry VI part 3, where Edward becomes king, the dramatic contrast between Henry VI and Richard of Gloucester provides the dominant note of the play. These two figures symbolise a transition in the nature of politics. Henry VI represents, as Danby suggests, "the pious medieval structure" (Danby, p. 202); he is "as nearly blameless as a king can be ... He behaves throughout the play as a pious, pitiful, Christian-hearted King ... Henry VI is the regulating principle of traditional society. He is mercy, pity, love, human-kindness, re-inforced by God's ordaining fiat. It is this which Richard kills" (Danby, p. 59-60).

Henry VI is a prayerful (1 Henry VI 3:1, l. 67), pityful (3 Henry VI 2:5, l. 96), peaceful (1 Henry VI 4:1, l. 161; 2 Henry VI 2:1, l. 33-5) pious (1 Henry VI 5:1, l. 12; 2 Henry VI 1:3, l. 53-62; 3 Henry VI 4:6, l. 42-44), just (2 Henry VI 2:1, l. 197-200; *ibid.* 3:2, l. 19-22), and virtuous (2 Henry VI 1:2, l. 20) ruler. All in all, he is portrayed as a good man and a virtuous king; there is no reason to

doubt the truth of the claims that Shakespeare has him make for himself:

... my meed (merit) hath got me fame:
I have not stopp'd mine ears to their demands,
Nor posted of their suits with slow delays;
My pity hath been balm to heal their wounds,
My mildness hath allay'd their swelling griefs,
My mercy dried their water-flowing tears;
I have not been desirous of their wealth,
Nor much oppress'd them with great subsidies,
Nor forward of revenge though they much err'd.

(3 Henry VI 4:8, l. 38-46)

Henry VI is, of course, to all appearances a rather ineffective king, somewhat like Richard II; but unlike Richard he is a good man and a virtuous monarch, his troubles came not from his vices, but were inherited from his grandfather, Henry IV. If Henry VI seems at times to be particularly weak, it is in part because he is aware of his tenuous claim to the throne--"I know not what to say; my title's weak" (3 Henry VI 1:1, l. 134). And it is his scrupulous honesty, rather than mere cowardice, that compels him to disinherit his son in favour of York. When Richard of Gloucester murders him he does indeed murder the sacred politics of "pity, love and fear."

3) Gerard Manley Hopkins

For Hopkins, images of perfection focus on a perfect creation, often on a perfect **nature**, whose essential characteristic is seen to be purity--the fresh, the uncorrupted, the **natural**. The "world is charged with the grandeur of God" that flames out "like shining from shook foil," and there lives the "dearest freshness deep down things," the sea's roar and the skylark's song are "pure" music, echoes of Eden, the innocent earth in Ribblesdale, the "Sweet especial rural scene" of the "fresh" aspens along the banks of the Thames--all these speak of an unfallen nature, an uncorrupted, pure nature, either lost in the past or precariously still with us. Even medieval Oxford is idealised thus. In all these, however, man, or especially modern man, with his rampant industrialism and commerce, is the evil presence, the source of corruption: man has smothered the grandeur of God in nature, and instead of being the first and foremost in all creation (as he was in "earth's past prime"), he is fallen and falling further still; he despoils nature, even felling the airy aspens; and the unfallen beauty of medieval Oxford is contaminated by the suburbs and factories springing up around it (though he can still write jokingly to Bridges, "at Oxford every prospect pleases and only man is vile" (October 8th, 1879, LRB p. 90)).

Yet man and his creations, too, can be idealised. Hopkins writes of youth and beauty as if they were as yet uncorrupted. "Margaret," who is springlike youth, grieves over the fall--of leaves, of man--which

is man's fate. Margaret is as yet unfallen, though she cannot retain that state: mourning over fallen leaves is mourning over her own fate. Youth and beauty are unfallen, but they cannot remain so for long, one way or another they will be lost. Hence Hopkins counsels sacrifice; for if you must lose them, you may as well give them up voluntarily, in the hope of receiving them back at the restoration:

the thing we freely forfeit is kept with fonder a care,
Fonder a care kept than we could have kept it, kept
Far with fonder a care (and we, we should have lost it)
(The leaden and the golden echo)

If individuals have fallen from youth and beauty, there has been a corresponding fall in the fortunes of England. In Duns Scotus's Oxford the fall has primarily been from an aesthetic perfection (though there is implicit reference to another type of fall). But in the Wreck of the Eurydice Hopkins sees the fall in religious terms, the loss of true faith. The entire crew, he surmises, died outside the true church, their salvation thus imperilled by the fall of England into heresy:

... The riving off that race
So at home, time was, to his truth and grace
That a starlight wender of ours would say
The marvellous milk was Walsingham Way
And one ...

The "one" is Duns Scotus; and Hopkins comments, "The thought is; the island was so Marian that the very Milky Way was made a roadmark to that person's shrine and from one of our seats of learning ... (Oxford) went forth the great champion of her Immaculate Conception"

(April 8, 1879, LRB, p. 77). The implication in all of this is that, Catholicism being so strong in England (as witness the devotion to Our Lady), had the Eurydice sunk four hundred years earlier, the crew would have died in Christ, rather than "in UnChrist". In this way pre-reformation England is a paradise from which we have fallen.

The English language, also, has fallen, not perhaps from perfection, but from a potential for perfection. The inclusion of Latin words in the development of English in the sixteenth century, despite the glories of the language at the hands of Shakespeare and Milton, nevertheless is a fall from grace: commenting to Bridges on William Barnes's Outline of English Speechcraft (an attempt to revive Anglo-Saxon equivalents for common words of Latin origin), Hopkins remarks,

It makes one weep to think what English might have been; for in spite of all that Shakespeare and Milton have done with the compound I cannot doubt that no beauty in a language can make up for want of purity. In fact I am learning Anglosaxon and it is a vastly superior thing to what we have now ... he (Barnes) calls degrees of comparison pitches of suchness: we ought to call them so, but alas! (November, 26th, 1882, LRB p. 162-3)

Here, as elsewhere outside Hopkins's middle period, beauty is not enough. He demands purity; the English language is beautiful, but it is not pure, it has fallen.

Man's ability to know is cast in the light of a former perfection--

this time the perfection of the historical Eden. Hopkins's interest in intellectual intuition, and his tendency to dwell on that at the cost of cognition has reference back to an unfallen state. He, like Scotus, believed that abstraction was a path to knowledge only because of the fall--otherwise man would have known even essences intuitively. After the fall, all that was left of this was a confused grasp of the being of the individual. For Scotus this was only a first step toward knowledge, to be completed by abstraction. But Hopkins, in his poetry, tries to halt just there with the remnant of Eden--knowledge as intuitive insight. We will discuss this further at a later stage. For the moment the point is that man as knower is to be understood only in relation to a past perfection which has been partially lost or corrupted.

4) Edwin Muir

For Edwin Muir, the paradise-fall-recovery motif was a conscious organising principle for him as he struggled to understand his own life. Childhood was a paradise on a farm on the Orkney Islands. The most dramatic steps away from Eden were the transition first to a poorer farm and then to Glasgow. But these were only the most dramatic stages of the fall; there were many others, most of which were simply a normal part of growing up. Yet despite the reality of the fall he retained not only the memory of paradise, but something of its presence--"One foot in Eden still I stand..."--which he consciously sought to recover.

The Orkney of Muir's childhood (the last decade or so of Queen Victoria's reign) was an enchanted land, a place where people could talk naturally of mermaids and fairies, witches and magic. Both Muir and fellow Orcadian Joe Grimond (in his introduction to the recent edition of Muir's Autobiography) point out that Orkney is not the Celtic Highlands, and that one should not read notions, mostly mistaken anyway, of a Celtic, mystical twilight into Muir's description of his native land. Nevertheless, this was a world, Muir writes, where,

there was no great distinction between the ordinary and the fabulous. A man I knew once sailed out in a boat to look for a mermaid, and claimed afterwards that he had talked with her. Fantastic feats of strength were commonly reported. Fairies, or 'fairicks' as they were called, were encountered dancing on the sands on moonlight nights ...

(A p. 14)

And the effect of all this was only enhanced by the stories of witchcraft and magic that his father used to tell, and the relaxed but sincere piety of the home.³

Muir's childhood was characterised, as he relates it, by a sense of security, of timelessness and splendour (see Butter 1962, chapter 1). The family was united and content. Muir writes that he cannot remember "ever hearing his parents exchange a discourteous word or raise their voices to each other" (A p. 27). Being the youngest, it seemed to Muir as if his siblings had always been present. Up until he was eight years old there were no catastrophic changes in life. The world was "a perfectly solid world" not yet determined by the passage of time. The wider community, too, knew its order, and rested securely in that:

I cannot say how much my idea of a good life was influenced by my early upbringing but it seems to me that the life of the little island of Wyre was a good one, and that its sins were mere sins of the flesh, which are excusable, and not sins of the spirit. The farmers did not know ambition; they did not realise what competition was, though they lived at the end of Queen Victoria's reign; they helped one another with their work when help was required, following old usage; they had a culture made up of legend, folk-song, and the poetry and prose of the Bible; they had customs which sanctioned their instinctive feelings for the earth; their life was an order, and a good order. So that when my father and mother left Orkney for Glasgow when I was fourteen, we were plunged out of order into chaos... My father and mother and two of my brothers died

in Glasgow within two years of one another. Four members of our family died within two years. That is a measure of the violence of the change. (A p. 63)

The security of the farm contrasts strongly with the insecurity of the life in Glasgow, where the principle was competition rather than co-operation, and where the loss of a job would plunge one into the abyss of destitution (A p. 93). And, again, the security of the farm was the security of a family still intact.

Muir's childhood vision was one of harmony--Muir calls it the "original vision"--by which he means something like the 'good creation' which Christian theology has seen as distorted by evil, but not destroyed. Part of Muir's recovery is a re-appropriation of that original vision.

I think of this picture or vision as that of a state in which the earth, the houses on the earth, and the life of every human being are related to the sky overarching them; as if the sky fitted the earth and the earth the sky. Certain dreams convince me that a child has this vision, in which there is a completer harmony of all things with each other than he will ever know again. (A p. 33)

This "original vision" is expressed in many of the poems; for example, in The Window, where childhood takes place in the protection of the tower:

Within the great wall's perfect round
Bird, beast and child serenely grew
In endless change on changeless ground
That in a single pattern bound
The old perfection and the new.

Here is harmony and security, that copes with change without the ravages of time. This last point is important: awareness of the destructiveness of time is very closely linked, in Muir's mind, with fall. The "original vision" is one of timelessness. We see this very clearly in another poem from the same collection:

My childhood all a myth
Enacted on a distant isle;
Time with his hourglass and his scythe
Stood dreaming on the dial
And did not move the whole day long
That immobility might save
Continually the dying song,
The flower, the falling wave.

(The Myth)

In this recollection Muir's Orkney has become a symbolic "distant isle"; the history has become the myth, the story has become the fable (when first published, the Autobiography was entitled The Story and the Fable). In this myth, time never breaks anything: the dying song never dies, the fading flower never fades away, and the wave, standing tall with its crest curling under, never smashes itself to pieces against the rock. All are caught and preserved by the immobility of time, leaning on his scythe, dreaming motionless on the sundial. Yet in all this the child plays, guarded, he goes on to say, by the "faithful watchers"--parents, perhaps, but more in the way of guardian angels. The timelessness connects, for Muir, with immortality: "we think and believe immortally in our first few years, simply because time does not exist for us. We pay no attention to time until he tugs us by the sleeve or claps his policeman's hand

on our shoulder; it is in our nature to ignore him, but he will not be ignored" (A p. 25). There are, here, strong echoes of Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality".⁴ But whereas Wordsworth laments what has been lost, Muir, in later life, re-appropriates this childish vision on a new level and a firmer foundation.

The splendour of the child's world is partly its enchantment, the presence of the magical to which we alluded earlier, but it is also the 'ennobling' of ordinary things, itself a form of enchantment. There is, Muir seems to say, an underlying glory to the world that is visible to the child. The scarlet suit he wore as a three year old at his baptism is etched in his memory: "the cloth seemed to glow from within its own light" (A p. 18). There is a glory attached to spring and sowing:

About that time of the year the world opened, the sky grew higher, the sea deeper, as the summer colours, blue and green and purple, woke in it. The black fields glistened... I would sit watching him (Muir's father), my eyes caught now and then by some ship passing so slowly against the black hills that it seemed to be stationary, though when my attention returned to it again I saw with wonder that it had moved. The sun shone, the black field glittered, my father strode on, his arms slowly swinging, the fan-shaped cast of grain gleamed as it fell and fell again; the row of meal-coloured sacks stood like squat monuments on the field. (A p. 31-2)

The brightening of the colours and the glory streaming out of the ordinary objects, the earth glistening and glittering, and the sacks of grain monuments, as if representing some great marvel: the child

in such a world **wonders** or **adores**. The ship whose movement inspires wonder is an example of the child's view of timelessness: the ship does change position, as if magically. But it is not seen to press on relentlessly, as time in the adult world moves on steadily and relentlessly. The ship is perceived to be stationary here, and then stationary there: the timelessness to which Muir refers does not, obviously preclude any change, only the steady, unforgiving plod of a time that never rests dreaming on the dial. Muir first experienced this steady flow of time when he went to school: "Time moved by minute degrees there; I would sit for a long time invisibly pushing the hands of the clock on with my will, and waken to realise that they had scarcely moved" (A p. 41). Only later did he come to accept this imprisonment (A p. 69). The fall was also a fall into captivity at the hands of time.

We quoted earlier from The Window. In that poem, childhood takes place within the confines of "the great wall's perfect round." It was a window in the tower up above, giving a view of the fallen world, which eventually captivated the watcher's interest, and held him "in thrall" beyond recall. In this case childhood is a privileged time of shelter from the real world. Time causes the great wall to be breached, the childhood garden dies, and evil intervenes, even in the sanctuary. But other poems are more hopeful, portraying the original vision, whether in childhood, or in later recovery, as the true reality. In The Gate, two children are **outside** of the "towering strongholdhold of our fathers" and may not enter into that "fortress

life of safe protection." The implication here is that they do not need the safety of the fortress--as he quotes (from St. Paul's letter to Titus, chapter 1, verse 15) in a later poem, "To the pure all things are pure." The children are watched over by "our guardians"--parent-like figures who cherish the children's innocence while being unable to share it. My understanding is that "the guardians" belong essentially to the tower. The children are outcasts from the tower, they don't belong there, they don't need its artificial safety, for they are both safe **and** outcast:

We sat that day with the great parapet behind us, safe
As every day, yet outcast, safe and outcast...

The children enjoy the childhood vision, the **original** vision:

Before us lay the well-worn scene, a hillock
So small and smooth and green, it seemed intended
For us alone and childhood, a still pond
That opened upon no sight a quiet eye,
A little stream that trinkled down the slope.

Muir deliberately avoids any personification of nature and so is not guilty of any of the more crass attempts of, for example, the early romantics to **endow** nature with spiritual characteristics as a means of re-enchantment. The still pond is a quiet eye, but it is quite definitely sightless. The world is enchanted naturally, without projection or device. This childhood vision comes to an end; in this poem he does not explain why. But the fall, when it occurs, is not a window, or a breaking of boundaries, which might imply liberation, but quite the opposite:

But suddenly all seemed old
And dull and shrunken, shut within itself
In a sullen dream. We were outside, alone.

And then behind us the huge gate swung open.

The time has come for the children to seek refuge in the tower. The fall is imprisonment: the creation is shut within itself, and the children, too, must shut themselves off from it by seeking refuge and safety in the tower. Muir's most powerful and, I think, most dominant images of the fall are of being caught, imprisoned, lost within a hopeless labyrinth; and his images of recovery are of liberation and re-appropriation of the original vision which constitutes not a fancy but an underlying truth of all things.

5) Comments

The key characteristics of the pre-modern paradise described by these four writers can be summed up briefly: unity (More)--of sign and signified in sacrament, of words and meaning, of church; enchantment (Shakespeare)--the sacred politics and a sacred nature; purity (Hopkins)--youth and beauty, intuitive knowledge, language; security (Muir)--harmony, timelessness, childhood. Clearly, these imagined paradises contain many echoes of the biblical Eden: More might be thinking of Adam's ability to name the animals--which has traditionally been taken to mean that Adam had an insight into their essences from their appearances; Hopkins of the fresh purity of an unfallen world; Muir might be thinking of a world free from the ravages of death and destruction; Shakespeare of a garden justly and properly tended--a godly administration. Indeed, as we have seen, Shakespeare specifically compares England of the past with Eden, and England of the present with a garden gone to ruin. Gardens are free from the industrialisation and trade that Hopkins so much disliked; they are places of security and harmony, free from the competitiveness of modern cities. One might say that Muir's Orkney was, in his memory, an Edenic garden, from which he and his family were driven by an exacting landlord--just as Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden by the vengeful angel. The Muirs, driven out from their first farm on the island of Wyre, moved to another on "the mainland." But this was a poorer farm, and there their labour was cursed--the land gave a "spiteful return for the hard work flung into it" (A p. 66).

Indeed, it seemed as if everything were under the curse: "the landscape was rough and desolate... it did not have the beautiful soft colours of Wyre and the islands round... Even the sea seemed a duller blue." For the first time in his life Muir saw rats and mice (A p. 68)--symbols of corruption and decay.

However, the notions of paradise back to which these writers look owe, perhaps, as much to their own time as to the biblical and traditional teaching concerning the first Eden. For each, the paradise projected is relative to the corruptions perceived in the present: that is to say, the paradise is projected as a means to criticise the present, it specifically corrects those faults that it will subsequently serve to illumine. In this way the paradise may be seen, in each case, to be lopsided: it exists to show up not every evil of the fallen world, but those which particularly concern each writer. So, for example, More idealised the church, which he knew perfectly well was seriously corrupt. The more he was faced with the evil of heresy, the more he tended to gloss over the faults of the church. Even in the short period of time between the Dialogue Concerning Heresies and the Apology (i.e., from 1529-1532) More changed from allowing criticism of the church's corruptions to simple whitewash--arguing that the church has always had (and perhaps always will have) a corrupt fringe, for even in the very earliest church "there was yet one nought in the small number of twelve" (CW 9, p. 70).

For Hopkins, one of the problems of his age was unchecked industrialism and the power of commerce and industry. Hopkins was posted to various Lancashire industrial towns and he saw with his own eyes, at close quarters, the pollution and the sorry state of the workers. Hopkins, at least in his middle period, perceives a pure creation (possibly including man, certainly children) as being spoilt by man's modern 'civilization':

My Liverpool and Glasgow experience laid upon my mind a conviction, a truly crushing conviction, of the misery of town life to the poor and more than to the poor, of the misery of the poor in general, of the degradation even of our race, of the hollowness of this century's civilisation: it made even life a burden to me to have daily thrust upon me the things I saw. (To R.W. Dixon, December 1st, 1881, LRWD p. 97)

Hopkins's notions of paradise are framed in opposition to this: it becomes a rural and pastoral idyll, something with which industrialism (almost beyond redemption) can have nothing to do. Sweated labour, trade, industrialism are the evils that Hopkins sees. It is these that, in no small part, vitiate the Edenic vision. They are the result of the curse that fell upon man's labour, reducing it to drudgery, and blinding him to the grandeur of God. It is this, partly theological, argument that supports Hopkins's revulsion at at 'laissez faire' capitalism, and leads him to sympathise with communism. For the communist protest against the horrors of working class life are just--labour should not be sweated drudgery, nor should profit rule indiscriminately; so Hopkins's criticisms, based on his

sense of an Edenic vision coincides with communism. Because industrialism and trade are so closely identified with cursed labour, it is doubtful whether there could be for them any redemption on this earth.

Muir seems to associate evil with time, or with an awareness of time. Many of the stages of the child's fall from paradise are connected with a growing awareness of time. First, perhaps, when he reached the age when his mother began to fit him out in boy's clothes rather than in "petticoats"; from that point on, "I remember," writes Muir, "myself as a boy, aware that I was different from little girls; no longer in the world where there is no marriage or giving in marriage" (A p. 32). Thus a divisiveness (sexuality) comes through time. At school he felt the constrictions of 'clock time'. With the move from Wyre, at the age of eight, Muir writes that he felt the need to become grown-up, and ascribes this 'evil' to time-- "it was as if time had suddenly spoken aloud to me" (A p. 66), echoing the earlier statement that "we pay no attention to time until he tugs us on the sleeve or claps his policeman's hand on our shoulder; it is our nature to ignore him, but he will not be ignored" (A p. 25). The same sentiment is explained more powerfully, and poignantly, in one of the poems already mentioned, The Window. Muir tells us in the Autobiography that the the worst punishment known in the Muir family household was "an occasional clip across the ears from my father's soft cap" (A p. 27). In The Window it is time that

administers this punishment:

... I beheld
The wrinkle writhe across your brow,
And felt time's cap clapped on my head,
And all within the enclosure now
Light leaf and smiling flower, was false,
The great wall breached, the garden dead.

Time administers this ultimate punishment, and the punishment symbolises the expulsion from Eden.

Time, then, appears to be one of the sources of evil, and so, naturally, Muir's paradise is, as we have seen, 'timeless' and his early hopes for recovery are for a liberation from time. This desire gets an almost brutal expression in the early Variations on a Time Theme (1934):

If there's no crack or chink, no escape from Time,
No spasm, no murderous knife to rape from Time
The pure and trackless day of liberty;
If there's no power can burst the rock of Time,
No Rescuer from the dungeon stock of Time,
Nothing in earth or heaven to set us free:
Imprisonment's for ever; we're the mock of Time,
While lost and empty lies Eternity.

And it re-appears more gently in the collection published fifteen years later, particularly in Love's Remorse and Love in Time's Despite. Here, as in Muir's more mature thought generally, we find the idea of preservation of the good within time, even, perhaps, despite time.

Eternity alone our wrongs can right
That makes all young again in time's despite.

And we who love again can dare
To keep in his despite our summer still,
Which flowered, but shall not wither, at his will.

Time, at least the ravages of time, is an evil of the fallen world,
and part of Muir's sense of recovery is the increasing faith that
what is worthwhile can be preserved.

Part ii. section i.

Thomas More on tyannous kings and chaotic religion

And so they said that these matters bee kynges games, as it were stage playes, and for the more part plaied vpon scafoldes. In which pore men be but y^e lokers on. And thei y^t wise be, will medle no farther. For they that sometyme step vp and play w^t them, when they cannot play their partes, they disorder the play and do themself no good. (CW 2, p. 81.)

More puts this remark in the mouths of some of the ordinary people who witnessed the fraud perpetrated at Baynards Castle, where the Duke of Buckingham led a crowd of unwilling and apathetic Londoners out to acclaim Richard as king. Everyone knew that the event was planned in advance by Richard and his accomplice Buckingham, and that it was just another attempt of Richard's to pretend that he was spontaneously called to the throne by the demand of the people. Richard feigns reluctance to accept the crown, but Buckingham insists and eventually Richard acquiesces. However, no one was fooled by this: "there was no man so dul that heard them, but he perceived wel inough, y^t all the matter was made betwene them" (CW 2, p. 80). Some excused this play acting, saying that, for form's sake, sometimes it was necessary that men "not be a knowen what they knowe"--just as in a play, when an ordinary man, say a sowter (shoemaker), will play a very grand part, say that of a sowdayne (sultan), it's necessary for the duration of the play to treat the cobbler as a king. If someone gets up upon the stage he must play the game, and go along with the pretence. Otherwise, if he is foolish enough to refuse to play, if he calls the king a cobbler, then:

one of his (i.e., the 'king's') tormentors (executioners) might hap to breake his head, and worthy (rightly) for marring the play. And so they (the common people) said that these matters bee kynges games, as it were stage playes, and for the most part plaied vpon scafoldes ...¹

The scaffold was the raised platform on which plays were performed, and by comparing politics to this More is making the point that this is a

place for a select few, those who seek the 'limelight' and are willing and able to play the appropriate parts. It is not a place for the common multitudes. Nor, interestingly, is it a place for 'the wise', perhaps because 'the wise' see too much to be good actors--there is always the danger that they might feel obliged to call the king a cobbler, and bring the whole performance into disarray². Play acting is a necessary part of politics, More seems to be saying, and if you are not a master of disguise (disimulation?), if you are not prepared to act as the performance demands, regardless of your own principles, then stay off the stage.

But, of course, the scaffold is also the place of execution. Politics in the early 1480s took place in the shadow of the executioner's axe. And this was also true under Tudor rule: Henry VIII's first act upon ascending the throne was, in a bid to win popularity, to arrest Dudley and Empson, two of Henry VII's much hated advisers, and to have them executed on a trumped up charge of treason (see Elton p. 17-18); and in 1513, shortly before More began to work on his History of Richard III, Henry VIII made another demonstration of arbitrary power in the peremptory execution of Edmund de la Pole, the nephew of Edward IV and, since Henry VIII still had no heir, probably next in line for the throne (CW 2, p. lxix, ci). More had few illusions about politics, even at this early stage, before he entered the king's service: he knew it was an activity that demanded the actor's ability, that it was a risky undertaking for the wise, that it was a dangerous activity, one where the scaffold might suddenly change from that of the play to that of the execution. More, however, was a consummate actor. William Roper, his first biographer, and his son in law, tells the story that More, when in service in the house of Cardinal Morton (service which More entered when he was about twelve years old), would "at Christ-

mas-tide suddenly sometimes step in among the players, and never studying for the matter, make a part of his own there presently among them, which made the lookers-on more sport than all the players beside." (Roper, p. 198)³. Yet More was also a wise man. His task in politics seems to have been to play the required role while yet maintaining his integrity. As such, language was extremely important to him: the problem was how to say the truth under cover of the appropriate, or rather, how to make the uncomfortable truth speak in and through the comfortable platitude or the innocent remark. This is in a sense a study in the subversive uses of language. The connection between meaning and what is said is crucial here: too tight a binding, and there is no room for anything other than the surface meaning; too loose a binding, and the intended other meaning(s) get lost in a sea of alternatives. More was determined to be an actor while yet witnessing to the real More--he would not lose himself in deceit or hypocrisy. Instead of, for instance, saying one thing and in his heart meaning quite another, as a flatterer would, he wanted to be able to use language so as to say something that was superficially genuine and innocuous in words that the wise might genuinely and openly perceive as meaning something rather different. Patrick Grant has commented on More's "awareness that the true play of language depends at once on the binding of words to meanings and on a sense of their freedom, their evasive distance from things." (Grant, p. 46). Such use of language frequently involves irony, and humor. Grant gives a delightful discussion of More's pointed humor by taking as an example his words at the foot of his scaffold of execution (Grant, p. 19-20). The incident is described thus: "going up the scaffold, which was so weak that it was ready to fall, he said merrily to Master Lieutenant: "I pray you, Master Lieutenant, see me safe up and, for my coming down, let me shift for myself""(Roper, p. 254). More is genuinely asking for help get-

ting up onto the rickety contraption. Getting down will not be a problem; gravity will take care of that, and perhaps even this wobbly scaffold will collapse; but all this is not More's concern. He will be dead, and will have no interest in the fragile constructions of this world. He will "shift for himself" also because the lieutenant will not be able to offer any help for More's soul; that must be More's own responsibility. However, in making this remark More is making a cutting reference to the shoddy workmanship of the scaffold--the lieutenant ought to be ashamed of himself if he can't get something better made for More's death. Yet the shoddy scaffold represents the shoddy justice which has condemned him. More's troubles will soon be over, but the lieutenant, More is implying, will still have to make do with the makeshift structures of the world--not least the poor justice that the king in his anger metes out to his servants, of whom, of course, the lieutenant is one.

So from behind a perfectly innocuous, and genuinely meant appearance--More had no desire to antagonise those who could cause him more pain than necessary--he nevertheless manages to pack a punch that denounces the injustice of the execution and the whole shoddy affair, from the staged trial to the poor workmanship of the scaffold. More turns the scaffold of execution into the stage, and while acting the part of one who is "Magnanimous ... whimsically co-operative ... and unafraid" (Grant), yet in so doing tells forth also, in ways that allow the wise to discern them, his own feelings about the sorry events.

More revelled in the possibilities opened up by the distance between words and things/meanings, but he was aware that too much volatility (like too much rigidity) has a way of becoming tyrannous (Grant, p. 46). The slip-

ping away of words from their meaning, sign from signified, is the characteristic More finds in the tyranny of Richard III, just as he was to find it in the politics and religion of his own day. The problem in language was but a part of the wider uncertainty of the world in which More lived--a world where things were not as they seemed, where appearances belied underlying reality, where any notion of inherent meaning was considered dubious by many, and where sign and signified were drifting apart, leaving a messy vacuum of arbitrariness, of anarchy and tyranny. Marius, in his discussion of More's History, makes this point well:

It is tempting to see in More's loathing and fascination for Richard's hypocrisy an almost subconscious tableau of how some Renaissance men regarded their own experience in the world. If the well known melancholia of the age had any major source, it was in the uncertainty of things, and the way appearances gave the lie to reality. Martin Luther was to raise this sentiment to become the apex and binding knot of his theology, making paradox rule the universe. What seemed to be God's blessing was really curse, for the man comfortably at ease in Zion is in fact doomed to hell. The torments of conscience were the Christian's first sign that he was predestined by God to salvation. Men are the most free when they seem most bound; the supposed Vicar of Christ is in fact the Antichrist; apparent miracles at the shrines of saints are really delusions of Satan./ Luther's doctrines had such wide appeal because they seemed to correspond to something in the common experience of humankind at the time. It is not so very far from them to the reasoning of Nicolo Machiavelli that the successful prince must study to give an appearance that belies reality... In Richard's awful world, things were not what they seemed; they were the opposite. Seeming good was really wickedness; safety was destruction; benevolence was malice... (Marius, p. 120-121)

What More writes, concerning the death, or supposed death, of the princes in the tower (Edward IV's offspring), might characterise the whole book:

all thynges wer in late daies so couertly demeaned, one thing pretended an an other ment, that there was nothyng so plaine and openly proued, but that yet for the comen custome of close and couert dealing, men had it ever inwardly suspect, as many well counterfeited jewels make y^e true mistrusted. (CW 2, p. 82.)

More writes this concerning Perkin Warbeck, who, pretending to be the surviving younger son of Edward IV, challenged the crown of Henry VII (so that "in late daies" refers to more recent events as well as those of Richard's

time). Thus he seems to say, such confusion and dissembling gives space to potentially chaotic politics, to that lack of certainty in which Warbeck could advance his claims. Yet confusion is no less the friend of tyranny. Richard's path to power feeds on uncertainty and confusion. As More points out, Richard chose to seize the crown immediately after the executions of Hastings in London and Rivers and others at "Poontfrait" (Pomfret), when the country was in greatest confusion over what was happening:

then thought the protectour, y^t while men mused what y^e mater ment,
while y^e lordes of the realme wer about him out of their owne
strenghtis (strongholds), while no man wist what to thinke nor whome
to trust, ere euer they should have time to dispute and digest the
mater and make parties, it wer best hastily to pursue his purpose,
and put himself in possession of y^e crowne, ere men could have time
to devise ani wais to resist. (CW 2, p. 58.)

Likewise, Richard ensures Buckingham's support by playing on the uncertain situation: telling him that "the state of things and the dispocisions of men wer than such, that a man might not wel tell whom he might truste, or whom he might feare" (CW 2, p. 43.)

The account of the death of Lord Hastings (the Lord Chamberlain) is a fine example of false appearances. Richard, still Protector, comes to the council meeting, in good humour, asking some strawberries from the Bishop of Ely (the same John Morton in whose house More was later to serve), then departs. He returns one hour later in a fury, and after some bizarre accusations, charges Hastings with treason, and has him executed as swiftly as possible (literally giving Hastings short shrift!--Richard desiring to get home for his dinner (the day is Friday; Richard appears as a good Christian who will eat no meat but is anxious to set to the fruit). More then recounts the omens which Hastings, not believing himself to be in any trouble, ignored; then he tells this story of Hastings's morning ride to the council: first, he tells us that Hastings's horse stumbled twice or thrice, and then comments,

"which thing albeit echeman wote wel daily happeneth to them to whom no such mischaunce is toward: yet hath it ben of an olde rite and custome, obserued as a token often times notably foregoing some great misfortune." (CW 2, p. 50). Here we see one of More's less attractive rhetorical devices, a type of lawyer's trick to insinuate something without claiming it to be true: many men will have their horses stumble under them, but in this case we are supposed to see some significance in it. More uses the same device to greater effect concerning Richard III: telling us that it is reported that Richard was born feet first and with teeth, and then commenting that this is just a rumor, and may or may not be true; in this way More can discredit Richard to the maximum without actually asserting as the truth that whereof he is uncertain⁴. This is another way in which More manages to dramatise without actually being dishonest. After this More continues,

Now this y^t foloweth was no warning, but an enemious scorne. The same morning ere he were vp, came a knight vnto him, as it were of curtesy to accompany hym to the counsaile, but of trouth sent by the protector to hast him thitherward, wyth whom he was of secret confederacy in that purpose, a meane man at that time, and now of great auctorite. This knight when it happened the lord Chamberlen by y^e way to stay his horse, and comen a while w^t a priest whome he met in the tower strete, brake his tale and said merely (merrily) to him: what my lord I pray you come on, whereto talke you, so long w^t that priest, you haue no nede of a prist yet: and therw^t he laughed vpon him, as though he would say, ye shal haue sone. But so litle wist y^e tother what he ment, and so litle mistrusted, that he was neuer merier nor neuer so full of good hope in his life: which self thing is often sene a signe of chaunge. But I shall rather let anye thinge passe me, then the vain surety of mans mind so nere his deth. Vpon the very tower warfe so nere the place where his hed was of so sone after, there met he w^t one Hastings a purseuant of his own name. And of their meting in y^e place, his was put in remembraunce of an other time, in which it had happened them before, to mete in like manner together in the same place. At which other tyme the lord Chamberlein had ben accused vnto king Edward by y^e lord Riuers y^e quenes brother, in such wise y^e he was for y^e while (but it lasted not long) farre fallen into y^e kinges indignacion, and stode in gret fere of himselfe. And for asmuch as he nowe met this purseuant in the same place that iubardy so wel passed: it gaue him great pleasure to talke w^t him therof w^t whom he had before talked thereof in the same place while he was therin. And therefore he said: Ah hastinges, art y^u remembered when I met thee here ones with an heuy hart? Yea my lord (quod he) that remembre I wel: and thanked be God they gate no good, nor ye none harmed thereby. Thou wouldest say so quod he, if thou knewest asmuch as I know, which few know els as yet and moe shall shortly. That ment he by the lordes of the quenes kindred that were taken before, and should that day be behedded at Pounfreit: which he well

wyst, but nothing ware that y^e axe hang ouer his own hed. In faith man quod he, I was neuer so sory, nor neuer stode in so great dread in my life, as I did when thou and I met here. And lo how y^e world is turned, now stand my enemies in y^e daunger (as thou maist hap to here more Hereafter) and I neuer in my life so mery, no neuer in so great surety. O good god, the blindness of our mortall nature, when he most feared, he was in good surety: when he reckened him self surest, he lost his life, and that wⁱⁿ two houres after. (CW 2, p. 50-52.)

The multiple ironies of the situation seem to fascinate More: Hastings on his way to death does not decline to speak to the priest, quite the contrary, yet he has no realisation of his need of the priest (in Shakespeare's retelling the irony is made even more explicit by having Hastings whisper something in the priest's ear--which draws the appropriate comment from his companion (at this point Buckingham))⁵; likewise in the meeting with the pursuant, not only does he now think himself safe, whereas on the former occasion he thinks he was in danger--when the truth is quite the opposite--but he actually knows, what his pursuant does not know, that the very day is to be a day of execution, though in truth he no more knows the full extent of what that will mean than the pursuant over whom Hastings feels such superiority. More's exclamation at the end of the passage not only comments on Hastings's blindness but asserts that this is a blindness inherent in our "mortall nature", a blindness that is as easily yours or mine as it was Hastings's. Hastings, More tells us, lacked any sense of the deceptiveness of the world: he was a man without guile, "plaine and open to his enemy and secret (intimate) to his friend: eth to begile, as he that of good hart and corage forestudied no perilles. A louing man and passing wel beloued. Very faithful, and trusty ynough, trusting to much" (CW 2, p. 52). Hastings was a good and innocent man, but that would not save him. The only type of good politician to survive is he who, like Bishop Morton, is careful and wily. After this murder Richard procains a story about a plot and a conspiracy in order to justify his actions: "Eueri man answered him fair, as though no man mistrusted y^e mater which of trouth no man beleved" (CW 2, p. 53).

Richard, for More, is a successful politician: driven solely by desire for personal gain, he masks this lust for power behind flattering appearances:

He was close and secrete, a deepe dissimuler, lowly of countenance (i.e. outwardly humble), arrogant of heart, outwardly coumpinable (friendly) where he inwardly hated, not letting to kisse who hee thoughte to kyll (i.e. the younger prince as he lures him from sanctuary), dispiteous (without pity) and cruell, not for euill will alway, but offer for ambicion, and either for the suretie or increase of his estate. Frende and foe was muche what indifferent, where his aduantage grew, he spared no mans death, whos life withstood his purpose (CW 2, p. 8).

More claims that not only did Richard murder his nephews and Henry VI, but may well have had a hand in the death of his own brother, Clarence.

Richard's most important characteristic is his dissembling; he is, as he appears even more so in Shakespeare's version (which was heavily dependent on More's History), a man of masks, one who is not what he seems, whose outward signs mislead, concealing a quite contrary reality. In this he is the type, we may with the advantage of hindsight suggest, of the "new man" against whom More will wage polemical warfare in the 1520s and early '30s: he is the model, for example, for "Master Masker", the man of "dyssimulacyon" as More calls him, the anonymous author of a work of 'protestant' polemics (see below). Richard is also a man who is suffering from acute anxiety. After the murder of the prince, More writes of him:

I have heard by credible report of such as wer secrete (intimate) w^t his chamberers, that after this abhominable deede done, he neuer hadde quiet in his minde, he neuer thought himself sure. Where he went abrode, his eyen whirled about, his body priuily fenced, his hand euer on his dager, his countenance and maner like one alway ready to strike againe, he toke ill rest a nightes, lay long waking and musing, sore weried with care and watch, rather slumbred then slept, troubled with feareful dreames, sodainly sometye sterte vp, leape out of his bed and runne about the chamber, so was his restles herte continually tossed and tumbled w^t the tedious impressions and stormy remembrance of his abhominable dede... (CW 2, p. 87)

Not even language itself escapes the uncertainty of chaos and the arbitrariness of tyranny. Robert Bolt's play, A Man for all Seasons, portrays More as a

man who takes refuge in the freedom offered and safeguarded by the law; but just as much, I have tried to suggest, More is one who takes refuge in language, and, as I suggested earlier, this requires a certain freedom within limits. Without limits, speaking becomes equivocation, and the deeper meanings get lost. In the chaos, order can be restored by power--the tyrant decides by fiat what words will mean. At the end of More's History (which he left unfinished) there is the following fable spoken by Bishop Morton:

In good faith, my lord, I loue not to talk muche of princes, as things not all out of peril, thoughe the word be without fault forasmuch as it shal not be taken as the party ment it, but as it pleaseth y^e prince to conster it. And euer I think on Esops tale, that when the lion had proclamed that on pain of deth there should none horned beast abide in that wood, one that had in his forehed a bonch of flesh, fled awaye a great pace. The fox that saw him run so faste, asked him whither he made al that hast. And he answered, in faith I neither wote nor reck, so I weronce hence because of this proclamation made of horned beasts. What fole quod y^e fox thou maist abide wel inough, the lyon ment not by thee, for it is none horne that is in thine head. No mary quod he y^e wote I wel inough. But what an he call it an horn, wher am I then? (CW 2 p.92-3)

Both the unnamed creature and the fox knew full well that a horn did not mean a flap of flesh. But the creature knew also that this relationship of word and thing was not strong enough to withstand the power of the monarch. The meaning is not inherent in the words, but will be as the authority decides-- "as it pleaseth the prince to conster it." Language no longer offers any protection against tyranny.

The lesson of More's History is that things are not what they seem: when Hastings was most sure of himself, then was he in greatest danger, and excessive sureness, More comments, is often a sign of a change in fortune; when Richard kisses his nephew, he already plans to murder him; Richard's outward appearance and his words bear no resemblance to the inner reality; words in general become slippery creatures, lose an inherent relationship to their meaning, and become pawns in a power game: in general the accepted sign-signified relationships are thrown into confusion. 'Natural' and traditional relationships and meanings lose their force, they become slippery,

malleable, up for negotiation, and the result is a confusion, a multiplicity of competing claims, twisting things as their claimants will, heedless of restriction. In this chaos, the result of scepticism about accepted meanings, only a tyrannical power, a dogmatism, can restore order. Thus emerges what I take to be the modern form of the chaos/tyranny dialectic, that is, that of scepticism and dogmatism.⁶

More very clearly opposed these tendencies. He objected strongly to the chaos that 'protestantism' was introducing into religious matters, and he saw very clearly how this gave opportunity to the prince with tyrannous desires. For the uncertainty in religious matters weakened the church and gave the king the chance to extend his control over the one part of the realm that had hitherto known considerable independence. In England the Church's liberty had been guaranteed under Magna Carta, but More saw that a divided church would give the king an opportunity to develop his caesaro-papal ambitions; and indeed some of the reformers did actually invite Henry VIII's intervention in the Church in order to forward their cause, and in doing so ascribed to him a degree of power and authority which Henry, sorely beset by troubles in his dealings with the pope, was only too willing to accept.

Indeed More shows himself to be alert to the possibilities of a chaos/tyranny dialectic arising out of 'protestantism' at quite an early stage. In his response to Luther's attack on Henry's Assertio Septem Sacramentorum, More wrote that Luther's disparagement of law would lead to an arbitrary reign of terror:

Therefore if you take away the laws and leave everything free to the magistrates, either they will command nothing, and they will forbid nothing, and then the magistrates will be useless; or they will rule by the leading of their own nature and imperiously prosecute anything they please, and then the people will in no way be freer, but, by

reason of a condition of servitude, worse, when they will have to obey, not fixed and definite laws, but indefinite whims changing from day to day. (CW 5:1 p. 277)

When More wrote this he may have had his eye on something closer to home than the ravings of "lewd Luther". The Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire were fourteenth century laws regulating the king's power in ecclesiastical matters. But the limits of these powers were not well defined, and they appeared to leave a peculiarly arbitrary power in the hands of the king. One of the clergy's pleas to Henry VIII in 1531 was for a definition of Praemunire. As one foreign observer commented at the time, "no one in England could understand praemunire because it was a law that the king interpreted in his own head and he made it apply to any case he chose" (Chapuys, quoted in Marius, p. 379). Henry, in fact, used this power unscrupulously to bully the clergy (see Guy, p. 116, 138f).

More's interest in tyranny is clear from some of the Latin poems and epigrams that were published in 1518. For example, the good king is a watchdog--protecting the flock from wolves--who rules by the consent of his people, whom he treats as his children, not as slaves. The absence of law, and of its enforcement, leads to chaos and the overturning of 'natural' relationships: "Freedom if unrestrained, exceeds quickly and irrevocably its proper bounds. If you let your wife stamp on your foot tonight, tomorrow upon rising she will stamp on your head" (CW 3, p. 201). And this is similar to the advice that More gave Cromwell late in 1530: "Master Cromwell ... you are now entered into the service of a most noble, wise, and liberal prince. If you will follow my poor advice, you shall, in your counsel-giving unto his grace, ever tell him what he ought to do but never what he is able to do. So shall you show yourself a true faithful servant and a right worthy counsellor. For if a lion knew his own strength, hard were it for any man to rule him" (Roper, p. 228). In both cases excessive freedom is seen to lead to tyranny,

and only a recognition of constraints can maintain reasonable action: the husband's disciplining of the wife, or the councilor's unwillingness to tell the king all the possibilities in a particular situation (a constraint through ignorance). "It is a mistake to believe that a greedy king can be satisfied; such a leech never leaves flesh until it is drained" (CW 2, p. 198, p. 231).

At the heart of More's polemical writings is his concern for the catholic understanding of the sacraments: this is the explicit focus of the Answer to the poisoned book and the Treatise on the passion, and a significant factor in his "letter to Frith". More's relentless affirmation of the real presence, indeed of transubstantiation, needs some explanation. Martz sees it, I think correctly, as a deep concern that the physical and spiritual realities must not be allowed to drift apart, as, More perceives, they do in 'protestantism':

More's deep distress and anguish, his anger and outrage, when he witnesses the current efforts to make only a "sign" of the sacrament, arise from his feeling that heaven and earth are being torn apart, that bodily things and spiritual things are being separated in a way that threatened to annihilate the meaning of man's creation (Martz, p. 303-4).

Grant comments on this that the 'real presence' in the eucharist, "guaranteed for More, meaning to the world and to human experience by maintaining a true rather than a merely token relationship between signs and things, words and reality, events and meaning" (Grant, p. 46). Grant goes on to make the important connection between the 'protestant' understanding of the sacraments and the godless and chaotic world of More's History:

God, we recall, is not much mentioned in Richard III, presumably because More assumed his presence in events, but a major achievement of the work is, rather, to show us how ironically and in what disturbing ways ordinary people going about their everyday business behave godlessly. And it might then easily appear that such an ordinary world must take its own course--anarchic, disoriented, confused, violent--in a realm for all practical purposes separate from the world of traditional religious values, with which (for linguistic reasons) it

can have no effective discourse. This prospect was frightening to More ... (Grant, p. 46)

As I have tried to suggest, some notion of inherent meaning is desperately important to More because it gives the lie to what he portrayed in his History, that is, the appearances of paradox and confusion, and in doing so offers constraints upon tyrannical attempts at redefinition. Henry VIII's flirtation with heresy came when he saw the political possibilities, that is, the removal of constraints, that it offered.

More's method in trying to hold things together is to emphasise straightforward appearances, and to attack the paradoxes, contortions, and what he sees as plain dissembling of the 'protestant' writers. Marius gives a helpful insight into what might be More's perception of Luther's world:

In Luther's view, God did everything, but God wore many masks, and all things divine were dark to human sight except when God chose to give light through revelation. The pope who claims to speak for God really speaks for Satan; the sinner tormented by the fear of God is actually beloved by God. The nominal Christian who works hard at doing good is damned for the pride that makes him imagine he can earn salvation. The visible institution called the church, spread across Europe in the form of bishops, priests, monks, nuns, friars, buildings, rituals, traditions, and all the rest, claims to be the church of God, but is really the congregation of Antichrist with the pope as the incarnation of Satan. The true church of the redeemed is hidden, to be known to all mortals only at the great day of doom. (Marius, p. 283)

This almost makes God into a rather ambivalent version of Richard III: a secretive, paradoxical being, a wearer of masks, rarely revealing his true identity, doing deeds in darkness, tormenting those he loves, fooling people by allowing the visible Church to go to ruin. Indeed, the relationship between salvation or the invisible Church (the signified) and the visible Church (the sign) has in Luther's world, drifted apart--they bear little relation to each other. The visible Church may be very nearly (completely?) the congregation of the damned, and the one who claims to be God's representative on earth may be Satan's vice-regent. In every case, sign and signified has fallen

apart, leaving confusion and paradox. More is determined not to let things fall apart in this way. The visible Church may have its faults, but, by and large, it is, for him, what it claims to be.

In the confusion that reigned in Luther's world, the Christian is supposed to find comfort in the doctrine of predestination (Marius, p. 266, 309). Marius, interestingly, connects this with Luther's craving for certainty--something required when the world in general is understood as so uncertain and confusing (Marius, p. 296). More, on the other hand, eschews both the despair and what might be seen as presumption involved in this doctrine; by contrast he saw the Christian as striving to co-operate with grace so as to please God, and while that striving never merited salvation, yet nevertheless God's mercy was such as to take man's paltry attempts and account them worthy.

It is important for an understanding of More to realise that he never fled to authority. Indeed, his view of the world was that, despite the confusions and uncertainties, it was not necessary to do so, because, as we see on several occasions in the History, in all the false appearances, wise men are yet able to see clearly.⁷ Earlier, I quoted from More's History the passage where he comments that there was so much dissembling going on that the truth was hard to find, just as many counterfeited jewels make the true mistrusted. This problem of false jewels occurs several times in More's writings and also in the following story that Erasmus tells that almost certainly refers to More:

I know a certain man named after me (Folly, 'moriae') who gave his bride some imitation gems, assuring her (and he is a clever jokester) that they were not only real and genuine but also that they were of unparalleled and inestimable value. I ask you, what difference did it make to the girl since she feasted her eyes and mind no less pleasantly on glass and kept them hidden among her things as if they were an extraordinary treasure? Meanwhile, the husband avoided the expense and profited by his wife's delusion, nor was she any less grateful to him than if he had given her some very costly gifts. (From In Praise of Folly, quoted in Marius, p. 92)

The tale illustrates the wife's ignorance and her corresponding helplessness: lacking discernment she is easily led astray. And this is the condition of most of mankind, More writes in The Four Last Things, for men are so devoted to bodily delights because they do not know the delights of the soul, and in such matters are helpless; only the wise know about such things, as "he that by good use and experience hath in his eye the right mark and very true luster of the diamond rejecteth at once and listeth not to look upon the counterfeit be it never so well handled, never so craftily polished" (Marius, p. 294).

It is interesting to contrast this passage with a reference to jewels in Utopia:

In the same class (that of those who seek false pleasure) the Utopians put those people I described before, who are mad for jewelry and gems, and think themselves divinely happy if they find a good specimen, especially of the sort which happens to be fashionable in their country at the time--for stones vary in value from one market to another. The collector will not make an offer for the stone till it's taken out of its setting, and even then he will not buy unless the dealer guarantees and gives security that it is a true and genuine stone. What he fears is that his eyes will be deceived by a counterfeit. But if you consider the matter, why should a counterfeit give any less pleasure when your eyes cannot distinguish it from a real gem? Both should be of equal value to you, as they would be, in fact, to a blind man. (Utopiap. 57-8 (Adams translation))

If everyone were like More's first wife, unable to tell the real from the false, then Hythloday's scepticism would be justified. But this lack of discernment is the ignorance of the many: they are the ones who are led astray by false appearances. It is, for More, the existence of a few wise men that saves us from Utopian scepticism, and prevents us from being cast adrift in a world of false appearances. If it were not possible to penetrate the veil of appearance, then we would indeed have to cling fideistically to dogma--predestination, an infallible papacy, or whatever--but More believes that discernment is possible. In the History we sometimes read that though the many were taken in by something, yet the wise knew better. And it is More's belief that the wise will always be able to tell the true from the false.

More's faith in the possibility of such discernment assumes always a corresponding faith in the possibility of being able to move from sign to signified, from the confusing appearance to the underlying reality. In the History More saw this presenting problems in the political world. In the polemics against the 'protestants' he saw this being doubted in religion. And this faith assumes the participation of the signified in the sign such that the transition can really be made. And nowhere is this sign-signified participation more precious than in the eucharist⁸.--which is the living proof that this world is not closed off entirely to the real presence of God.

A sample of More's arguments against his opponents concerning the eucharist can be found in the concluding paragraph of The Answer to the Poisoned Book: he complains of

folyshe argumentes of theyre owne blynde reason, wrestling the scripture into a wronge sense, agaynste the very playn wordes of the text, agaynst thexposycions of all the olde holy sayntes, agaynste the determynacions of dyvers whole generall counsayles, agaynste the full consent of all trewe chrysten nacyons this .xv. hundred yere before theyr days, and agaynste the playne declaracyon of almighty god himself, made in every chrysten countrey by so many playn open myracles, (which) labour now to make vs folyshely blynde and madde, as to forsake the very trewe catholic fayth, forsake y^e socyetie of the trewe catholyque chyrche, and wyth sundry sectes of heretikes fallen out thereof, to set both holy dayes & fastyng days at nought, & for the deuylls pleasure to forbere & abstayne from all prayer to be made either for soules or to sayntes, iest on our blessed laydy y^e immaculate mother of Chryste, make mockes at all pilgrimages, and crepyng of Chrystes crosse, the holy ceremonyes of the churche & sacramentes to, turne them into tryflynge, wyth lykenyng theym to wyne garlandes and ale polys and fynally by these wayes in the ende and conclusyon, forsake our sauour hym selfe in the blessed sacramente and in stede of his own blessed bodye & his blood, wene there were nothyng but bare bred and wyne, and call it ydolatry there to do him honour. (CW 11 p. 222-3)

Opening this passage we see the three main argumentes More brings against the 'heretics'. One is that they twist the "very playn wordes of the text"; second, they go against the witness of the Church Fathers, the Church councils, and the whole witness of the Christian community over fifteen centuries; third, they fail to see that the truth of the Catholic faith is guaranteed

by the witness of miracles. The second argument may seem like an appeal to authority, but if so it is less an appeal to an absolute authority than to the sheer weight of consensus, which makes it seem absurd and presumptuous to suppose that a handful of protesters of the present day could possibly be right: as More puts it elsewhere, "the fayth of all the holy sayntes & of all the whole corps of crystendome thys .xv. hundred yere ... a thyng whereof yt were a very fransey (madness) to doubte" (CW 9 p. 39). Chesterton exactly gets at More's use of tradition when he writes,

Tradition may be explained as an extension of the franchise. Tradition means giving the vote to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking around. (Orthodoxy, p. 83)

More's first argument against Frith was the appeal to the 'plain' meaning of the text (the texts under discussion are the accounts of the institution of the eucharist and the sixth chapter of John's gospel); and this is important when we recall his attitude towards language. When More appeals, for example, to the words of the Last Supper, "This is my body ... This is my blood", his plain meaning of the text is clearly not a 'literal' meaning, because the bread still appears as bread, the wine still tastes like wine, yet underneath these appearances there is the reality of our Lord's body and blood. More's 'plain meaning' takes a distance while still maintaining a real connection between the words and the phenomena. More revels in the delicacy of a limited slippage like this. But what he sees Frith doing is widening this distance so much that the objects bear no real connection to the words describing them; the bread is simply bread, and nothing more--it is the 'self-effacing sign' which we shall discuss further when we look at Hopkins.

Although misusing the term 'literal', Foley sums up well More's strategy in

More's "Letter to Frith":

More quickly dismisses Frith's scriptural exegesis, arguing that allegorical senses of scripture must not be accepted instead of the literal sense but along with it; without this firm foundation in the literal sense as established historically in the church, scripture becomes a mere plaything for the fantasy of the individual. (CW 11, p. xxxiv)

And in The Answer, More makes the same point:

But neuer hath any good man ben accustomed to playe the pageant y^t master Maskar playeth vs here, with a spyrytuall expositiō of allegories or parables, to take away y^e very fyrste sense that god wolde we shold lerne of the letter and bycause of some allegories, turne all y^e playn wordes fro y^e first right vnderstanding, into a secondary sense of allegories. (CW 11 p. 18)

And More complains that this criticism was one that Frith never answered (CW 11 p. 220f). On these grounds More accuses his adversaries of juggling with the text. In the Treatise on the Passion he complains of those who "would make menne wene that those playne wordes of Christe, This is my bodye &c. were otherwise ment than they were indeede ..." (CW 13, p. 137). And he charges later that they confuse words in saying that the eucharist, being a sacrament, must be just like the other six, i.e., signifying but not containing grace, that is

a bare sacrament onlye, that is to wytte a token, a figure, a sygne or memoriall of his bodye and hys bloude crucified and shed, and not his owne very body and his bloude indeede. (CW 13 p. 138)

Similarly in this Treatise More lays great emphasis on the names given to the mass: these are not arbitrary but declare something real about what is going on, that is, testifying to the 'real presence'.

More is particularly concerned to expose the confusion that his opponents bring into language: "they make falsed treuth & treuth falsed", they make "fayth heresies and heresyas fayth", they call the old new and the new old (CW 9 p. 168). But More's charge of juggling with language comes across most powerfully in The Answer. More is answering a book by an anonymous writer. More likens the author to one who hides behind masks:

And therefore syth thys man by wythdrawynge his name from hys book,

hath done on a visour of dyssimulacyon (i.e., put on a mask of concealment) dyssimulynge his person to voide the shame of his falshed, and speketh to mych to be called mayster Mummer, whyche name he were else well worthy for hys false dyce: I shall in this dyspicyon (discussion) betwene hym and me, be content for thys onys (syth by some name muste I call hym) for lacke of hys other name to call hym mayster Masker. (CW 11 p. 13)

More makes the most of this name, signifying as it does deceit, concealment and trickery. As Foley comments,

Master Masker becomes a fool, a jester, a cheating dicer, a street magician. His rhetorical and theological trickery is a version of street entertainer's sleight-of-hand. When he presents More's words, he uses "interlacynge, ruffle (disorder) and confusion" (119/8-9). To entrap More, he sets up "gynnys (strategems) and his grinnnes (snares) and all his trymtrams (absurdities)" (175/26-27)--to no avail. One must always look closely at his hands: "But yet in these wordes he ingleth(deceives) with vs, and may with his wylynges begile them that wyl take none hede. Bit who so loke well to his handes shall perceyue where his galles (probably oak apples used by jugglers) goo well inough" (121/21-23). (CW 11, p. lxxxii)

More develops this attack with considerable force in some passages: at one point he writes,

Here is mayster Masker fall to inglynge lo and as a iugler layeth forth hys trynclettes vpon the table and byddeth man loke on this and loke on that and blowe in hys hande and than with certayne straunge wordes to make men muse whurleth his iuglynge stick about his fyngers to make men loke vpon that whyle he playeth a false caste and conuayeth with y^e tother hand some thyng slyly into his purse or his sleve or somewhere out of sight so fareth maister Masker here that maketh Christes holy wordes serue hym for his iugling boxes and layeth them forthe vpon the borde afore us and byddeth vs loke on this texte and than loke lo vpon this and whan he hath shewed forth thus two or thre textes and byd vs loke vpon them he telleth vs not wherfore nor what we shall fynde in them. But bycause they be so playne agaynste hym he letteth them to slynke awaye and than to blere our eyes and call our mynde fro the mater vp he taketh his iuglynge stycke the commendacyon of fayth and whyrleth that about hys fyngers ... But I wyll pray you remember there with all, where about this iugler goth, y^e wolde with byddyng vs loke vppe here vpon faith iugle away one great poynt of fayth from vs and make vs take no hede of Chrystes wordes playnely spoken here of the very eatynge of his holy flesshe. (CW 11 p. 133-4)

(This picture that More is portraying might well be illustrated by the painting 'Der Taschenspieler' by Hieronymous Bosch.) More sees the Masker as someone who really is playing tricks with Christ's words, twisting them to mean something other than their plain meaning, someone who is deceiving Christian folk in their faith: the Masker is the cheat at dice, the pickpocket

at the fair. All this More says not only to discredit his opponent but to express his understanding of what is happening in the Masker's interpretation of scripture. The Masker's aim, in More's eyes, is to dissociate reality from appearance to deny the primary meaning of texts and to substitute allegory for the plain sense.

More is, as Foley comments (CW 11 p. lxxx), ever watchful of Masker's misuse of the English language: for example the Masker's misuse of the word dissemble: "I wyll not dyssemble with hym, but tell hym very playne, that as great a dyssembler as he is, he woteth not as it semeth that this worde dyssemblyng meneth, or ellys wote I nere what he meneth thereby" (CW 11 p. 126). For More, as Foley comments, "the Masker ... abuses language to dissemble the real presence of Christ in the eucharist" (CW 11 p. lxxx).

Why do the 'protestant' polemicists do so much violence to language? They act so, says More in the "Letter to Frith", because they set limits to what God can do. So if the plain meaning of the text is something their reason tells them is impossible, they seek refuge in allegorical interpretation. This 'reason' acts so as to simplify the world and destroy established meanings; it is a "barrayne reason" which "induceth many men into great error, some ascrybynge all thyng to destynny wythout any power of mannys free wyll at all, and some gyuyng all to mannes free wyll, and no forsyghte at all vnto the prouydence of God, and all bycause the pore blynde reason of man canot se so farre as to perceyue how Goddes presyence and mannes free wyll can stande and agre togyther, but seem to them clerely repugnant". And More goes on to argue that this exaltation of man's "feeble reason", making it into a legislating power of what can and cannot be is the reason why Frith and his friends cannot accept Christ's presence in the bread and wine. And where will this all end? asks More, "... the deuyll wyll within a whyle set vs vppon

suche a truste vnto our owne reason, that he wyll make vs take it for a thyng repugnaunt and impossyble, that euer one God shoulde be thre persons."

Conclusion

This then is, for More, the world into which we have fallen: there is heresy in the Church and tyranny in the civil power, language has disintegrated--its integrity is denied and it has become a tool of the powerful--God has slipped away from such a world, denied even in the bread and wine of the mass, and what is left of the spiritual world is utterly discarnate, separate from the world of now unconstrained power and matter. And behind all this there is a destructive power that has cut lose the traditional connections: the "blynde" and "barrayne" reason that has taken upon itself, in opposition to the teachings of 'the tradition' (as More would call it), to legislate what can and cannot be. This 'reason' cannot allow matters beyond its understanding (and thus beyond its control) to remain unresolved (such as the relation between providence and man's free will), and so it simplifies and legislates, and in doing so brings things under its control. The mystery of the mass is beyond reason, but the 'protestant' writers, claims More, insist on making it subject to reason, and in doing so tear it apart and replace the mystery of the presence of God in bread and wine with a God forsaken world and a religion which is quite immaterial. Similarly, the complex working of God and man together are to be separated out, giving importance to controversies concerning 'free-will' and 'predestination'; for, as with the sacraments, it has become a matter of the highest importance to separate out the human from the divine. This may be understood as a movement towards simplicity and purity--an attempt to pull apart the (apparent) confusion of divine and human and reduce each to a separate, pure state. The instrument accomplishing this simplicity is "blynde" and "barrayne" reason. The consequence of this mania for separation is the encouragement of an acute slippage in experience be-

tween creaturely sign and divine presence--the words "This is my body" cease to be a metaphor of presence and become a metaphor of absence--the sign ceases to be the participation of the signified in the signifier and becomes merely a signpost pointing away from itself to something which is wholly other; the signified has become dis-located, torn apart from the sign and removed to another place.

This world of 'protestantism' was the world More had depicted in the History of Richard III, where traditional sign-signified relationships had been torn apart in the pathological politics of the period (which was still More's own time). The resulting vacuum in the political world was taken up by the tyranny of Richard, just as the vacuum in the church that no longer had confidence in the presence of God at the heart of its celebrations was naturally taken up by the civil power, the tyrannical tendencies of Henry VIII. In this débacle More recalls the steadfastness of the Catholic tradition of the past fifteen centuries. He sees recovery as a return to this tradition: the re-establishment of inherent meaning, the gradual re-connection of sign to signified. For More, the tradition was close enough to him to be a real force (at least he seems to have felt it as such); he did not need to give the present day Church an infallible defining power to validate it. He felt the sheer weight of consensus of one and a half millennia. More did not die for the infallibility of the pope, nor particularly for the infallible defining power of the Church. He died rather for the autonomy and integrity of a Church that was defined by the accumulated witness and development of fifteen centuries. As Marius points out, More is reluctant to commit himself to defining the authority of the pope (Marius, p. 235-6, 326-7, 340, 356), and he suggests "it is a critical error to say that he died for the authority of the pope in England and to leave it at that, not explaining that he held none of the high-flown doctrines of papal infallibility that have spread their

black wings over the skies of Catholic modernity" (Marius, p. 517).¹⁰ To this I would add that such notions of infallibility, other than the cumulative consensus of the historic Church, might well, for More have partaken of precisely that tyranny which was the evil of 'modernity'.

Yet More did not live long enough, or in peace enough, to ask whether restoration in the face of 'modernity' was possible except on the basis of the conditions laid down by 'modernity' itself. In conditions of uncertainty the tradition is itself called into question. How else can its truths be established against the acids of scepticism except by an infallible pronouncement that will re-establish and validate the tradition? More opposed the tradition to scepticism, but tradition was scepticism's first victim. It is more than possible that the increasing authoritarianism in the Roman Catholic Church was the only effective response to the demands of the time. More's hope for a restoration without resort to tyranny seems, in the end, somewhat facile, based on insufficient appreciation for the depths of the problem.

If these criticisms of More seem plausible, then they may well be useful in establishing critical questions to put to Shakespeare, Hopkins and Muir: specifically, how can there be a recovery from modernity which can effectively sustain itself, without being caught up in the evils from which it is attempting to extricate itself? Can there be a recovery except on terms of the problem--terms which would jeopardise the integrity of that very recovery?

Part ii. section ii.

Disenchantment and the death of the politics of 'pity, love, and fear' in Shakespeare's English history plays.

The history of the modern West has been, in part, a process of the increasing disenchantment of the world. The phrase is notably Weber's--die *Entzauberung der Welt*--and he saw this as a key mark of 'modernity': as Julien Freund, in his study of Weber's sociology, has remarked, "increasing rationalisation and intellectualization have had one decisive consequence, on which Weber laid great stress: they have disenchanted the world"

(Freund, p.23-4). A similar phrase was used by Schiller--die *Entgötterung der Natur*--the 'dis-godding of nature'. This disappearance of God or gods from western experience has been the subject of J. Hillis Miller's important study in nineteenth century poetry, The disappearance of God: five nineteenth century writers, which we shall explore in the next section.

The phrase 'dis-godding of nature' also describes well the conclusions of Keith Thomas's study Religion and the decline of magic. Thomas tells the story of the decline of 'superstition' in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in England and the triumph of the secular outlook in the rise of 'mechanistic philosophy': for example,

The notion that the universe was subject to immutable natural laws killed the concept of miracles, weakened the belief in the physical efficacy of prayer, and diminished faith in the possibility of direct divine inspiration. The Cartesian concept of matter relegated spirits, whether good or bad, to the purely mental world; conjuration ceased to be a meaningful ambition. (Thomas, p. 643).

It is hard not to make some connection between disenchantment and the Reformation; a connection which is all the more understandable after our initial discussion concerning More's polemics on the sacraments (and we shall pick this subject up again in the following section). Yet, if disenchantment--which may perhaps be described as the dissociation of Creator

from creation--is related to the dissociation of matter and spirit¹, which as it developed has left Christianity "unbelievably discarnate", then, Aelred Squire suggests, this has infected western Christianity in a significant way since the schism with the east:

Particularly in the west one of the unobserved consequences of the Schism with the East was that, with the development of the scholastic movement, a schism between flesh and spirit was gradually established both in theory and practice. Reinforced by the philosophy of Descartes and accentuated by the social results of the Industrial Revolution, this cleavage between the bodily and the spiritual has left us in our own period with a Christianity unbelievably discarnate.

I am not sure if this does justice to all scholastic theology, but if we may allow the main point to stand then we must take seriously Allchin's comments to the effect that protestantism in general, whatever its positive aspects, took up on this issue the worst trends in the medieval church and pursued them to their logical ends:

This is the version of Christianity against which many of our contemporaries have revolted, most notably those concerned with ecology and with the re-discovery of man's place in the world. Many indeed have supposed that this 'unbelievably discarnate' form of religion is itself Christianity. No one can deny its influence in the West, particularly in the Puritan movement and in those forms of Protestantism which have minimized the importance of the sacraments and distrusted the whole realm of the symbolical. (Allchin, 1984, p. 52.)

However much some writers may wish to hold protestantism responsible for this "unbelievably discarnate religion", there was nevertheless something deeply unreformational also about the modern drive to disenchantment--a drive which was utterly uninterested in maintaining even the minimal restraints that no biblical vision could possibly deny. As Bernard Zylstra wrote,

in modernity, the creaturely character of nature is done away with. For this creatureliness both directs and limits man's interference with nature. Modernity rejects that direction and these limits, and views nature as the object of man's autonomous will, in his art, his science, his technology, and his economic exploitation of nature's resources for the satisfaction of his limitless needs.

Nature in the Scripture is the theatre of God's glory. Nature in modernity is the arena of man's Faustian conquest. (Zylstra, p. 7)

Faustian man is he who rejects all constraints, rejects all enchantments; he is the free, autonomous individual of liberalism and capitalism. The power of capitalism as an agent of disenchantment was well recognised by Marx: in capitalism, he wrote,

Nature becomes for the first time simply an object for man, purely a matter of utility: it ceases to be recognised as a power in its own right, and the theoretical knowledge of its independent laws appears only as a stratagem designed to subdue it to human requirements, whether as an object of consumption or as a means of production. Pursuing this tendency, capital has pushed beyond national boundaries and prejudices, beyond the deification of nature and the inherited, self-sufficient satisfaction of existing needs confined within well-defined boundaries, and the reproduction of the traditional way of life. It is destructive of all this, and permanently revolutionary, tearing down all obstacles that impede the development of productive forces, the expansion of needs, the diversity of production and the exploitation and exchange of natural and intellectual forces. (Marx, p. 111-2.)

The revolutionary character of capital, thus described, may also be understood as the revolutionary character of the unfettered human will--the Faustian character of modern man--that tears down all obstacles to the fulfillment of its unrestrained and arbitrary passions. Whether we are talking of 'capital' or 'will', it is clear that before the world can become an object of exploitation it must be emptied of all that could make it of sufficient value in its own right to prevent such action. The spiritual need not be denied but it must be detached from the world that is to be abused. The logical pre-requisite of capitalism is the 'discarnation' of Christianity--the disenchantment of the world. If we accept the studies of, for example, Carolyn Merchant and David Dickson (see the bibliography for references), among others, we may understand modern science as one of the means by which 'capital' disenchanted the world.

We can see, though, that, however deeply antagonistic they might be towards each other in their inner natures, protestantism and capitalism

may be understood as walking hand in hand during the early modern period. This is something that has been recognised, not only by broad studies, such as Weber's Protestant Ethic, and the literature it spawned, but also, for example, in the detailed historical study of Keith Thomas in Religion and the Decline of Magic. Consider, for example, his description of the increasing reluctance of wealthy householders to fund the drinking that accompanied Rogation ceremonies (which consisted of beating the bounds of the parish): these ceremonies, he writes,

Basically ... were the corporate manifestations of the village community, an occasion for eating and drinking, and the reconciliation of disputes. They fell into disuetude, less from any growth of rationalism, than because of the social changes which broke up the old community, and physically impeded anything so cumbersome as a perambulation around parochial boundaries. The ritual was well designed for open-field country, but enclosure and cultivation led to the destruction of old landmarks and blocking of rights of way. The decline of corporate feeling showed itself in the increasing reluctance of wealthy householders to pay for the riff-raff of the village to drink themselves into a frenzy. (Thomas, p. 65.)

But there were other reasons as well for decline in ceremonies like these; there was also, accompanying the social change, a more atomistic conception of society growing out of protestant practice:

Whereas traditional Catholicism had believed that God would let souls linger in purgatory if no masses were said for them, Protestant doctrine meant that each generation would be indifferent to the spiritual fate of its predecessor. Every individual was now to keep his own balance sheet, and a man would no longer atone for his sin by the prayers of his descendants. (Thomas, p. 603.)

so protestant practice and social change together conspired to reduce the "corporate feeling" that was the basis of ceremonies such as those of Rogationtide. This illustration from Thomas's historical study fits in well with the Marx-Weber understanding of the rise of modern society: that is, that a variety of factors, not least social and religious, 'conspired' together in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to transform the nature of society and its relationship with the world².

Morris Berman makes the following historical claim:

The view of nature which predominated in the west down to the eve of the Scientific Revolution was that of an enchanted world. Rocks, trees, rivers, and clouds were all seen as wondrous, alive, and human beings felt at home in this environment. The cosmos was a place of belonging. A member of this cosmos was not an alienated observer of it but a direct participant in its drama. His personal destiny was bound up with its destiny and this relationship gave meaning to his life. This type of consciousness ... involves merger, or identification, with one's surroundings, and bespeaks a psychic wholeness that has long since passed from the scene. (Berman, p. 2.)

This is no doubt something of an idealisation. But it does help us locate some of the meaning of enchantment: it is a recognition of a 'spiritual' presence in the things of the world. Owen Barfield³ has described this under the term "original participation"--which has something in common with the understanding of the relationship of sign and signified in the sacrament that we saw in the last chapter was so important to More.

Barfield characterises "original participation" as the habit of mind that sees through the everyday experience to an underlying world of meaning and 'presence':

the essence of original participation is that there stands behind the phenomena and on the other side of them from me, a represented which is of the same nature as me. Whether it is called 'mana', or by the names of many gods and demons, or God the Father, or the spirit world, it is of the same nature as the perceiving self, inasmuch as it is not mechanical or accidental but psychic and voluntary. (Barfield, p. 42.)

What Barfield means by this is shown for example in his discussion of the medievals:

Compared with us, they felt themselves and the objects around them and the words that expressed those objects, immersed together in something like a clear lake of--what shall we say? --of 'meaning', if you choose. (p.95.)

So the signs were immersed in what they signified; they participated in it. Barfield sees this as a characteristic of the medieval period, but one that fades in the modern, so that it has almost entirely disappeared

by the late nineteenth century. Barfield sees this process as ending up in the idolisation of phenomena; that is, seeing the world as self-contained, not referring to anything beyond itself. But what interests me is the identification of a stage when phenomena are seen as pointing away to, but not containing ("re-presenting" to use a term which anticipates the discussion in the next section) what they signify. A stage, as it were, when the phenomenal system is both largely isolated and self-contained, and thus largely impervious to the presence of the transcendent, yet still makes reference to something beyond itself. When 'nature' is perceived as isolated and self-contained, then, however much it may reflect or proclaim the glory of God, or other of His attributes, it ceases to be a dwelling place for God--it is disenchanted. It becomes the self-contained, self-sufficient system of deism and modern (Newtonian) science. To claim that such a system may yet witness to God, as apologists have consistently done, is to miss the point: for such a claim without the belief in a 'real' connection (barring the dogma of a distant act of creation) is a mere arbitrary assertion, as unprovable as it is ultimately unconvincing.

Enchantment and Disenchantment in Shakespeare's English Histories

We saw in the first section images of an enchanted world in Shakespeare's plays. But these beliefs were far from unchallenged. As Keith Thomas has noticed, by even the mid-sixteenth century disenchantment was well under way:

there is no denying the remarkable speed with which the distaste for any religious rite smacking of magic had spread among some of the common people. It had started with the Lollards ... In the fifteenth century pilgrimages and hagiography were on the decline; and Reginald Pecock (d. 1416; an outspoken and possibly heterodox bishop) was already complaining that some of the sacraments were by some of the lay people 'holden to be points of witchcraft and blindings'. by the time of the Henrican Reformation there was a vigorous foundation of popular Protestantism ... Many men were now unwilling

to believe that physical objects could change their nature by a ritual of exorcism and consecration (Thomas, p. 74-5)

The tension between enchantment and disenchantment is shown delightfully in the contrast between Owen Glendower and Percy Hotspur in 1 Henry IV: for example, in act iii, scene i, where Glendower tells of the omens that accompanied his birth; Hotspur doesn't believe in such nonsense and plainly tells Glendower as much, whereupon the latter claims, "I can call spirits from the mighty deep". To which Hotspur replies, with heavy sarcasm, "why so can I or any man;/ But will they come when you do call for them?" The same contrast arises in King Lear, between Gloucester and his bastard son Edmund. For the father there is a link between "these late eclipses in the sun and moon" and the 'unnatural' happenings in human society: human actions are connected to the cosmos, and disruptions in the natural order portend disruption in the social order. To Edmund such superstition is nonsense,

This is excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune--often the sufeit of our own behaviour--we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on ... (act i, scene ii).

Although Edmund resembles Hotspur in his cynicism, he resembles him in little else. Hotspur is the fitting partner for Prince Hal: they are too much alike for England to be big enough for the both of them (1 Henry IV, act v, scene iv). Hal, like Hotspur, is a man of the 'modern age', but both are honourable men, after their fashion; Hal is "the machiavel of goodness" (Danby, p.100). Edmund, however, is the machiavel of evil, as are those he sides with--Goneril, Regan and Cornwall. All, Hal and Hotspur included, have their origins in some initial departure from a traditional and sacramental order: according to Danby, these characters have their origins in the character of

Richard of Gloucester (Richard III), Shakespeare's first machiavellian character:

I can add colours to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantage,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school
(3 Henry VI, act iii, scene ii)

It is Richard of Gloucester who "rejects 'pity, love and fear' and kills the King who stands for the holy order of these values" (Danby, p. 99). Richard is a diabolical figure in that he rejects utterly all godly restraints, and explicitly is willing to risk all for his advantage; he owes nothing to anyone, he disowns his brother, rejects any bonds of love, and stands quite alone. Unlike More, who contrasted Richard with Edward IV, Shakespeare in his first cycle of history plays (the three parts of Henry VI, and Richard III) contrasts Richard with Henry VI. The godly king is opposed by a figure of evil who represents unconstrained individual pursuit of power. But by the second cycle (Richard II, the two parts of Henry IV, and Henry V), the sacramental order for which Henry VI stood has all but disappeared, is little more than a memory, as individual advantage (commodity) and unconstrained power have become the features of government--a reflection of the realities of politics in Shakespeare's own time:

The Prince Hal plays bring this phase of Shakespeare's development to an end. Hal, Hotspur, Falstaff, the whole body of the play's world now reveals clearly the mechanisms of sixteenth century society. Commodity is both ruler and ruled. Authority and appetite, combined and disjointed alternately, set up the swaying, skidding rhythm which 'tug and scramble' requires. Hal's descent is direct from Richard Crookback ... The villain of the first tetralogy is transformed into the hero of the second. Hal is the machiavel of goodness. He is also the official side of Elizabeth's world, and as such stands for Authority ... There is no vestige left in this world of 'pity, love and fear', not even the awareness that 'pity, love and fear are dead. (Danby, p. 100)

Danby's evaluation of the course of the two cycles measures everything against the holy Henry VI, and the criteria of 'pity, love and fear' as the sign of a politics which recognises the presence of divine sanctions

and constraints, a sacramental or enchanted world. Richard III's murder of Henry VI is an evil act which signifies the fall from grace for the body politic into the messy business of unconstrained power politics. However, Danby is wrong to say that all awareness of 'pity, love and fear' are dead, for, as Coursen points out, the second tetralogy alone contains within itself the 'paradise lost' motif, the fall from a divinely sanctioned society, a sacramental politics, into a godless power politics: "The second Henriad charts the movement from a God ordained body politic to a more sequential, though not necessarily more orderly, pragmatic politics" (Coursen, p.11). The paradise, by which the subsequent events are judged and found wanting, is, as we described in the first part, the description of England in John of Gaunt's speech in Richard II act ii, scene i. This England is already past, though it is Richard II's reign that is destroying it--specifically in three ways: through shedding blood (act i, scene ii); through leasing out land (act ii, scene i); and through depriving Bolingbroke of his rightful inheritance.

Within the course of Richard II we see only the remnants of the sacramental order. The gardeners in act iii scene iv, while faithfully tending their walled garden, comment on the failure of the king to tend his walled garden:

Why should we, in compass of a pale,
Keep law and form and due proportion
Showing, as in a model, our firm estates,
When our sea-walled garden, the whole land,
Is full of weeds; her fairest flowers chok'd up,
Her fruit trees all unprun'd, her hedges ruined,
Her knots disordered, and her wholesome herbs
Swarming with caterpillars?

The kingdom is still a garden, but the king has neglected his Adam-like, Christ-like task: he has sheltered weeds (flatterers), and failed to control the growth of his fruit trees. Just as, as we pointed out earlier, England was Eden, so her kings are Adam, and Richard II is Adam fallen. Richard violated the sacred task entrusted to him, to keep the garden,

and was himself devoured by the garden.

Similarly, Richard violates Time, a sacred Time that legitimises succession, and by that violation he destroys his own right to the throne. Richard takes away from the temporarily banished Hereford⁴ his inheritance on his father's death. The king is desperate for money and acts out of greed. York protests,

Take Hereford's rights away, and take from Time
His charters and his customary rights;
Let not tomorrow then ensue today;
Be not thyself--for how art thou a king
But by fair sequence and succession.
(act ii, scene i)

The legitimacy that time confers has been broken. Henceforth legitimacy will be based on violent power. And the king himself will be the victim. In a sense, Time itself has revenge. For, as Richard, dethroned and imprisoned, comes to realise, in the breaking of Time his own life has been soured. Hearing some music playing, he comments:

How sour sweet music
When time is broke and no proportion kept!
So is it in the music of men's lives.
And here have I the daintiness of ear
To check time broke in a disorder'd string;
But, for the concord of my state and time,
Had not an ear to hear my true time broke.
(act v, scene v)

Richard does not admit responsibility for breaking Time, but allows that he failed to read the signs of the times, failed to recognise disorder, and was broken by that failure:

I wasted time, and now time doth waste me ...
... the sound that tells what hour it is
Are clamorous groans which strike upon my heart
Which is the bell ...

Richard violates the time that made him what he is: and by that violation Time makes Richard other than he is. Through Time Richard is king, but through Time he is also prisoner and dethroned. Richard becomes something

of a split person, or rather, two people in one: he both asserts himself as king--

Not all the water in the rough rude sea

Can wash this balm off from an anointed king.

(act iii, scene ii);

and yet begins to feel, in the press of events, the transformation, the effects of breaking time--

I had forgot myself; am I not King?

And in time he is broken almost entirely--

With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With my own hands I give away my crown,
With my own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breathe release all duteous oaths ...
God save King Henry, unking'd Richard says...
(act iv, scene i)

Yet Richard cannot relinquish the crown in a sense. For he is still himself; he has the same face, he knows he is a "true king", he cannot become other than what he was. Just as Richard broke time as regards Bolingbroke, but kept it as regards himself (seeing it as legitimising his reign), so now time, broken, topples the crown from Richard's head, but will not let him live without it.

Like Adam, Richard cannot wholly succumb to the fall. And the presence of what he was torments him. If Richard could be nothing, then he would be at peace. But time cannot be wholly broken; remnants of Eden remain as reminders of something lost; the memory of time kept is the memory of sweet music by which we know the present sourness. So in Richard II we see the memory of a past perfection, the virgin walled garden, giving birth to a happy breed of men. And we see the fallen reality that yet cannot live without being haunted by ghosts of what has been lost.

Yet whatever memories remain, the destruction of the sacred England Gaunt

portrays erases 'pity, love, and fear' and tells a tale not of divine retribution, but of the absence of God--at least as far as the political realm is concerned. Henry V is the best of this kind: he is still pious, and sincere in his piety, though in a somewhat mechanical and perfunctory sort of way. Recalling to mind his father's sins in winning the crown, Henry V lists the good works that he has done to atone, though recognising that there are not enough (Henry V, act iv, scene ii). There is no hint of grace present anywhere in this speech. Henry V is a self-sufficient man doing what he can to atone for a wrong, recognising that nothing he can do is sufficient. While God watches over this world, he is not present, does not belong, indeed, is not wanted there. Coursen sums up Henry V in this way:

Whatever victories Henry V achieves are the product of a personality superbly conditioned to the ambiguous modern world that issues from the cracking of the firm foundations Gaunt described. Bolingbroke's smooth pragmatism returned to confront him in rebellion. Henry V's consummate skill achieves all it can in a world in which materialism has "evolved" to replace the **devolutionary** principle, the Christian version of Platonism Gaunt celebrated ... the career of Henry V is not designed to restore "sacramentalism" to England.

Even were that restoration possible ... Henry V employs sacramental "value" as an adjunct to policy, a façade for machiavellian means that justify the end of "the good of England ..." (Coursen, p. 210)

The second Henriad, then, is a world populated almost entirely by machiavels: good, bad and indifferent depending on whether they incline (in Danby's terms) to Authority or Appetite. It appears to mark Shakespeare's acceptance of the world in which he lived. But in *King Lear* he opens up again the dramatic contrast between the politics of the machiavels and those of 'pity, love and fear'.

Godly Rulers and Machiavels in King Lear

The play opens with the introduction of Edmund: one who immediately indicates the ambiguities in the term 'natural', for he is unnatural, being illegitimate,

and a shame to his father; yet on the other hand he is very natural indeed, for, as his father admits, his mother was fair, and "there was good sport at his making", and so Gloucester cannot altogether repent his sin.

Here then are two very different images of nature: as enchanted, that is, as a divinely sanctioned prescriptive order, a world of constraints, to which a man must align himself (henceforth 'Nature')--hence Gloucester's shame and the appellation bastard; and as disenchanting, that is, as a free resource to be used in accordance with the unconstrained appetites of man (henceforth 'nature')--this nature prescribes no constraint, and sanctions no stigma connected with the illegitimacy. Gloucester is essentially a weak man, superstitious (as we saw earlier) and easily swayed. But he has none of his bastard son's cynicism and, in the course of the play, Gloucester ends up taking sides against everything that Edmund stands for; for, as Robert Speiaght suggests, though Gloucester's mind is sometimes foolish and easily confused, yet "when the moment comes, it will be vulnerable to grace" (Speiaght, p. 106).

Then Lear and his daughters and others arrive. This is the scene where Lear gives away his kingdom. This is profoundly un-Natural. It assumes that the kingship is just another office that can be taken up or put down at will. In fact, Lear's act is worse even than that, since he does not wish merely to deny who he is (i.e., the king) as for example Richard II, under pressure, does (an act which precipitates in Richard's case something akin to madness, a confusion of identity); no, Lear wishes to retain the status of king without the obligations of kingship. Lear wants status without responsibility, something that is quite contrary to the Natural hierarchy which prescribes for every rung duties as well as rewards. Lear's violation of this Nature invites others to deal with him according

to the other view of 'nature'--that is, Edmund's, where even the annointed person of the king imposes no obligations, or is just another silly superstition. Lear violates Nature and reaps the consequences, just as Richard II violates Time to his cost.

At this point we might say that, even before disinheriting Cordelia, the king has fallen from the bias of Nature. In this sense his madness is not something that comes with the storm: quite the contrary, Lear is mad from the very beginning of the play and the storm brings him sanity ("My wits begin to turn" act iii, scene ii). In another sense, he never recovers the kingship that would return him to his true self, and thus remains, to that extent, insane.

Lear describes his task as "our darker purpose", which presumably means his mysterious purpose, but which we might also read as his evil purpose, a purpose which will, in a sense, unleash the powers of darkness and plunge his kingdom into chaos and anarchy--just that "future strife" that Lear believes himself to be preventing. He calls forth from his daughters protestations of their love for him, apparently to give the largest territory "where Nature doth with merit challenge". Yet interestingly it appears that Lear has already made the divisions and he does not compare all three answers before making the gifts. It appears that he is not going to award according to "merit". He merely wants to hear suitable words spoken, to which he will respond by awarding whichever section he fancies.

Goneril's response is profoundly unNatural. On the other sense of the term it is most natural--it is a dissimulation, a flattery masking greed for power. It protests love without limits ("more than word can wield

the matter") which not suprisingly is a love without content--Goneril can say what it is not ("Dearer than eyesight, space and liberty, beyond what can be valued, rich or rare"), and that it is "No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour." But Goneril's only really positive statement is somewhat of an anti-climax, for it seems in essence no different from the answer that Cordelia will give: "As much as child e'er lov'd or father found": this is an exaggeration, and certainly not what she feels, but it does at least point to the genuine parent-child relationship that needs to be honoured. But she covers this up in a welter of flattery, bringing her response back to an impressive but ineffable claim: "A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable/ Beyond all manner of so much I love you." Regan does much the same. She affirms her sister's answer, and dresses her own response up in the selfsame flattery that is laughable nonsense according to Cordelia's Nature and otherwise pure deceit, a mask for something precisely the opposite of appearance.

When we compare this to Cordelia's answer we see that something pathological has happened to language. When Cordelia says (to herself) "my love's more ponderous than my tongue", she implicitly accuses her sisters of exaggerating their feelings. But this is not what they have done. They have stated exactly the opposite of what they feel: their feeling is their lust for power; their statements are fulsome words of what is quite the contrary, i.e. love. Cordelia still misunderstands them when she says, "I want that glib and oily art/ To speak and purpose not", for it is not that they lack the love that they profess merely, but that they actively feel greed. Appearance and reality, words and meaning, expression and feeling to be expressed are not just dissociating, as Cordelia suggests; they have become polar opposites. These 'machiavels' are characters of deceit, wearers of masks: they do violence to language by using words as masks concealing their real intent. In such a situation Cordelia provides a significant contrast by refusing to do anything

but stand by the Natural meaning of words: "What shall Cordelia speak, "Love, and be silent."" With delicate irony Cordelia apologises that she "cannot heave" her "heart into" her mouth. She knows that her sisters have not done this, and that she, in fact, will do so. Her declaration is that she loves according to her "bond"; that is, according to the Natural bond between child and parent, a bond prescribed by Nature herself, which indicates the various obligations that it demands: "You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me./ I return those duties back that are right fit". Cordelia's words directly express her heart; and the lack of elaboration only makes the contrast between her and her sisters more stark.

The unNaturalness of Lear's behaviour is now sealed by his violation of the bond that Cordelia has just affirmed: in disowning her he not so much falls from the bias of Nature as commits the crowning folly of that fall. But he does not fall completely: it is interesting that, though he disowns Cordelia, he is yet prevented (by grace?) from cursing her--as later he curses her sisters.

In disowning and exiling Cordelia, Lear disowns and exiles Nature, with all its sanity: his Natural right to rule, the Natural respect his daughters should have for him, the Natural bonds of subject to king, the Natural connection of words to meaning. And so the kingdom is plunged into the chaos of unNaturalness--as Gloucester comments later (act i, scene ii), paralleled by the unNatural happenings in Nature.

Kent sees clearly what has happened: power bowing to flattery. He warns Lear, "Kill thy physician, and thy fee bestow/ upon the foul disease". Majesty has fallen to more than folly. It has begun to succumb to a foul disease, symbolised by the elder sisters. The cure, the Naturalness and sraightforwardness of Cordelia, Lear is about to 'kill' by sending into exile.

Kent himself, however, is not particularly interested in what Cordelia represents. He sees the folly for the kingdom and the king: for the good of the kingdom he can dissemble with the best of them, as he does for most of the play, when in disguise he returns to serve Lear. No less than the elder sisters he does violence to language when in disguise he claims, "I do profess to be no less than I seem" (act i, scene iv) while in truth being quite other than he seems. Kent is the good machiavel, standing for loyalty, trustworthiness, and the like, but only for the goal of the good of the kingdom, the maintenance of order and authority.

The opening scene plunges the kingdom into a profound unnaturalness. Cordelia, who is sanity, predicts that the evil dissemblers will be found out, but she is banished. Nature is banished, and in its place comes the modern nature to which Edmund pays homage at the opening of scene two. This nature is opposed to customs and traditions and destructive of established law, and, most of all for Edmund, it attaches no stigma to bastardy.

Edgar, Gloucester's legitimate son, is a figure comparable to Kent. Just as Kent shows his lack of respect for the sacred by the comment "to eat no fish" (act i, scene iv) (i.e., not respect the Church's fast days), so Edgar has no more time than Edmund for anything that smacks of superstition; he is not like his credulous father. When Edmund feigns interest in astrology, Edgar's replies may be read as dismissive ("Do you busy yourself with that?") and sarcastic ("How long have you been a sectary astronomical?").

The play is a conflict for the prize of kingship between the evil machiavels and the spirit of Cordelia. Lear and Gloucester are the realities of power. Lear is the king who has fallen from the bias of Nature; Gloucester is the weak and feeble representative of Nature, who is so easily duped by Edmund.

Kent and Edgar are the good machiavels who are primarily devoted to the good of the legitimate figures of authority and good of what such figures stand for. We might see Shakespeare as asking again about the possibilities of 'pity, love and fear', the spirit of Cordelia. Unlike in the second Henriad this spirit is here a real and living force. We might point out that Lear himself is converted to this spirit in the storm scene, when, with his wits returning, he realises compassion (for the fool and knave, act iii, scene ii), and humility, and repentance:

Nay get thee in; I'll pray and then I'll sleep.
Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides
Your loop'd, and window'd raggedness defend you
From such seasons as these? O I have te'en
Too little care of this: take physic, Pomp,
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayest shake the superflux to them
And show the heavens more just.
(act iii, scene iv).

But Lear's conversion avails little. He and his youngest daughter, reconciled at last, are victorious over the evil machiavels, but do not themselves survive. The re-establishment of a politics of 'pity, love and fear' is not a possibility. Likewise, though Gloucester at last, though blind, sees clearly, and is reconciled to Edgar, he too does not live. Power passes into the hands of Kent and Edgar, the good machiavels. For all the power of the drama, Shakespeare could not, it seems, admit any other outcome than that shown in the history plays, and that shown in real life: the triumph of the good machiavels, Henry V, the Tudors, Edgar, and Kent. Politics have been disenchanted. The development is irreversible. The great drama of enchanted politics has come to an end, and its epoch has given way to a messy world of power politics. Edgar sees enough to recognise the loss: "we that are young/ Shall never see so much."

Conclusion

Shakespeare does not, if I am correct, offer a vision of recovery--at least as a political possibility. In concluding thus, he shows a more profound appreciation than More for the problem of 'modernity'. It is not hard to see why this might be. The fifteen centuries of Catholic tradition which More felt so heavily had, by the end of the sixteenth century been broken for some decades: it was not a living force. And politically well over a century of relative stability had passed since the disastrous wars of the roses that blighted the reign of the godly Henry VI. The intervening period had seen a succession of strong and effective monarchs (Henry VII, Henry VIII, and Elizabeth) punctuated with a period of indecision and chaos associated with religious conflict (Edward VI and Mary). Against the memories of the past and the disorders on the continent, Elizabeth's reign must have seemed very good. The time of godly rulers was past.

Now there were at best good machiavels who could ensure order and the rule of legitimate authority. And this was necessary since waiting in the wings, ever threatening, there was the chaos of naked power struggles waiting to pounce. Henry VI was too weak a king to rule effectively.

Godliness and authority do not seem to mix anymore; for Shakespeare, this is the world into which we have fallen. Any recovery will now have to take place outside the political sphere of the present world. Meanwhile, in this present world, God is not forgotten, necessarily; he is simply put at a distance. His divine sanction no longer rests in reality over the power structures of the world--though it is useful rhetoric to pretend it does. Henry V, for example, is sincere enough in his prayer. But grace is not present. There may be the judicial act of forgiveness, but there is not the real and living force of grace active in experience. More offered three arguments against the 'protestant polemicists and the world they represent: the plain meaning of scripture; the weight

of tradition; and miracles. The traditions have been broken. Words and meanings are torn apart--as we saw in the case of Lear's elder daughters, and even, perhaps in a sense, in the good machiavel Kent. And miracles are unmasked--as in the sorry fraud of Simcox and his wife, exposed at St. Albans (2 Henry VI, act ii, scene i)⁵. The unmasking profoundly shocks the king, but it is all in a day's work for Duke Humphrey. The only 'miracle' is the one accomplished by the Duke in unmasking the fraudulent miracle. More's three arguments are destroyed. In such a world the good machiavel is a blessing.

Yet Shakespeare knows that there are better than these. Cordelia and converted Lear are both too powerfully portrayed for us to have any doubt where the playwright's sympathies lie. That they die makes one weep for the body politic, but that only means that their triumph over the evil machiavels must be looked for elsewhere.

Gerard Manley Hopkins: On Finding God in a Wintering World

In 1876 it was reported to Parliament that 7,144 churches had been restored and 1,727 new churches had been built in the parishes of the Church of England since 1840 (Edwards, iii, p. 202). Most of these were urban and suburban churches, and their grimy neo-Gothic towers and spires still provide a witness, if not to Christianity, then at least to the pretensions of the Victorian Church. At the time of this massive programme of building, the Church was most dynamic at either end of the theological spectrum. The loudest voices were those either of the evangelicals, on the one hand, or the Anglo-Catholics, heirs to the Oxford Movement, on the other. The building of churches provided each group an opportunity to proclaim their theology in the very structure of the building. The use of Gothic style, not least the long chancel, setting off the altar from the congregation, which bespoke the influence of imagined 'Catholic' and Medieval ritual, was generally accepted. But the evangelicals proclaimed one of their key tenets more subtly. In the stained glass over the altar, or, as they would call it, the 'Lord's Table', they depicted the scene where the angels greeted the women on the first Easter morning: and at the bottom of this window they wrote prominently the words, "He is not here, He is risen." They did this in order to witness to their understanding of the eucharist. What they were saying was that the bread and the wine somehow signified, but did not contain, the presence of Christ. The Lord's body was in heaven, and such presence as he had here was not localised in the bread and wine.

Their understanding of the Lord's Supper was consistent with what they found in the notorious rubric that was inserted into the 1662 Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England:

It is hereby declared, That thereby (that is, by kneeling to

receive the elements, a controversial requirement of the prayer book) no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread or Wine there bodily received, or unto any Corporeal presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very natural substances and therefore may not be adored; (for that were Idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians;) and the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one.

The argument contained in the last sentence is familiar from our discussion of More's polemics: More attacks it in the "Letter to Frith", where he points out that this argument sets limits to God's activities in accordance with the dictates of man's "blynde" and "barrayne" reason. In opposition to the prayer book rubric the Council of Trent had already declared:

If anyone denieth that, in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist are contained truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ; but saith that He is only therein as in a sign, or in . . . figure, or virtue; let him be anathema.

If anyone saith that, in the sacred and holy sacrament of the bread and wine remains conjointly with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and denieth that wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the Blood--the species only of the bread and wine remaining--which conversion indeed the Catholic Church most aptly calls Transubstantiation; let him be anathema.

(Canons 1. and 2. from Session XIII)

If, for the moment we concentrate on Canon 1., what is at issue here between the prayer book and the Council is the notion of a sign, and the way in which the bread and wine function as signs. A sign is, let us suppose, a thing which asserts itself, and yet by the very act of asserting itself asserts something other than itself. My particular concern in this chapter, in the discussion of Hopkins's writings, is a matter touched upon in some detail in the chapter on More, that is, the relationship of sign to signified, and especially the significance of the 'itselfness' of the sign. It is this matter that separates the Anglican prayer book from the Council of Trent, and which lies at the heart of

Hopkins's recovery from the 'evils' of the modern world. As we pursue this discussion I think we shall also see the significance of Canon 2. quoted above, and why it is a most helpful way of exploring the relationship between sign and signified.

The commandment in the institution of the eucharist is "do this in remembrance of me," and some liturgies use also the word "memorial" ("a memorial of his precious death ..."). In the Greek the word is anamnesis, and Gregory Dix, in his important study, The Shape of the Liturgy, argues that in the early Church, largely Greek speaking, this word would have meant "a 're-calling' or 're-presenting' of a thing in such a way that it is not so much regarded as being 'absent' as itself presently operative ... This is a sense which the Latin memoria and its cognates do not adequately translate and which the English words 'recall' and 'represent' will hardly bear without explanation, still less such words as remembrance ..." (Dix, p. 245). Anamnesis, then, was not understood as pointing the participant away to Christ's atoning death, but as presenting it again (re-presenting it) here and now. In this case the sign (that is, the bread and the wine) does not point away from itself but proclaims the signified within itself.

It is not my purpose to ask whether Dix is correct here, nor to dispute whether the Book of Common Prayer or the Council of Trent is more faithful to the witness of Scripture (and, it is hardly necessary to add, the prayer book may not fairly be characterised by a rubric which was inserted after the composition of the liturgy--Pusey, for example, argued that its teaching was certainly quite consistent with the belief in the "real presence", at least in the form of the "co-existence" of sign and signified, that is, what is commonly, but confusingly, known as 'consubstantiation' (see Pusey, p. 113)). But it is my purpose to draw

out the implications of the evangelical doctrine that proclaimed over the Lord's Table, "He is not here, He is risen." For what they are saying is that they "do this" in remembrance but not in re-presentation of our Lord's death. For them the sign does not participate in, and thus show forth, but rather points away from itself to something which explicitly is not "here".¹.

The difficulty evangelical Christians have in seeing, or their unwillingness to see, the signified in the sign, is characteristic of the modern world which More feared, and in which Hopkins found himself fully immersed. It is intimately connected with the problem of disenchantment. The essence of disenchantment is not that people no longer believe in God or no longer worship, or are insincere about their Christian faith. The problem is that faith becomes progressively alien to the world in which they ordinarily live--God is no longer found in the things of this world: as J. Hillis Miller wrote, in his study of the disappearance of God in nineteenth century experience,

The lines of connection between us and God have broken down, or God himself has slipped away from the places where he used to be. He no longer inheres in the world as the force binding together all men and all things ... When the old system of symbols binding man to God has finally evaporated man finds himself alone and in spiritual poverty. Modern times begin when man confronts his isolation ..." (Miller, p. 2, 7)

The point is that the "symbols" fail to bind together God and the world: the two slip apart. Things may still be signs of God, but only in the modern or reformational sense of pointing away from themselves to something that is wholly other--the disappearance, the cleavage, cannot be overcome. Miller's definition of 'modernity' is essentially that of the four writers we are examining: Shakespeare's Richard III is the unconstrained isolated individual ("I am myself alone"); More saw his 'protestant' opponents as ushering in a world where no sense of God's presence remained to constrain the pursuit

of power; and we shall see in this chapter and the next how Hopkins and Muir both find the essence of 'modernity' in the isolation left by the 'disappearance of God'.

It is interesting to see that, while he undoubtedly followed strictly the orthodox Roman Catholic teaching as regards the sacraments, John Henry Newman understood the world as a sign of God, if at all, only in this reduced modern sense. While dogmatically holding to the Catholic faith, Newman was very much a victim of the scepticism of disenchantment.² Consider, for example, the famous passage in the Apologia where he writes:

...I look out of myself into the world of men, and there I see a sight which fills me with unspeakable distress. The world seems simply to give the lie to that great truth [i.e., the being of God], of which my whole being is so full; and the effect upon me is, in consequence, as a matter of necessity as if it denied that I am in existence myself. (Newman, p. 277-8.)

We shall see in a moment that Newman did have other, more hopeful experiences. But we do need to notice the problems he had in asserting the worth of the physical world: it was "nothing else than the prophet's scroll full of 'lamentations and mourning and woe.'" And even as a young man he had felt a "mistrust of the reality of material phenomena" (Newman, p. 98), wondering if the world was anything more than a dream. So it is not surprising that when he does talk of the world as a sign of God, it is only in the reduced, modern sense. As a young fellow and tutor of Oriel college, he was out riding one day and found himself reflecting on these lines from Keble's recently published Christian Year:

Every leaf in every nook,
Every wave in every brook
Chanting with a solemn voice
Minds us of our better choice.
(1st Sunday after Epiphany)

In a letter he wrote this commentary on his experience:

I never felt so intensely the transitory nature of this world ...
What a veil and curtain this world is! Beautiful, but still a
veil. (Quoted in A.M. Allchin, 1967, p. 52-3)

The world here is indeed a sign but a self-effacing sign: the more it asserts itself, the worse it functions as a sign. Strictly speaking it is a signpost pointing away from or beyond itself. It functions as a sign in the same way the bread and wine functioned for the nineteenth century evangelicals. Such a sign cannot declare itself, rather it has to deny itself, empty itself of its own meaning and reflect our gaze away. Time was when people who felt the things of this world to be a distraction would go into the desert to seek God; but what is happening here is that, with this understanding of the sign, we are transforming our world into a desert in order that we may not be distracted (see for example the poetry of Jack Clemo).³

The more religion becomes composed of signs in this reduced sense, the further it progresses towards the disappearance of God. The less God is seen to participate in the signs, the more he is viewed as a transcendent Other, and the less he seems a part of our everyday world. But when God ceases to be understood as participating in the signs, then they begin to seem arbitrary, they become objects of suspicion, and they are ripe for re-interpretation. This was the situation in which Hopkins found himself--the chronic uncertainty, doubt, and struggle for belief that characterises mid-Victorian England. Without some sense of recovery of the presence of God, He 'slips away' into utter otherness, and religion decays into agnosticism (scepticism) or a stark fideism (dogmatism), thus succumbing to the characteristic of modernity that we discussed in our section on More.

Hopkins, in his early period (at least up until 1868) shared in the Victorian crisis of faith. This did not mean that he didn't believe the truth of the Christian religion, rather it meant that he had difficulty in relating that

belief to the everyday world in which he lived, which seemed only to tell of the absence of God. In Lent, 1866, he wrote a poem he entitled Nondum (meaning, 'not yet'), prefacing it with a passage from Isaiah, "Verily thou art a God that hidest Thyself". In this he gives voice to his experience of the world: God is absent. Our prayers lose themselves in the desert, hymns die in the silence. We form God in our own image, creed contends with creed, zeal confronts zeal: and in all this, God is silent. We pass from confused empty dusk into the utter emptiness and blackness of death. Creation reveals nothing: rather it is,

like a lighted empty hall
Where stands no host at door or hearth
Vacant creator's lamps appal.

And a later stanza is strikingly similar to the agnosticism that Matthew Arnold expresses (actually a year later than Hopkins's poem) in Dover Beach:

And Thou art silent, whilst Thy world
Contentds about its many creeds
And hosts confront with flags unfurled
And zeal is flushed and pity bleeds ...

(cf. "And we are here as on a darkling plain/ Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,/ Where ignorant armies clash by night." Matthew Arnold) Even the closing stanza fails to solve anything. Hopkins still has faith: he asks God to grant him patience and a word of comfort in his heart. But he does not ask for, or expect, the darkness to lift or the veil to rend.

There is nothing unusual in this experience of creation. It is the characteristic of the later nineteenth century. Parallels abound--one might say it is the hallmark of the period. And it not only afflicts those whose Christian faith is ambiguous--such as Matthew Arnold--or non-existent--A.E. Housman lamenting "heartless, witless nature,"⁵ or Thomas Hardy, helpless to answer nature's questioning⁶--but also more robust believers. It is there in Tennyson--in In Memoriam, for example, where he voices the fear that the stars run blindly, and that nature is "red in tooth and claw"--and it is there too

in Newman, as we saw. This situation gave rise to a class of people--whose most notable representative was, perhaps, Robert Elsmere, the fictional character (closely modelled on the Oxford philosopher, T.H. Green) of Mrs Humphrey Ward's novel--who sincerely wanted to believe and were sincerely unable to. Hopkins did not quite belong in this class, but he was one of a not inconsiderable number who, as Miller puts it, though they "still believe in God, they find his absence intolerable. At all costs they must attempt to re-establish communications. They too begin in desolation, abandoned by God" (Miller, p. 13).

One of the reasons Hopkins can only understand the world as a sign in the sense of the self-effacing signpost is that for him, as for Newman, the creation is not something valuable. Hopkins, at this time, writes of the "sordidness" of things (letter to Alexander Baillie, 10-12 September, 1865, FL, p. 226), and a few months later about "the triviality of this life" (letter to E.H. Coleridge, 22 January, 1866, FL p. 19). Such feelings are only to be expected from the author of Nondum: a world which seems to have no connection with God can hardly be thought of as very important, nor even very good. The world is empty of God, vacant, unreal, a distraction: what really matters is elsewhere. Two of his finest early poems express this very clearly. Heaven Haven is a simple, short piece that, at best celebrates contemplation, and at worst glorifies world flight. It expresses the thought of a nun as she 'takes the veil', contrasting the dependability ("where springs not fail"), peace ("where the green swell is in the haven dumb"), and beauty ("where a few lilies blow") that she will find, with the destruction ("sharp and sided hail"), turbulence (storms) and restlessness ("the swing of the sea") she leaves behind. The poem takes its title from the last line of George Herbert's The Size, a poem that praises self-denial in this world (the lack of grasping in this world that Hopkins was to find in the hymn about Christ in chapter two of Paul's letter to the Philippians) in the trust that we shall know ample

content hereafter--its final line contrasts this vale of tears with the future hope: "These seas are tears and heaven the haven." Hopkins's descriptions in Heaven Haven are reminiscent of some lines in Tennyson's "The Passing of Arthur" in Idylls of the King where Arthur quits this world for the idyllic island of Avilion. The world (as Sir Bedivere describes it) is in decay, dark and hostile. Rest and refuge and regeneration lie beyond in the island paradise, which Arthur describes as a place,

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.

If the nun's taking the veil is really analogous to Arthur's passing from this world then it really does seem a celebration of world-flight.

If the world is a distraction then Hopkins is forced to realise the ambiguity of mortal beauty. On the one hand he cannot but delight in it, but on the other hand he is afraid to place any worth in it because of its impermanence, its lack of ultimate worth, and because it, too, is but a veil hiding God's better beauty. The distrust--later dwelt upon agonisingly in To what serves mortal beauty?--is present even in the early period in the sonnet Confirmed beauty will not bear a stress (April, 1865). Nothing much is developed in that rather slight piece, except lament and a recourse to memory. But the sentiment emphasises the transitory, fickle, ultimately worthless nature of creation. After all this it is no surprise to see a comprehensive programme of world denial worked out in The Habit of Perfection (1866). The world must be denied in order that God may be met with. Deaf to the world, silent in the world, blind of the world, we must not take delight in taste, smell, feel, or material possessions. Only then can we hear the music of God, see the uncreated light, and have a fit wedding garment for the eternal marriage feast.

But Hopkins's hopes were precariously held. They were sustained by a faith

that was an act of will in despite of the fact that his experience witnessed to the contrary. As Miller argues, what Hopkins actually felt in this early period was the absence of God and the isolation of the self:

God does not exist as a manifest being, immanent in the works of creation. When I ask where my throng and stack of being comes from, nothing I see can answer me. When I turn within I find only my own inimitable taste of self. Neither within nor without is God anywhere directly present to me. He exists only as a necessary deduction from my discovery of myself as the most highly pitched entity in the creation. Having created me and the rest of the world, he has apparently withdrawn from his handiwork, and lives somewhere above or beyond or outside, occupied with his own inscrutable activities. He is a God that hides himself. This is the religious situation in which many men of the nineteenth century find themselves, and it is the situation which is described in Hopkins' early poems. (Miller, p. 272-3)

The emphasis on escape from the world is hardly suprising: this wintering world is a barren wasteland. But yet not everything in the world is rejected. Even in The Habit of Perfection it is good to smell incense, taste bread and water in between fasts, and, especially, to celebrate the mass ("house and unhouse the Lord"). The eucharist is one of the two points which prevent Hopkins from utterly despairing of the world--or rather it is an extension of the other point: the Incarnation. In a letter to a friend in January, 1866, he wrote,

it is incredible and intolerable if there is nothing which is the reverse of trivial and will correct and avenge the triviality of this life. (To E.H. Coleridge, FL p. 19)

But there is something: the Incarnation: God suffered the pains of life and "the mean and trivial accidents of humanity":

I think that the trivialness of life is, and personally to each one, ought to be seen to be, done away with by the Incarnation. (ibid.)

And although he seems nowhere else present, yet God is with us at least in one place: in "the blessed sacrament of the altar". This is the one counter to our sense of "the sordidness of things that one is perpetually compelled to feel," something that is "perhaps ... the most unmixedly painful thing one knows of" (to Alexander Baillie, 10-12 September, 1865, p. 226). It is interesting to notice that it is the "sordidness" that is one of Hopkins's chief concerns, the corruption and impurity of his present world. However,

in all this the "real presence" of Christ in bread and wine is "the great aid to belief and object of belief ... Religion without that is sombre, dangerous, illogical, with that it is ... loveable" (June 1st, 1864, FL p. 17). Because it provides the only point of contact between God and the world, we can understand how he can write to his father that this presence in the eucharist "is the life of the soul and when I doubted it I should become an atheist the next day" (October 16, 1866, FL p. 92). Without this faith in the Incarnation/eucharist the lines of connection between God and the world would slip away utterly. Moreover, from this faith in the Incarnation develops Hopkins's later view which sees, feels, and rejoices in God's presence in all of creation.

Hopkins's conversion to Roman Catholicism can be seen as an attempt to sustain his experience of God's presence. For he goes on to write, in the letter to his father from which I just quoted, in which he justifies his conversion to his bewildered parent, that this belief in the "real presence"

is a gross superstition unless guaranteed by infallibility. I cannot hold this doctrine confessedly except as a Tractarian or Catholic: the Tractarian ground I have seen broken to pieces under my feet.

The emphasis on the Incarnation and the "real presence" were Tractarian characteristics: Hopkins did not need to leave the Church of England to find these. But he perceived these doctrines to require an authoritative basis that Anglicanism could not provide. It was the authoritative basis that he found in the Roman Catholic Church that enabled him to overcome the sordidness of the modern world. Yet present in his struggles and his recovery is the very dialectic of scepticism and dogmatism that characterises the sickness of the modern world from which he is trying to recover. Hopkins, unlike More, partakes almost completely in the scepticism of the modern world, and the suspicion of tradition--in this case the traditional teaching of the Church. Whereas More felt the weight of fifteen centuries of Christian

witness, Hopkins needs to have this validated by an authoritative pronouncement, he needs an infallible authority that will authorise his beliefs. He commits himself to this authority by an act of will, in spite of his feelings and his experiences, which are so heavily shaped by the modern world. The tremendous reconstruction which he achieves is only as strong as the act of will on which it builds, and only as stable as it is successful in transforming those feelings and experiences which were originally opposed to it.

Whatever conclusions we may come to concerning the success of his recovery, we must nevertheless do justice to what he did achieve. Hopkins entered adult life with a sense of the absence of God similar to that which afflicted Victorian liberals such as Matthew Arnold, or agnostics such as George Eliot.⁸ But against these he has one thing: the Incarnation/eucharist. And by holding fast to this he is able, almost uniquely for an Englishman of his time, to recover slowly a sense of creation as both an object of value and yet, by virtue of that, as revealing the presence of God. So that just a decade or so after writing of "being's dread and vacant maze," he is able to assert,

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out like shining from shook foil.

Here creation witnesses not by denying itself, but by affirming itself and pointing to the reality at its heart. The victim of the disenchantment of the world, Hopkins is able to recover something of the presence in creation of Him, in whom, through whom and for whom all things were created and now exist. Understanding this we can perhaps appreciate Miller's contention that,

Hopkins' conversion is a rejection of three hundred and fifty years of the spiritual history of the west, three hundred and fifty years which seem to be taking man inexorably toward the nihilism of Nietzsche's "Gott is tot". Like the Catholic revival in Victorian England of which it is a part, Hopkins' conversion can be seen as an attempt to avoid falling into the abyss of the absence of God. Hopkins, like other Catholic converts, is willing

to sacrifice everything--family, academic career, even his poetic genius--in order to escape the poetic and personal destiny which paralyses such men as Matthew Arnold, and leaves them hovering worlds, waiting for the spark from heaven to fall. (Miller, p. 312)

The fruits of this conversion were not, however, brought forth at once. The tendency to 'world denial', the rejection of 'mortal beauty', and the new agony of conflict between priestly and poetic vocation--all witnessing to his early experience of the world as worthless, distracting, and empty of God--continued to trouble him. So, for example, before entering the Jesuit order, some two years after his conversion, he destroyed the finished copy of his early poems: "I saw they would interfere with my state and vocation," he wrote to Robert Bridges (August 7, 1868, LRB, p. 24). This conflict between vocations seems to die down during his middle period--the mid and late 1870s--but recurs again in the early 1880s (see Hopkins to R.W. Dixon, October 29, 1881, LRWD p. 88f).

Similarly, the tension between natural beauty and grace is still present nearly two years after his conversion. By February 1868 he had decided to be ordained. He wrote to a friend, Alexander Baillie,

You know I wanted to be a painter. But even if I could I wd. not, I think, now, for the fact is that the higher and more attractive parts of the art put a strain upon the passions which I shd. think it unsafe to encounter. I want to write still ... (but as a priest) nothing or little in the verse way, but no doubt what wd. best serve the cause of my religion. (February 12, 1868, FL p. 23)

This idea of literature as propaganda re-appears in later correspondence (e.g., the letter to Dixon mentioned in the last paragraph). That by being taken as an end in itself literature might best serve religion is an idea that Hopkins found hard to accept. The conflict between natural beauty and grace to which this alludes also recurs later. In a sonnet of 1885 he asks "to what serves mortal beauty?" and the answer comes "dangerous". It is a sign of grace, but the sort of sign that needs to be surpassed, lest it become a distraction:

What do then? how meet beauty? Merely meet it; own,
Home at heart, heaven's sweet gift; then leave, let that alone.
Yea, wish that though, wish all, God's better beauty, grace.

Neither in 1868, nor in 1885 can he see that one might be able to resolve the conflict between the call of natural beauty and the desire for grace by seeing that 'mortal beauty' may be a sign that is not a distraction from, but a proclamation of, grace. Yet for a few years in between he was able to see just that.

Hopkins's Journals

The journals, kept from 1866 to the mid-1870s, reveal "in Hopkins' observation of nature, an increased perception of God's presence in the natural world" (Ferns, p. 166). One of the characteristics of his journal record is the very fine detailed descriptions of nature, sometimes accompanied by sketches that have the same meticulous concern for particularity. Both the descriptions and the drawings owe a great deal to the influence of John Ruskin; Hopkins himself describes some early sketches as done in a "Ruskinese point of view" (to Alexander Baillie, July 10, 1863, FL p. 202). These detailed descriptions are, however, missing for the six month period between January 25 and July 25, 1869; the reason was "a penance I was doing ... prevented my seeing much that half year" (J p.121). This would have been a voluntary penance and probably reflects his earlier sense that natural beauty is dangerous. Apart from this there are an increasing number of observations of nature. A significant passage dated May 18, 1870, notes,

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 p. 133-4)

The significance of this is that the bluebell is not a veil that needs to be repudiated in order to see the Lord, it is not a mirror, of no value in itself but pointing beyond itself to something valuable. It is itself a thing of worth and in revealing itself it reveals the beauty of Christ. That the natural beauty of the bluebell is taken seriously is shown clearly by the detail of

Hopkins's interest in it. This opening statement doesn't lead him to seek Christ elsewhere, it draws him deeper and deeper into the details of the flower:

It(s inscape) is (mixed of) strength and grace, like an ash(tree). The head is strongly drawn over (backwards) and arched down like a cutwater (drawing itself back from the line of the keel). The lines of the bells strike and overlies this, rayed but not symmetrically, some lie parallel. They look steely against (the) paper, the shades lying between the bells and behind the cockled petal-ends and nursing up the precision of their distinctiveness, the petal-ends themselves being delicately lit. Then there is the straightness of the trumpets in the bells softened by the slight entasis and (by) the square splay of the mouth ... (J p. 134)

Another example of his growing sensitivity to the presence of God in creation comes six months later. He sees the northern lights for the first time and describes them in close detail: out of this description develops the recognition of revelation:

My eye was caught by beams of light and dark very like the crown of horny rays the sun makes behind a cloud. At first I thought of silvery cloud until I saw that these were more luminous and did not dim the clearness of the stars in the Bear. They rose slightly radiating thrown out from the earthline. Then I saw soft pulses of light one after another rise and pass upwards arched in shape but waveringly and with arch broken. They seemed to float, not following the warp of the sphere as falling stars look to do but free though concentric with it. This busy working of nature wholly independent of the earth and seeming to go on in a strain of time not reckoned by our reckoning of days and years but simpler and as if correcting the preoccupation of the world by being preoccupied with and appealing to and dated to the day of judgment was like a new witness to God and filled me with delightful fear. (September 24, 1870, J p. 135)

The religious vision is less well developed--as far as the later work goes--than with the bluebell. But the same careful attention to detail does give rise to the idea that creation is revelation, and, more, that it is perfect and good. Only man and his world has fallen, only he stains the beauty, mars the goodness, and blots the revelation.

The detailed nature observations seem to become both more frequent and more precise in the journal from 1870. One might suggest that, having been able to make the connection between natural beauty and Christ, Hopkins feels he is justified in taking this close interest in creation. It is no longer a

distraction. It is revelation, a revealing of the presence of our Lord, God's better beauty, in and through natural beauty.

Also developing over this period is his understanding of *inscape*. The term first appears in an early essay on Parmenides. It is used occasionally in the early years of the journal--in the description of Spanish Chestnuts (July 20, 1868) and trees in Richmond Park later that year, and more frequently from 1870. The development of the idea of *inscape* is part of the transition through which he is able to incorporate his fine observation of nature into a metaphysical and religious understanding of the world. Gardner makes this point well:

With the eye of Ruskin, and the same power of using words as pigments, he glances from heaven to earth, noting the varied forms and changing moods of nature and recording every significant detail. The artist is merged with the metaphysician. In the vagaries of shape and colour presented by hills, clouds, glaciers and trees he discerns a recondite pattern--"species or individually distinctive beauty"--for which he coins the name "*inscape*"; and the sensation of *inscape* (or indeed of any vivid mental image) is called "*stress*" or "*instress*". (Gardner, i, p. 11)

Hopkins describes '*inscape*' in a letter to Bridges:

as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern, or what I am in the habit of calling '*inscape*' is what I above all aim at in poetry. (February 15, 1879; LRB p. 66)

It was also what he aimed at in his observation of nature. He sought to find the characteristic pattern of a thing. What '*inscape*' refers to is not the individuality that sets something apart from other examples of the same type (what he would later call, following Duns Scotus, its *haecceitas*, 'thisness'), but the "inner law or pattern which any one oak tree, cloud, or flower shares with similar trees, clouds, or flowers" (Miller, p. 293). The best description of '*inscape*' comes in his later sonnet, "As kingfishers catch fire" (1882); here he presents a series of characteristic kinds: the kingfisher 'catching fire', the dragonfly 'drawing flame', the bell telling out its very nature as it is swung, all these are *inscapes*:

Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:

Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves--goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying **What I do is me: for that I came.**

The characteristic pattern of each type of thing--the self that is revealed--is its 'inscape'.

Inscape is the key to understanding the world. A thing illustrates itself by acting out its inner nature; and this is the order and harmony in the universe: "All the world is full of inscape and chance left free to act falls into an order as well as a purpose" (February 24, 1873, J p. 173). Yet there is, at least at this stage, no link that can unite the different inscapes--the world is full of characteristic patterns, but as yet these are isolated. The presence of Christ seen in the bluebell provides a basis for their connection, but this is only fully worked out when Hopkins begins to read Duns Scotus.

Hopkins and Duns Scotus

After the examination we went for our holidays out to Douglas in the Isle of Man Aug. 3. At this time I had first begun to get hold of the copy of Scotus on the Sentences in the Baddely library 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 look in any inscape of the sky or sea I thought of Scotus. (July 19, 1872, J p. 161)

Part of Hopkins's attraction to Scotus lay in the option Scotus gave for those who were suspicious of abstract knowledge. Hopkins, with Newman, shared this suspicion; they were both, to a greater or lesser extent, intellectuals who distrusted the intellect. "Newman unites the popular scepticism and subjectivism of the age with a rigorous adherence to Catholic dogma" (Weatherby, 1975, p. 75).⁹ So, perhaps to a lesser extent, was Hopkins. As for Newman, so for Hopkins, it is not reasoning from experience that effectively tells of God but intuition. Neither was comfortable with the Thomism they were forced to study. Hopkins's choice of Scotus rather than Thomas is significant, and even in Scotus Hopkins has little interest in the theory of abstract knowledge. Hopkins is interested in intuition.

Scotus talks about intuitive cognition and abstractive cognition: the one is knowledge of the individually existing thing--"the thing in itself in its actuality"--the other of the thing's quiddity or nature--"according as it has been abstracted from actual existence, and not existing" (Weatherby, 1975, p. 80). The important point here is that Scotus implies that one can grasp the existent reality of the thing known rather than merely the thing's essence, abstracted from the thing itself. Scotus further implicitly detracted from abstractive cognition by claiming that it was necessary merely on account of the fall. Now, indeed, abstraction is essential. But if Adam had remained upright we would have known even essences by intuition:

Had it not been for the fall ... men would have been as angels with respect to cognition--they would have known intuitively not only substances but the essences or quiddities of those substances for which, as things now stand, we must rely upon abstraction. Though an absolute necessity, abstraction must be regarded as a makeshift, a necessary evil, a means of filling a gap left by man's original defection from a pristine state in which all knowledge would have been as sight, as *visio* ... However, even in our fallen condition we have preserved the capacity for intuition of existing singular substances, and that intuition is preliminary and indispensable to the supplementary process of abstraction by which we for the moment make do. (Weatherby, 1975, p. 82)

It is this idea of intuitive cognition that influenced Hopkins.

Scotus sees two acts as taking place in knowing. The second--indispensable since the fall--is abstraction and reasoning to universals. The "first act" is a confused intuition of Nature as a living whole, or of "common being". This is contracted by the senses to a "particular glimpse" or "most proper appearance"--*species specialissima*--which is the individual type: and it is this that Hopkins seems to have identified with his own idea of *inscape* (see Gardner, i, p. 25-6 and Devlin, p. 113-116). By focusing on this "first act" (and ignoring the second) Hopkins could claim some philosophical justification for saying that the intellect knew not just universals but individuals--and thus that when *inscapes* were intuited, real knowledge was gained. So from Scotus Hopkins was able to argue,

that the intellect has got a direct, if somewhat confused knowledge of particular things, 'a confused primary intuition of the particular thing'. The reality of a tree, this tree is not that it partakes in some abstract idea of tree but that it is a blend of unique qualities (texture, shape, colour) which give it its individual essence. This essence ... is what constitutes the the reality of the thing. (McChesney, p. 21)

In this way Hopkins's minute interest in every detail of the world was vindicated: knowledge of individuals is still knowledge. Furthermore, it is knowledge of God. For while Scotus teaches that we come to know God through reasoning from experience, he also claims that in intuition there is knowledge of "common being" and so of God (Weatherby, p. 83). In this Scotian understanding of intuition we have a basis for Hopkins's poetry:

the expression of the intuitive and confused cognition of the in-stress of creation and of God himself, that stresses source, in the dappled world--in the variety of singular species to which that general common stress is contracted ... this intimate intuition of God in the *species specialissima*. (Weatherby, 1975, p. 86-7)

Hopkins connected this to a theological insight of Scotus: God is not just present in all the world, he is indissolubly joined with it, in fact he is incarnate in it. Scotus taught that Christ's humanity was God's first intention in creating:

I say nevertheless that the fall was not the cause of the predestination of Christ; on the contrary if neither Adam nor man had fallen, Christ would still have been predestined in this manner even though there had been no other created beings save Christ alone.

Not only is the incarnation the cornerstone of the creation; but Christ's sacrificial presence is there from the very beginning:

I say then, but without insisting on it, that before the Incarnation and 'before Abraham was', in the beginning of the world, Christ could have had a true temporal existence in a sacramental manner. And if this is true, it follows that before the conception and formation of the Body of Christ from the most pure blood of the Glorious Virgin there could have been the Eucharist. (Scotus, quoted in S p. 113-4)

This passage is mysterious but it fits well with Hopkins's idea that the creation everywhere tells of Christ's sacrificial presence, a sacrifice of love and praise until the fall made necessary a bloody sacrifice.

One of Hopkins's clearest explanations of his thought here is the following from his devotional writings:

The first intention then of God outside himself or, as they say, *ad extra*, outwards, the first outstress of God's power was Christ;... Why did the Son of God go thus forth from the Father not only in the eternal and intrinsic procession of the Trinity but also by an extrinsic and less than eternal, let us say aeonian one? --To give God glory and that by sacrifice, sacrifice offered in the barren wilderness outside of God ... (S p. 197)

While equal with the father, the Son could not worship the Father (S p. 14).

The Son made the "great sacrifice" of becoming what was not God (i.e., creature) in order to render perfect praise. This was God's first intention *ad extra*.

So God created the world with which the Son was hypostatically united, so that He might receive perfect adoration. From Scotus Hopkins learned to see creation

as dependent upon the decree of the incarnation: "Hopkins insisted that the Word made flesh is a 'condition of matter'" (Leggio, p. 66); "The worlds of

angels and of men were created as fields for Christ in which to exercise his adoration of the Father" (Devlin, in S p. 109). We see then that for Hopkins God is intimately and indissolubly connected with everything that has being; so deeply present to everything, in fact, "that it would be impossible for him, but for his infinity, not to be identified with them"

(S p. 128). This presence is God **enfleshed**: this took place at the creation.

The Incarnation in Jesus is God **enmanned**. So, for example, Hopkins reads the passage from the prologue to John's gospel as 'The word (a) was made flesh and (b) came to dwell among us', where (a) took place at the creation and (b) at the incarnation. (S p. 171, 181, 298)

All creation, then, is to be understood as Christ's giving glory to his Father on the throne, and every aspect a part of that sacrifice of praise. To be is to be part of that sacrifice. In a fallen world man has rejected self-giving; he has turned in upon himself. In doing so he has consigned himself to nothingness. Redemption through the cross is return to the full pitch of being, to the life of sacrifice. That life of sacrifice continues

in the natural world (except where man tarnishes it) where everything, by doing what is its nature to do, what God calls it to do, is giving praise to God, or rather Christ is giving praise through it.

How quickly Hopkins developed this full understanding after reading Scotus is not clear. There is a steady development of the notion of inscape in the journals and an increasing perception of Christ in nature. Whereas in 1866 he had written of the stars, "vacant creation's lamps appal," in 1874 he noted

As we drove home the stars came out: 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. (August 17, J p. 205)

The poems, 1876-1884

It is to the stars he returns to celebrate God's presence in nature in the opening section of the poem that breaks the seven year poetic silence. In the fifth stanza of the Wreck of the Deutschland he writes,

I kiss my hand
To the stars, lovely-asunder
Starlight, wafting him out of it ...

But it is not this that forms the subject of this poem: he goes on to say,

Not out of his bliss
Springs the stress felt ...

That is, not in beauty is God most powerfully known, but, he goes on to say, in sacrifice and suffering--as in the deaths of the five nuns that the poem celebrates, and as, primarily in the death of Jesus (though this is re-enacted in the death of the nuns, and is "in high flood yet" in its continual representation in the mass). The focus is primarily upon human rather than non-human creation, because it is there Hopkins perceives suffering and sacrifice most clearly.

Two years later, however, suffering and sacrifice do come together with the presence of God in the natural world. Hopkins at one point called The Windhover his best work, and it is certainly his most discussed poem. With the

dedication "To Christ our Lord", it begins with the sight of a bird of prey--Kestrel or Falcon--and wonders at the bird's mastery of the air. The octet of this sonnet gives us the inscape of the bird--riding the high air, striding high, sweeping smooth, hurling and gliding. Hopkins is lost in sheer admiration for "the achieve of, the mastery of the thing". So far the bird reveals itself, and is of worth for that. Yet if this were all, one suspects that after a while Hopkins might worry that it was just a distraction from God. However, there is more, for in telling out itself, it tells out more than itself. The bird is outgoing and exuberant and seems to spend itself in its activity: the small falcon expends "himself in 'doing his thing', wearing himself out in doing what he is made to do and is good at doing, fulfilling himself by giving his whole being in doing" (Ong, p. 75). Hopkins sees "Brute beauty and valour and act". These "buckle!", and he finds that in telling out itself, the bird tells out Christ within:

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

This is not something at which we should be surprised, Hopkins continues, for not only in glorious things like the windhover is Christ present sacrificially. Even the sheer plod of the plough through the soil--a type of suffering or sacrifice--makes the plough-shoe shine to the glory of God. There, too, Christ is giving praise. And the "blue-bleak embers" spend themselves as they fall and break and reveal their inner riches; again glory through self-sacrifice. The embers, indeed, in doing what they are called to do, in expressing themselves, "Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion", re-enact the crucifixion: the outpouring of blood which was the gold that redeemed the world. This is perhaps the climax of Hopkins's slow process of coming to recognise in the forms of nature "the divine and human shape of the crucified Lord" (Ferns, p. 165).

So the windhover, the ploughshares, the blue-bleak embers,--all, in being them-

selves, and so tell out the presence of Christ's sacrifice at their heart. Grace is the inside of mortal beauty, the sign is participated in by the signified.

That grace is the inner meaning of mortal beauty is the theme of many of the 1877 nature sonnets. In Hurrahing in Harvest, written at St. Beuno's, north Wales, he sees Christ in the surrounding hills and in the sky above. The scene is basically one he described a few years earlier in his journal:

The nearer hills, the other side of the valley, showed a hard and beautifully detached and glimmering brim against the light ... A blue bloom, a sort of meal, seemed to have spread upon the distant south, enclosed by a basin of hills. Looking all around, but most in looking up the valley, I felt an instress and charm of Wales. (September 1874, J p. 258)

In the poem, written three years later, he feels the very presence of Christ: he gleans Christ from the sky of "silk-sack clouds":

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?

Christ can be 'harvested' from the meal-drift moulded skies, just as grain from the fields. And the "azurous hung hills", which showed "a hard and beautifully detached and glimmering brim against the light", show Christ also to the heart that is willing to receive him.

In the great sacrifice of praise there is one ambiguous note, however. The imperfection of man is present even in the optimism of these sonnets: in God's Grandeur Hopkins lamented,

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

Yet this does not despoil the creation. In The Valley of the Elwy, Hopkins laments his own failings, feeling unworthy both of the hospitality he has received and the beauty of the surrounding countryside. But he is able to

close with a prayer for grace. The note of despair is just faintly present in The Sea and Skylark: he speaks of "our sordid time" and bewails the fact that,

... 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.

Man that was to be the crown of creation is the cause of its disintegration --just as he is the cause of his own downfall. The disintegration he brings to nature is described in Binsey Poplars. The scene is reminiscent of one described six years earlier in his journal: there we read,

April 8 (1873)--The ash tree 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 p. 230)

The immediate inspiration for Binsey Poplars however was a trip he made to Godstow on March 13, 1879, as he describes it in the postscript to a letter to R.W. Dixon,

I have been up to Godstow this afternoon--I am sorry to say that the aspens that lined the river are everywhere felled. (LRWD p. 26)

What has been lost in that act of vandalism was what Hopkins called the "sweet especial rural scene", the characteristic pattern of the tree-lined river bank had been 'unserved', the inscape broken (a "loss of inscape" (Gardner, ii, p. 271): there was less praise of God in the world because of what had been done.

And man himself, made to be earth's "eye, tongue, or heart" (Ribblesdale) has turned traitor:

To his own selfbent so bound, so tied to his turn,
To thriftless reave both our rich round world bare
And none reck of world after ...

Now here in this sonnet written in 1882, man's sin has a more damaging effect on nature than it did in God's Grandeur, written five years earlier. Whereas there Hopkins expressed the assurance that the earth was constantly being

renewed by the presence of the Holy Ghost, here we find him expressing the shadow that man's sin has cast;

... this bids wear
Earth's brow of such care, care and dear concern.

As he took preaching posts in northern industrial towns, Hopkins became increasingly depressed with what man had done to himself . At the end of 1881 he wrote to R.W. Dixon,

My Liverpool and Glasgow experiences laid upon my mind a conviction, a truly crushing conviction, of the misery of town life to the poor and more than to the poor, of the misery of town life in general, of the degradation even of our race, of the hollowness of this century's civilization; it made even life a burden to me to have daily thrust upon me the things I saw. (December 1, 1881, LRWD p. 97; see also LRB p. 127-8)

Man's sinfulness is a continual theme in Hopkins's poems, but by the early 1880s it begins to loom large enough to spoil his appreciation of the rest of creation. In Ribblesdale nature is, as Gardner comments, "relatively perfect, whereas man ... does not correspond" (Gardner, i, p. 160). Yet in this poem, as in Binsey Poplars, man's sin has its effect, nature is marred, and a marred nature does not show forth grace.

It is about this time that we see poems representing sacrifice in the form of a radical break with nature in order to choose for God. To some extent this was, perhaps, an inevitable theme for Hopkins to return to. For he himself had made two such sacrifices, from his 'natural religion' to Roman Catholicism, and from secular to religious life. But this turn also seems to mark the breakdown of the synthesis of nature and grace that he had achieved, and a return to the assertion of grace in spite of nature, dislocated from nature, that had characterised his early period. Morning, Midday and Evening Sacrifice is an early example, and three years later there is The Leaden and Golden Echo (1884). This last, especially, makes an interesting contrast with the idea of dedication present in the sonnet Spring (1877).

In the latter, the beauty of spring is affirmed in its offering of itself to Christ:

What is all this juice and all this joy?
A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden.--Have, get, before it cloy,
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

The Leaden and Golden Echo picks up the same theme and treats it in a similar way (see also the sermon in S p. 19). But here the emphasis is not upon the affirmation of mortal beauty as a gift to be given, but on renunciation and self denial:

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.

Certainly Hopkins believes that God will preserve mortal beauty for us, but it is something which one is called upon to renounce. This already anticipates the theme of To what serves mortal beauty? (1885):

What do then? how meet beauty? Merely meet it; own,
Home at heart, heaven's sweet gift; then leave, let that alone.
Yea, wish that though, wish all, God's better beauty, grace.

Instead of grace being, as we saw in the 1877 nature sonnets, the inside of mortal beauty, it has now become something other, and not to be found residing in the natural world; mortal beauty has become a potential distraction again, it is "dangerous". The integration achieved by the late 1870s has begun to fall apart.

Along with this comes a growing concern over his vocation. We saw that on deciding to join the Jesuits in 1868 Hopkins burned his poems; now again in the early 'eighties he is afflicted by the same doubts: my vocation to the priesthood, he writes,

puts before me a standard so high that a higher can be found nowhere else. The question for me is not whether I am willing ... to make a sacrifice of hopes of fame (let us suppose), but whether I am not to undergo a severe judgment from God for the lothness I have shewn

in making it, for the reserves I may have in my heart made, for the backward glances I may have given with my hands upon the plough, for the waste of time the very compositions you admire may have caused and their preoccupation of the mind which belongs to more sacred and more binding duties, for the disquiet and thoughts of vainglory they may have given rise to ... I have never wavered in my vocation, but I have not lived up to it. I destroyed the verse I had written when I entered the Society and meant to write no more; the Deutschland I began after a long interval at the chance suggestion of my superior but that being done it is a question whether I did well to write anything else. (Hopkins to R.W. Dixon, October 29, 1881, LRWD p. 89)

As the disintegration between nature and grace returns, Hopkins finds it increasingly difficult to retain his view of the worth of creation. In Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves (1884-5) he sees earth as devoid of grace--just as he feels his own heart to be.

... For earth her being has unbound; her dapple is at end, as-tray or aswarm, all throughther, in throngs; self in self steeped and pashed--quite.
Disremembering, dismemb'ring all now.

The pitch of earth's being, the inscape and instress that provided pattern and meaning--that powerful presence of Christ, at the very heart of the creaturely signs--is now disintegrating, something Hopkins also felt within himself, the "slack ... last strands of man/ In me" (Carrion Comfort, 1885). This experience of the lack of grace in his soul is the theme of the 'sonnets of desolation'. But the lack of grace in nature as a whole is dealt with most powerfully in That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and the Comfort of the Resurrection: the title well captures the dualistic nature of this piece. It begins with a celebration of the bewildering variety and change in nature. But just this very changing complexity now becomes a problem for Hopkins--where is there firm ground, where is something that will last? Perhaps all is as Heraclitus said:

This world, which is the same for all, no one of gods or man has made; but it ever was, is now and ever shall be an ever living Fire with measures kindling and measures going out.

Hopkins is able now to see no more than this in nature, all has become a hopeless confusion; and if this is true then there is no firm ground--all will die and be no more:

... Million-fuelèd, nature's bonfire burns on.
But quench her bonniest, dearest to her, her clearest-selvèd spark
Man, how fast his firedint, his mark on mind is gone!
Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark
Drowned. O pity and indignation! Manshape, that shone
Sheer off, disserveral, a star, death blots black out; nor mark
Is any of him at all so stark
But vastness blurs and time beats level.

Looking at nature, this is all Hopkins sees. This is a complete reversion to his understanding of the 1860s. As far as creation goes, God is absent, creation is vacant and meaningless. As before, Hopkins is not totally without hope, he still believes in God, hopes for grace. But God and grace have been torn from his world, they are once again asserted despite everything natural. When hope comes in this poem it comes as a violent intrusion of something totally other:

... Enough! the Resurrection,
A heart's clarion! Away grief's grasping, joyless days, dejection.
Across my foundering deck shone
A beacon, an eternal beam. Flesh fade, and mortal trash
Fall to the residuary worm; world's wildfire, leave but ash:
In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am, and
This Jack. joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond,
Is immortal diamond.

The integration of sign and signified, nature and grace that was so eloquently expressed in the late 1870s has slipped apart. It appears that Hopkins has lost most of what he achieved; his world is once again wintering.

Conclusion

Unlike More, Hopkins was almost wholly born and bred in his fallen world. He was almost entirely immersed in the sense of the absence of God that so afflicted mid-Victorian life. Yet even so his disenchanted world was not without some sense of presence. The valiant attempt of the Tractarians, the Oxford Movement, to rekindle the fires of faith, and to do so on a firmer footing than the now waning Evangelical revival, gave Hopkins a 'lifeline' in their teaching about the eucharist. They fought again More's battle for the unity of sign and signified in the sacrament. Yet for them, and especially

for Hopkins, what was at issue was not just the sacrament--the truth of centuries of Catholic teaching which other Christians challenged--but the very possibility of authentic belief in a religion of the Incarnation. In one sense it is precisely in his torment over certainty and authority, the very worries that drove him into the Roman Catholic Church, that we see just the extent to which Hopkins was a 'modern' man. The weight of centuries of Christian tradition, which More had felt so powerfully, Hopkins needed to have certified and authorised by some authoritative body.

All the churches of the Reformation (the Roman Catholic not excluded) tended to seek to save themselves from scepticism by appeals to authority. The Roman Catholic was perhaps the most successful in doing this, the Church of England the least. If High-Church Anglicanism was able to survive and prosper, it was only because it was the same church as More's, living by appeals to the weight of traditions of Christendom, but bending the knee to no localised authority which might authorise that tradition. Hopkins, like Newman, was perhaps too much a part of the climate of scepticism to be able to live with this. We might imaginatively picture Hopkins at the moment of his conversion as poised between following the path of Newman to authority, or, losing the last hope of retaining belief, spinning off into scepticism--as A.H. Clough spun away from W.G. Ward¹⁰ (an even more authority-loving convert to Roman Catholicism than Newman; it was Ward who said that he would like a papal bull every morning for breakfast with his copy of the Times¹¹). By grace Hopkins chose for authority. But being saved from scepticism is not the same as being rescued from a scepticism/dogmatism dialectic.

What is at stake for the young Hopkins is, I have tried to suggest, the possibility of incarnation. If world is wintering, God is absent, and his presence seems an impossibility. Incarnation then, must belong to another world, a world that is dead and gone--as the world of the Carthusians of the

Grande Chartreuse is almost utterly dead for Matthew Arnold.¹² As a Roman Catholic, Hopkins can concretely locate this past world: it becomes pre-Reformation England, the world of Duns Scotus and of the "Walsingham Way", before the "beast of the waste wood" laid waste the garden. Hopkins's achievement is not so much that he believes what Scotus believed; in a way, for example, that Matthew Arnold cannot (will not?) believe what the Carthusians believe. Rather Hopkins's achievement is to go beyond the lament over fallenness; not to return to a lost world, but to transform the present world so that it becomes a place not only where belief is possible, but where it is at home. As I have suggested in the first chapter, this redemption is limited: there is little Hopkins can do for the dirty, industrial mill towns of Lancashire but weep. Moreover, there seems precious little vision of human recovery, except in the possibility of the experience of God in nature. Yet nevertheless he can, and does, do something for non-human creation, and for human youth and beauty. He is able to reconcile sign and signified--nature and grace--so that once again there is a world in which God is present; so that signs of God do not self-effacingly point away from themselves to an absentee God, but fully proclaim themselves. In doing so these earthen vessels show at their core (if you let their selves shine forth to the full intensity, until they 'buckle') God's very self. The disappearance of God has been reversed, world is no longer wintering. Hopkins has re-created his world anew.

What then of sin? It has not been overcome, and it has not been accepted. It has been shunted away into a little corner, into adult human kind, and some of the works of his hand. But Hopkins, too, is a man. When the wind-hover 'buckles' it shows forth the Christ within, but when, in his last years Hopkins wakes ('buckles'?) to feel the "fell of dark", all he sees is a soul suffering the torments of hell, the absence of God ("that lives, alas!

away") and the isolation of the individual. To untwist the "last strands of man/ In me" would be to show forth a heart of despair.

Various commentators have written of the necessity of Hopkins's despair. Harold Weatherby claims that Hopkins's middle period vision was intellectually unsupported and unsupportable; it was primarily an emotional state, which could only last as long as Hopkins continued to feel in a certain way. David Jaspers has claimed that the notion of the univocity of being that Hopkins learned from Scotus is quite impossible to sustain. Weatherby and Jaspers both make such claims as part of explicit arguments for alternatives: Weatherby, for orthodox Thomism; Jaspers for Romanticism, and the analogy of being. Miller has offered the argument that the Victorian crisis of faith was simply too strong for Hopkins to overcome in the way he tried. Yet, whatever truths there may be in these explanations (and I am sympathetic to all three) some recognition must also be made of the imbalance in Hopkins's recovery. Non-human nature becomes the promised new, sinless creation. But man has become the focus of all evil in the world; and Hopkins himself comes to feel as a soul in hell. He cannot allow sin in the natural world, and he cannot control it in the human world.

If Shakespeare cannot believe in the possibility of recovery, at least in the present world, Hopkins tries to achieve too much. If More held out hope of recovery on the basis of the felt weight of fifteen centuries of Christian tradition, Hopkins feels forced to flee to authority, to will the power of an authority that will authorise his beliefs, to will submission to dogmatism for the salvation of his soul. Yet Hopkins's subsequent recovery seems a strangely isolated affair; it appears to have little support from his Church and his religious order, and seems to be shared with only a few friends like Robert Bridges and R.W. Dixon, who scarcely understand him. Hopkins seems to wrestle almost alone with a fallen world, just as he wrestles with a

fallen language; and, just as his restored language appears, as even he admits, "queer" and idiosyncratic, so too his vision of the restored world seems a strange personal creation, having more to do with his will to believe, to overcome his disenchanted world, and the accompanying emotional intensity than with a mature insight into the possibilities of recovery in a good but fallen world.

Labyrinths, complexity, and the poetry of Edwin Muir

Jorge Luis Borges has a story about a library that is a labyrinth--"an indefinite and perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries". The library is the universe. Borges describes reactions to the question of meaning within the labyrinth. He tells of the hopes the inhabitants had: of finding a catalogue of catalogues, or the mystical circular chamber, or the Crimson Hexagon,--all of which would constitute a centre, or provide a justification for the labyrinth. Yet he also tells of the fear that the books signify nothing, of the disillusion that led some to cease searching and, if there was to be any centre, any meaning, at all, construct it themselves.

Traditionally, labyrinths were not merely confusing places, but existed to guard what lay at the centre. The labyrinth of King Minos existed to contain the Minotaur, which Theseus found at its centre. The labyrinths inscribed on the floors of medieval cathedrals symbolised the Holy City, and the act of following the labyrinth was an *iter mysticum* to the throne of God. Similarly, garden mazes typically contain something rewarding at the centre, a resting place, perhaps, or possibly a vantage point from which to survey the perplexing pattern of paths. The medieval labyrinth in the library in Umberto Eco's novel The name of the Rose exists to guard forbidden books; like Borges's library, it functions as a sign of the world, and by this bears witness to a confusing world, but not one without meaning and purpose--a centre to the labyrinth, a secret to be pierced. Yet Borges's library of Babel also tells of another understanding of the labyrinth: that of a meaningless confusion, the world as a maze with no centre and no goal. This conception of the labyrinth appears in another of Borges's stories, "The Garden of Forking Paths". Here the labyrinth is, again, a symbol of the world. But this time there is no centre and no hope of a centre. The labyrinth is

an infinite confusion of intersecting paths in which all things are possible. With this story the symbol of the labyrinth has changed from one of a guardian of an elusive secret to one of utter confusion to no purpose.

The labyrinth can be the symbol of a quest, or it can be a distraction and confusion from which one desires to escape, or to be rescued. This latter meaning of the symbol appears frequently in Calvin's writings: consider some examples from the Institutes:

though we had been dispersed like stray sheep and scattered through the labyrinth of the world. (III:vi:2)

(Christ has passed from) a labyrinth of all evils into heavenly glory. (III:viii:1)

Here there is no preaching, no care for discipline, no zeal toward the churches, no spiritual activity--in short nothing but the world. Yet this labyrinth is praised as if nothing better ordered and disposed could be founded. (IV:viii:22)

And from the commentary on the first letter of Peter:

As the kingdom of God is a kingdom of light, all who are alienated from him must necessarily be blind and wander in a labyrinth ... the whole life of man is a ruinous labyrinth of wanderings until he has been converted to Christ. (quoted by Bouwsma, 1988, p. 46)

McNeill comments that in Calvin the labyrinth indicates the "frustration and confusion" of the human mind in its natural state.¹ Natural reason, for Calvin, is inextricably lost in a labyrinth unless it be guided by the word of God. The 'labyrinth' here contains no secret to be pierced; rather it is something that must be escaped from by the transcendent, saving, intrusion of the word of God.

A sustained meditation on the world as a labyrinth by John Amos Comenius (Komensky, 1592-1670) elaborates on this use of this symbol. In The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart (1626), Comenius imagines, much as Bunyan was to do half a century later, the Christian as one on a pilgrimage through the world. Early on, 'pilgrim' meets with Ubiquitous, who

tells him of the Cretan labyrinth:

It was one of the wonders of the world, a building with so many rooms partitions, and passages that anyone entering it without a guide was doomed to wander and grope about it here and there without ever finding his way out.

It is significant that Comenius does not say that the Cretan labyrinth had a centre and a secret that could be penetrated by finding a path through the passages. Ubiquitous continues, "That however was mere child's play in comparison with the arrangement of the labyrinth of this world especially in our own day" (p. 6).

'Pilgrim' soon voices a concern which is characteristically modern: the need for, and the anxiety over the lack of, certainty. He is anxious to know "whether there be anything one could safely rely on" (p. 7), and he is in search of "the most reliable" as well as the most delightful (p. 9). And later on he complains that all he sees in the world is "fraud" and "anxiety" (p. 135, 149). Assuming that the character 'pilgrim' (Comenius actually gives him no name) is voicing Comenius's own concerns, it is interesting to see that he shares with Calvin a feeling of uncertainty and confusion and is deeply concerned to lay hold of something comfortably reliable.

Accompanied by Ubiquitous and Delusion, pilgrim ventures out into the "market place of the world." He observes that the people there wear masks; asking why, he gets this response: "That is, my dear son, human prudence, not to appear to all as one really is. Alone, one need not constrain oneself, but among people it behooves one to appear properly and to give a seemly appearance to one's affairs." Pilgrim notices that the masks hide disfigured faces and bodies (p. 15). "I looked about me again and noticed that many were quite dextrous in the use of their masks, quickly snatching them off and doning them again, so that in an instant they could assume any appearance they saw fit. Then I began to understand the course of the world" (p. 16).

We should bear in mind that this wearing of masks, as a characteristic of modernity is something we have come across before: Shakespeare portrays Richard III as a wearer of masks, a chameleon, and Richard is the extreme symbol of the 'new world' that is coming into being; More accuses his Protestant foes of hiding behind masks and promoting their cause by deceit. It is worth adding that it was in the early sixteenth century (in fact, in 1512) that court masques made their appearance in England (they seem to have developed from the masquerade, a popular carnival amusement, in the late fifteenth century, in the Italian cities), and indeed there were even laws enacted at that time to prevent the wearing of masks in public places. Masks are false appearances, and what all these writers seem to be alluding to is the problem, suddenly perceived to have become chronic, of false appearances.² It is in a world of false appearances that the problem of trustworthiness, certainty, becomes acute and deeply distressing. The uncertainty aroused by the use of masks is compounded by the lack of order in the natural world, for Comenius: human relations are in utter confusion, and even the natural world is in disorder ("full of holes, pits, and washouts") (p. 17).

Having viewed much of the world, 'pilgrim' is in despair. Where others rejoice, he sees himself only "lost in mazes", where others thought of themselves as leaping about, he saw men groaning under heavy burdens, where others were joyful, he saw only men sick and dying. And in all this he has found nothing reliable or certain: "I saw, observed, and realised that neither I nor anyone else is anything, knows or possesses anything, but that we all imagine ourselves in possession of knowledge. We seize but shadows while the truth ever escapes us" (p. 103).

To all this there is no solution. Pilgrim can only find these things by retreating right out of the labyrinth. He hears God's voice telling him to return, "Return to the place whence you came, to the home of your heart, and

shut the door behind you" (p. 124). 'Pilgrim' responds; "Collecting my thoughts as well as I could, and shutting my eyes, ears, mouth, and nostrils, as well as all inner passages, I entered the recesses of my heart" (p. 125). Clearly, Comenius's solution is very different to Calvin's. But they have this in common: that they despair of the labyrinth, and they seek an escape out of it. They despair of finding any centre to the maze and they take a short cut out of the complexity to certainty. 'Simplicity' is the characteristic of their response. Here is the advice given to Comenius by Christ:

Among the learned you have observed how they tried to understand all things. Let the summit of all your learning be to study me in all my deeds, how wonderfully I direct you as well as all else. Here you will find more material for consideration than these scholars, and that with ineffable delight. Instead of all libraries, to read which is endless toil and but small profit, often even harm, and always weariness and perplexity, I give you this one book (i.e., the Bible) in which are deposited all the liberal arts ... (p. 128-9)

This advice is to turn away from the confusing complexity (which is weariness and perplexity) to the direct contemplation of Christ: "Now I understand that I was lost in mazes when I groped through the world, seeking consolation in created things. From this hour, I desire no other solace but Thee, and now surrender myself wholly to Thee. Strengthen me, lest I fall away from Thee to created things, committing again the same senseless folly of which the world is full" (p. 132). Clearly, God is not to be found in the complexity of created things, but in the simplicity of looking away from the world. These passages from Comenius perhaps bear comparison with a comment Colet made to Erasmus, "There is no end to books and science. Let us, therefore, leave all roundabout roads and go by a short cut to the truth" (quote Huizinga, p. 109). Short cuts to the truth, as a result of despair over the complexity of the world and the falseness of appearances characterise, I suggest, both the Renaissance and the Reformation, and, indeed, in time the Roman Catholic Church. All were part of, or succumbed to, the essence of 'modernity': that is, the fear of complexity, and the desire to close off

discussion by short cuts to authority. Whitehead illustrates this with a quotation from a history of the Council of Trent: the papal legates ordered,

That the Divines ought to confirm their opinions with the holy Scripture, Traditions of the Apostles, sacred and approved Councils, and by the Constitutions and Authorities of the holy Fathers; and that they ought to use brevity, and avoid superfluous and unprofitable questions, and perverse contentions ... This order did not please the Italian Divines; who said it was a novity, and a condemning of School-Divinity, which in all difficulties, useth reason, and because it was not lawful (i.e., by this decree) to treat as St. Thomas (Aquinas), St. Bonaventure, and other famous men did. (Whitehead, p. 9)

This closing off discussion to authority Whitehead sees as the mark of modern science and Protestantism, as well as the Tridentine Roman Catholic Church.³

The 'Renaissance crisis of knowing'

Why has the symbol of the labyrinth changed from indicating a quest to symbolising a meaningless confusion, an imprisonment in chaos? And why has this new meaning of the symbol become such a frightening image for Calvin and Comenius? The answer lies, I suggest, in the crisis that gave birth to 'modernity', what has been termed 'the Renaissance crisis of knowing'.

One of the signs that a tradition is in crisis is that its accustomed ways of relating seems and is begin to break down. Thus the presence of scepticism becomes more urgent and attempts to do the impossible, to refute scepticism once and for all, become projects of central importance for a culture and not mere academic exercises. Just this happens in the late middle ages and the sixteenth century. Inherited modes of ordering experience reveal too many rival possibilities of interpretation ... Ambiguity, the possibility of alternative interpretations, becomes a central feature of human character and activity. (MacIntyre, p. 459)

William Bouwsma, in an important essay, seeks to understand Calvin in the context of this situation.⁴ He argues that the Renaissance indeed involved a crisis, a legacy of late medievalism, about what man could claim to know. The traditional idea had been tremendously optimistic: the Aristotelian understanding that, in the act of knowing, the mind is united with, and becomes identical with, what is known. The role of the knowing subject is not relevant to the knowledge gained thereby. As Bouwsma describes it,

in the traditional view in thinking one thinks the thing itself; the thought is shaped by, and becomes, the thing. We might contrast this conception with the modern notion of thinking about a thing, a notion that assumes a distinction between thought and object and can recognise the possibility of wide discrepancies between them. (Bouwsma, 1982, p.191)

This possibility of wide discrepancies opens up the possibility of diverging interpretations, false appearances (masks) and a lack of trust in the process of human knowing--seeing it no longer as a labyrinth in which the secret may be entered into, but a labyrinth of hopeless confusion.

Bouwsma traces the roots of Renaissance scepticism to various sources (Bouwsma, 1982, p. 198-9). There is the influence of late medieval nominalism; there is the revival of pagan learning, which, he suggests, was also a revival of Sophist scepticism over the possibility of human knowledge. Emphasis passed from an understanding of humanness as a capacity for knowing to humanness as a capacity for acting. And there was an increasingly instrumental understanding of reason, which now comes to be seen as a means, but as incapable of discerning ends.

Before pursuing Bouwsma's article on Calvin further, I want to comment, in parenthesis, as it were, that these last two points, the emphasis on the will, at the expense of the intellect, and the changing understanding of reason, are characteristics that Maritain finds in Luther's writing. What, according to Maritain, makes Luther such a founding father of the 'modern' period is the primacy he gives to the will and the suspicion he has of, and the limitations he places on, reason.

Luther is the source of modern voluntarism... As reason is banished to the foulest place in the house, if not killed and buried, the other spiritual faculty, the will, must be correspondingly exalted... (Maritain, p. 34-5)

Maritain is convinced that the primacy of the will and scepticism (he calls it 'pessimism of the intellect') are inseparably connected:

With Luther... the will has primacy, truly and absolutely... That attitude of soul would naturally go with a profound anti-intellectualism which was besides helped by the Occamist and nominalist training in philosophy which Luther received. (p. 30)

"We are therefore," Maritain concludes, "fully justified in looking to Luther for the origin of these two great ideas, which seem inseparable in the history of philosophy: the idea of radical evil (i.e., the radical perversion of our powers to know)... and the idea of the primacy of the will... as if Pessimism and Voluntarism were from a metaphysical standpoint the two complementary aspects of one same thought." (p. 38)

The connection between radical evil and scepticism lies in one's estimate of the power of reason. Under the guise of rejecting rationalism, Luther emaciates reason. As a result of the fall, reason is so vitiated that all it can do is provide means for us to cope with every-day, 'earthly' tasks. Specifically, it cannot help us divine anything of God.

Reason for Luther has an exclusively pragmatic value, it is for use in earthly life. God has given it to us only "to govern on earth..." But in spiritual things it is not only "blind and dark", it is truly the "whore of the devil. It can only blaspheme and dishonour everything God has said and done." (p. 32)

Luther, in fact, allows only calculating or instrumental reason, reason as a tool or a means. Anything else is blasphemy. The vacuum left by this castration of reason is made up for by authority--Luther's powerful assertion of his own particular experience of the gospel.

Another thoroughly modern characteristic in Luther is his hostility towards 'participation'. Each individual is an isolated soul, a self alone, who can indeed still relate to God, but must always remain utterly separate and apart. "No longer is there any question of the indwelling of the Divine Person in our soul. The soul is driven back into its solitude, it has become impenetrable to everything but self." (p. 48).

Having made these very brief comments concerning Luther, let us return to Calvin. Bouwsma's paper is an attempt to evaluate Calvin's relationship to the crisis that begins 'modernity'. He suggests that Calvin participated in this crisis of knowing to a significant extent:

John Calvin was acutely sensitive to the unsettling developments that I have summarised as the 'Renaissance crisis of knowing', developments in which we can also see what was most modern about Renaissance culture. (Bouwsma, 1982, p. 200)

One aspect of Calvin's participation in this uncertainty is his use of the labyrinth as a symbol for his distrust of the capabilities of the human mind, his belief in the futility of natural human reason. Like Luther, but unlike Thomas, Calvin sees sin as radically confusing the mind. Now, "man's nature is a perpetual factory of idols" (Institutes, I:xi:8), and in religion reason is, if not quite Luther's 'whore of the devil', yet, and perhaps more frighteningly, a labyrinth, unless we allow ourselves to be guided by the word of God (I:vi:3). The opinion of the fallen human mind in religious matters is "a boundless filthy mire of error" covering the earth (I:vi:12). The very best that such a mind can achieve is the recognition that it is lost in futility, i.e., a state of 'agnosticism' (see the story of Simonides, I:vi:12).

The function of the 'labyrinth' as a symbol in Calvin's writing is to indicate a helpless lostness. Redemption does not come as a guide through the labyrinth, but a rescue from it. We are (to change the metaphor) lifted out of the confusing, hopeless soft sand, and placed on the rock of the word of God. This is not the world flight that Comenius celebrated; but otherwise certain characteristics are shared. In both cases the complexity of the labyrinth, with its accompanying anxiety in the face of uncertainty⁵ is left behind, and we are made to begin our lives over again on the simple, given authority of the word.⁶ The anxiety of the labyrinth is overcome by

emotional attachment to the word, which is always in reality a word already interpreted in certain ways. We cannot evaluate this promised salvation, we must **commit** ourselves to it. Knowledge is dependent upon such fervour: "we cannot say that God is known where there is no religion or piety" (I:ii:1). Knowing has no autonomy: it is sustained by an act of the will that commits us to something—specifically gives its power to that to which it commits itself, setting up this 'other' as absolutely authoritative. Knowledge is knowledge, is truth, only so long as it is sustained by the 'right' logically prior commitment. Thus we may see in Calvin what Maritain saw in Luther: a scepticism about the possibility of knowledge in the complexity and confusion of the world, and a short cut to a simple truth, which is sustained as authoritative by an act of the will. The fact that Calvin does not identify the labyrinth with the creation, but only with the unregenerate mind, or 'the world', means that for him, escape from the labyrinth is not the escape from creation that it is for Comenius. But nevertheless, the pattern of his thought is similar enough. In all these cases we can identify despair and anxiety over the confusion of the world, a distrust in the potential of human knowing, and a short cut out of the labyrinth by the willing of some simple absolute authority: the combination, that is, of scepticism and dogmatism to which we first alluded in our discussion of More and his 'protestant' opponents, and an attitude by no means unknown in the world of the Roman Catholic Church, as we saw in our discussion of Hopkins.

Edwin Muir: a life

One critic has summed up Muir's life in the following sentence:

He had known Eden, the journey through the labyrinth of time and the journey back to the recovery of an innocence which could be combined with experience. (Butter, 1962, p. 20)

During the time of fallenness, at Kirkwall and then at Glasgow, he experienced three conversions. All may be seen as attempts to escape from the nightmare

of the empty labyrinth. The first, at age fourteen, was "an equivocal religious conversion" (A p. 280) which did not last long (see A p. 87-88). The second was a conversion to Socialism--a conversion very comparable to his religious conversion (A p. 113). Both seem from the accounts that he gives to have been premature attempts to step into some pattern of meaning and recovery ("the fable" A p. 114). Neither integrated well with his daily life, they left a glow of naïve, simplistic recovery which could not survive long in the rigours of everyday life. His socialism focused on dreams of a future restoration:

I read books on Socialism because they delighted me and were an escape from the world I had known with such powerful precision. Having discovered a future in which everything, including myself, was transfigured, I flung myself into it, lived it, though everyday I still worked in the office of the beer bottling factory, settling the accounts of the lorry-men and answering the jokes of the slum boys. (A p. 113)

But this conversion began to fade after a while, and reading in history undermined his faith that such a future could ever come about (A p. 125). Then he began to read Nietzsche. As he recounts this experience, it, too, was an escape; in retrospect he calls it a "compensation"--"I could not face my life as it was, and so I took refuge in the fantasy of the Superman" (A p. 127):

The idea of a transvaluation of all values intoxicated me with a feeling of false power. I, a poor clerk in a beer bottling factory, adopted the creed of aristocracy, and, happy until now to be an Orkney man somewhat lost in Glasgow, I began to regard myself, somewhat tentatively, as a "good European." I was repelled by many things that I read, such as the counsel to give "the bungled and botched" a push if I found them going down hill, instead of trying to help them. My Socialism and my Nietzscheanism were quite incompatible, but I refused to recognize it. I did not reflect that if Christianity was a "slave morality" I was one of the slaves who benefited by it and that I could make no pretension to belong to the "master class." But I had no ability and no wish to criticise Nietzsche's ideas since they gave me exactly what I wanted: a last desperate foothold on my dying dream of the future. My heart swelled when I read, "Become what thou art," and "Man is something that must be surpassed," and "What does not kill me strengthens me." (A p. 126)

The emotion--anxiety, despair, hope--that made him lay hold of Nietzsche,

that coloured his commitment, comes across even in this retelling at a distance of several decades. This emotion led him to ignore the contradiction between Nietzscheanism and Socialism, and to abandon his Orcadian heritage. His commitment to Nietzsche's message of hope led him, he continues, to ignore certain aspects of his experience: "To support myself I adopted the watchword of "intellectual honesty," and in its name committed every conceivable sin against honesty of feeling and honesty in mere perception of the world with which I daily came into contact" (A p. 127). His commitment was, in fact, a profound simplicity with which he ignored or distorted experiential realities--a refusal to come down to the real, complicated earth (A p. 151). He realises all this in time: "My belief in the ideas of Nietzsche was a willed belief..." which "had become my last desperate defence" (A p. 169).

Muir married and left Glasgow in 1919. He and his wife settled in London, where Muir underwent a programme of psycho-analysis. In a difficult and painful process he seems to have established a "new self-knowledge" (A p. 158). One stage was what he calls, in retrospect, a conviction of sin, though this appears really to be more of a frank acceptance of failures, frustrations, hatred, anger, shame, grief,--confronting these allowed him to win "a certain liberation from them" (A p. 158). Dreams of the Superman disappeared, though for a while afterwards he was writing articles "of a Nietzschean cast" (A p. 170).

Muir's subsequent life can be viewed as a slow and difficult recovery. It is sustained by various 'epiphanies', as I shall call them, which cumulatively have the effect of giving him a real recovery without escape and of making effective the "equivocal religious conversion" that he experienced back on Orkney. In the sense that it is a series of insights--epiphanies--which

effect this recovery, Muir's life resembles Hopkins's. But, whereas Hopkins experienced his epiphanies within the context of a prior commitment, as an escape from the hoplessness of disenchantment to a system of dogma, Muir, as we shall see, was more willing to let the experiences cumulatively establish their own interpretation. I'm not saying that he did not desire to re-establish his Christian belief, or to use Christian symbols as interpretive devices, merely that he resisted the urge to desperate and anxious commitment, that would prematurely (but precariously) establish an absolute authority. His appropriation (or re-appropriation) of Christianity no doubt had much to do with his recovery of the child's vision of the world; but it is necessary to add that, as we shall see, he was sharply critical of the form that Christianity predominantly took in Scotland, that he had experienced in his youth (see A p. 277).

One such epiphany is the conviction of sin already mentioned. Later there came a belief in immortality--"a realisation that human life is not fulfilled in our world, but reaches through all eternity" (A p. 170). A later vision still, while he was in Germany, is especially important, for it shows Muir refusing to doubt the validity of his experience even though it was hard to believe in the light of subsequent events. He has a vision of the "simple natural virtue" of the people. Yet, this is Germany in the 1920s, and reflecting on this experience he cannot help but see it in the light of the evils of Nazism. How can these people really be said to have a "simple natural virtue" when in a decade or so they were implicated in tremendous evils? To his credit, however, Muir affirms the truth of his experience:

This awareness of the direction in which the world is moving ... casts doubt on my memory of these years in the early 'twenties when my wife and I lived in Dresden and Hellerau. Yet they still seem to me among the happiest of my life. We lived by ourselves in a town pleasantly strange. Everything seemed good, the houses, the streets, the people, because we were disposed to find them so. The Saxons are not a hand-

some race, but I was not looking for beauty, and when I encountered it in some chance face it was so unusual that it suprised me, and awoke a sense almost of alarm. There was so much of life which I had not accepted and felt the need to accept. that what I wanted now was the ordinary as the reassuring, given substance of life--round faces and blank blue eyes and comfortable bodies--and here they were in plenty, more consoling than any more carefully finished sketch of the human form could have been. These people were like a race still in the making, and quite content to be so, affirming without knowing it that the material out of which mankind is shaped has a simple natural virtue. When we went out for our mid-day meal at some nearby restaurant and saw Saxons converging upon it with greetings of "Guten Appetite" or "Mahlzeit," the simplicity of that salutation, that blessing on the stomach and its doings, though the mere observance of a convention, moved us genuinely. It confirmed and blessed the rite of eating. (A p. 197)

Later, in Hellerau, he writes that his imagination "was beginning to waken after a long sleep." And with this comes images of "Eden and the millennial vision of which I had dreamt as a child" (A p. 201). Back in England, worried by his wife's illness, he was anxiously on his way to summon the doctor, when he noticed a tree illumined by a lamp nearby where "a robin was sitting looking at me, quite without fear, with its round eyes, its bright breast liquidly glowing in the light. As I stared out of my worry, which was a world of its own, the small glittering object had an unearthly radiance, and seemed to be pouring its light into the darkness within myself. It astonished and reassured me." (A p. 227). His wife recovered.

These experiences and others like them, little things, but powerful, provided him with solid hope and comfort. It was such things, one conjectures, that saved him from "the cult of untrammelled freedom" of the twenties and the politicization of the thirties. Of the former, he describes those who accepted it in images that would apply to his own sad past.

They lived in an open landscape, without roads, or a stopping place, or any point of the compass. Their brief love affairs resembled those of children who had acquired the knowledge and desires of mature men and women, and in their conduct, perhaps even in their thoughts, remained children. They were lost and on the road to greater loss, and ready to accept any creed which would pull their lives together and give them the enormous relief of finding, even under compulsion, a direction for their existence... (A p. 229)

Previously, Muir had been like them, attaching himself to creeds, in an attempt to find direction--evangelicalism, socialism, Nietzscheanism--but now direction was finding him, and he was open and relaxed enough to wait patiently on its leading. He was sharply critical of the movement of intellectuals towards communism, despite his own socialist sympathies. He was repelled by the hate and anger that lay behind the proclamation of class warfare and revolution:

I had been made a socialist by the degradation of the poor and the hope for an eventual reign of freedom, justice and brotherhood. Instead of these things communism offered me the victory of a class, and substituted the proletariat for a moral idea. It was as if a conjuring trick had been played with the hope as old as Isaiah, and what the heart had conceived as love and peace had been transmuted into anger and conflict... Communism presented itself as a strange, solidly made object, very like a huge clock, with metal bowels, no feelings, and no explanation for itself but its own impenetrable mechanism; it was neither glad nor sad, and revered only its own guaranteed working. (A p. 234)

The politicized poetry of the time accepted this communist simplicity. "The new poetry had left the immemorial hopes behind it; in no imaginable future would the lion and the lamb lie down together; they belonged to a mythology which Marx had exploded; and all that was left for the lamb now was to arm itself with the latest equipment and liquidate the lion." (A p. 235)

This was the same simplicity that he saw in the Calvinism of the Scottish Covenanters, with their slogan "Christ and no quarter"⁸. Muir's sympathies lay entirely with the fight against fascism: of the Spanish Civil War he writes that "without knowing very much about the situation, we were on the side of the Republicans" (A p. 243). Yet communism repelled him, and even of the Spanish conflict he could say, "We were, of course, right to be against Franco, but wrong to take the other side so self-righteously. Every one who serves a political movement must be appalled later by the confident blindness of his choice" (A p. 243). The choice between either fascism or an angry communism was a false dichotomy, and Muir had the presence of mind to realise this. In his meditation on these matters while he lived in Hampstead in the

thirties, he had another profound insight: the centrality of forgiveness:

in the Communist scheme there is no place for forgiveness... To forgive an enemy was a sin against the system; to forgive an erring brother was a reprehensible weakness. I tried to think of ordinary people, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers and children, lovers and friends, and to imagine them all as unforgiving and unforgiven, on principle and not merely by inclination; and I realised that it was impossible to wish this and to understand mankind. To think in such ways either kills or falsifies the imagination. (A p. 235)

These 'epiphanies'--of sin, of immortality, of underlying goodness, of comfort, of the centrality of forgiveness--are not yet Christian. Yet in time they became so.

One strong affirmation of Christianity came to him not as a voluntary, but an involuntary, act: an entry in his diary for February 28, 1939, reads,

last night, going to bed alone, I suddenly found myself (I was taking off my waistcoat) reciting the Lord's Prayer in a loud, emphatic voice--a thing I had not done for many years--with a deep urgency and profound disturbed emotion. While I went on I grew more composed; as if it had been empty and craving and were now being replenished, my soul grew still; every word had a strange fullness of meaning which astonished and delighted me. It was late; I had sat up reading; I was sleepy; but as I stood in the middle of the floor half-undressed, saying the prayer over and over, meaning after meaning sprang from it, overcoming me again with joyful surprise; and I realised that this simple petition was always universal and always inexhaustible, and day by day sanctified human life. (A p. 246)

This was an important epiphany for Muir, but it was also only the next stage in a gradual recovery of belief. He later returns to reading the New Testament, though not to going to church. Later in Italy, he tells of the profound conviction, new to him, of the Incarnation:

During the time when as a boy I attended the United Presbyterian Church in Orkney, I was aware of religion chiefly as the sacred Word, and the church itself, severe and decent, with its touching bareness and austerity, seemed to cut off religion from the rest of life and from all the week-day world, as if it were a quite specific thing shut within itself, almost jealously, by its white-washed walls, furnished with its bare brown varnished benches unlike any others in the whole world, and filled with the odour of ancient Bibles. It did not tell me by any outward sign that the Word had been made flesh... nothing told me that Christ was born in the flesh and had lived on the earth./ In Rome that image was to be seen everywhere ... That these images

should appear everywhere, reminding everyone of the Incarnation, seemed to me natural and right ... This open declaration was to me the very mark of Christianity, distinguishing it from the older religions. For although the pagan gods had visited the earth and conversed with men, they did not assume the burden of our flesh, live our life and die our death, but after their interventions withdrew into their impenetrable privacy. (A p. 277-8)

Muir's "conversion" to Christianity fifty years before, which like his other "conversions" may be seen as an attempt to escape from the horror of the labyrinth, is finally effected in a real way through patient waiting, and a willingness to be guided by experience--the occasional epiphanies which don't take him out of the labyrinth, but lead him to something very special at its centre.

The poems

In the poem The Labyrinth in the collection of the same title, published in 1949 (the year in which Muir and his wife arrived in Italy), we see him caught between the two understandings of the "labyrinth" that were discussed in the first part of this chapter. The narrator of the poem is Theseus, emerging from the Cretan maze after killing the Minotaur. In his nightmares he is haunted by the images of a hopelessly confusing labyrinth: "deceiving streets" and rooms that, opening into each other, never reach a "final room". Tracks close behind one, like paths through the sea, "Tracks undiscoverable, indecipherable": "all seemed part/ Of the great labyrinth". This "great labyrinth is a nightmare vision of the world--the world as a labyrinth in modern sense we indicated earlier in this chapter. Theseus emerged from the labyrinth after killing the beast, just as Muir emerged from the labyrinth of the Glasgow tenements (Butter, 1962, p. 79), but this labyrinthine view of the world is not so easily left behind. The narrator tells himself that he is out of the maze, that he has nothing to fear, no reason for panic or haste,

But my bad spirit would sneer, 'No, do not hurry.
No need to hurry. haste and delay are equal
In this one world, for there's no exit, none,
No place to come to, and you'll end where you are,
Deep in the centre of the endless maze.

Clearly there is no significance to this "centre" that makes sense of the confusion. In an endless maze anywhere may be centre, where you are now, where you were, where you will be, because there is no centre, no end to the confusion. Such a labyrinth is

... the lie,
The maze, the wild-wood waste of falsehood, roads
That run and run and never reach an end,
Embowered in error ...

The nightmare of the meaningless labyrinth is the lie. If it were the truth, then life would not be worth living. But, the narrator says, he has known something else:

... once in a dream or trance I saw the gods
Each sitting on the top of his mountain-isle,
While down below the little ships sailed by,
Toy multitudes swarmed in the harbours, shepherds drove
Their tiny flocks to the pastures, marriage feasts
Went on below, small birthdays and holidays,
Ploughing and harvesting and life and death,
And all permissible, all acceptable,
Clear and secure as in a limpid dream.

Although, as is fitting where Theseus is supposedly the narrator, the islands are distinctly Mediterranean, nevertheless they also speak of Muir's childhood on Orkney: a simple agricultural society going through the cycles of life. And above all this there is the conversation of the gods, the eternity in which the idealised island communities participate as "a chord deep in that dialogue". This is only a memory, but it is enough to give the lie to the lie of the hopeless labyrinth. The narrator writes, "I'd be prisoned there (i.e., in the lie)/ But that my soul had birdwings to fly free". But this is not a flight from the labyrinth to some simple solution, but a flight from the nightmare of the complex world seen as a hopeless confusion. There is no escape from difficult choices--"All roads lie free before you". Nor does he escape to the paradise he remembers. On the contrary, although

sustained by the memory and uncowed by the lie, he still remains a wanderer in a confusing, but not hopeless world:

Last night I dreamt I was in the labyrinth,
And woke far on. I did not know the place.

The memory (which itself was of a "dream" or "trance") can destroy the nightmare, but it does not rescue one from wrestling with the world, or from coping with the choices offered by a new place. We discussed in Part 1 Muir's apparent desire for liberation from time. But time itself, like the labyrinth, is not something from which one can escape. What can be avoided is the nightmare of the labyrinth, and the ravages of time. Like the child who knows eternity in time, so recovery is not a leap into a timeless world, or a simple world, but preservation of good in this world and a trust in the possibility of a path through the complexities. Muir comes to realise this explicitly in the case of time: he made the discovery "that things truly made preserve themselves through time in the first freshness of their nature" (A p. 280). Butter comments on this:

we must be careful not to misrepresent Muir in saying that he sought and found an "escape from time" (though he uses the phrase himself). It is not so much an escape from time that he finds as an escape from the conception of time as a closed circle. It is not by dreaming of another world that he finds salvation, but by a profounder vision of what goes on in this one. (Butter, 1962, p. 75-6)

Part of restoration for Muir is the recovery of a balanced vision: one that neither despairs, nor seeks escape, but which recognises both the real goods and the real evils in the world. This requires primarily a willingness to accept things for what they are--something of the acceptance that Muir found with his conviction of sin. Both good and evil need to be seen for what they are and accepted. The 'realist' who sees a world where wrong triumphs and right suffers is unbalanced, Muir writes in his commentary on his own poem The Three Mirrors.⁹ That is the scene in the first mirror. In the second, the vision is that of the man of maturity who, unlike the 'realist', has kept a memory of past good: "He sees in a mirror an indefeasible rightness be-

neath the wrongness of things; a struggle between god and evil, and not merely the victory of evil; and to him the rightness of human life has a deeper reality, a more fundamental appositeness, than the evil, as being more truly natural to man." This vision focuses on the struggle, and the need to ascertain the outcome--it is a dynamic vision. The third mirror gives a vision like the second, only it is static; there is complete acceptance of a world "in which good and evil have their place legitimately." This is a mystical vision; a comprehension and acceptance of things in their unresolved complexity. The "wise king" is "safe on his throne" and "the rebel raising the rout". These two contrasting images are frozen in time as archetypes of the complexity of good and evil in the world.

In One Foot in Eden we are given the same static image of the indissoluble boundness of good and evil; here, using the image of the wheat and tares, we are given a picture of the world where the two grow together:

The armorial weed in stillness bound
About the stalk.

This is a vision of complexity--two different things bound up together. As in the parable of the wheat and the tares, the situation must be accepted, we cannot uproot the tares, and accepted for what it is, not an unmitigated disaster, but simply the mixture of real good and real evil. Yet it is clear in this poem that good is original and evil is only a parasitic perversion of the good. Evil is only 'stalk deep'; good is untouched at the roots.

It is time (time the ravager) that

... takes the foliage and the fruit
And burns the archetypal leaf
To shapes of terror and of grief...

The phrase "terror and grief" directly recalls the very similar image found in The Three Mirrors, in the second mirror:

But the little blade and leaf
By an angry law were bent
To shapes of terror and of grief ...

And yet in One Foot in Eden these famished fields and blackened trees bear
flowers unknown in Eden--

What had Eden ever to say
Of hope and faith and pity and love...?

This actually takes us beyond the acceptance of good and evil of The Three
Mirrors. There is in this later poem a notion of *felix culpa*; not only is
good fundamental, but even the ravages of time can bestow good things. Muir
can only stand in wonder,

Strange blessings, never in Paradise
Fall from these beclouded skies.

Despite the miracle of blessing even in fallenness, in The Transfiguration
Muir has a vision of the restoration of all things to original good. It is
a vision of a future transformation, and one that focuses on the person of
Jesus Christ. This Jesus is, as the title of a later poem tells us, The
Incarnate One. Here Muir gives expression to his insight into the person
of Jesus that he gained in Italy, and does so by direct contrast to the
religion of his native land: now back in Scotland, he compares "Calvin's
Kirk" to the images he has seen in Rome:

The Word made flesh here is made word again,
A word made word in flourish and arrogant crook.
See there King Calvin with his iron pen,
And God three angry letters in a book,
And there the logical hook
On which the mystery is impaled and bent
Into an ideological instrument.

Muir is not just criticising a past religious error, he is concerned about
the abstract simplicity of Calvinism, which, as we have seen, he finds also
in Communism. The "fleshless word" will destroy all the variation and
uniqueness that is human and replace them with "the abstract man":

The fleshless word, growing will bring us down,
Pagan and Christian man like will fall,
The auguries say, the white and black and brown,
The merry and the sad, theorist, lover, all

Invisibly will fall:
Abstract calamity, save for those who can
Build their cold empire on the abstract man.

The connections here are not easy to follow, but it seems that Muir finds in both Calvinism and Communism the desire to force the variety of experience into the straitjacket of a logical scheme. In each the problem is that too much gets explained. Calvinism reduced the mystery of the Christian story and its relevance by attempts to fathom God's ways with man--reducing complex and mysterious patterns of salvation to the blunt simplicity of predestination, unfleshing the Word so that it becomes amenable to logical simplification. Communism, as we saw, reduced the complexity of human life to class warfare, and outlawed real aspects of human life--such as forgiveness.

Conclusion

One of the touchstones of our discussion of 'modernity' has been the participation of sign in signified. Failure to perceive this participation is explicitly the complaint of More and Hopkins against their age: in both cases their complaints focus especially on the nature of the sacrament of the eucharist. More retains the remnants of the 'pre-modern' culture: he asserts his traditional understanding in the face of the strong challenges to it. Hopkins's recovery of that perception was of the same nature as the overall response of the Roman Catholic Church: they accepted the 'modern' turn to authority as the only means of preserving what, by its very nature, must be free to preserve itself (for the participation of signified in sign is the example of 'inherent meaning', and all attempt to authorise it are tantamount to denying this¹⁰). Shakespeare's approach to this issue was to ask about the reconciliation of sacred, enchanted politics with the realities of worldly power. The triumph of a truly divine politics--the politics of 'pity, love and fear' working effectively through the structures of power--would have constituted the participation of sign in signified. If it were possible for the divine law to shine out through the human law, if it were

possible for the monarch to be both priest and king, if Henry VI had been effective, or Henry V godly, or if Lear had been restored to his throne, or Kent and Edgar converted,--then 'modernity' might have been overcome. God appears absent from the world of Henry V, and notions of divine politics are nothing but empty propaganda--no more real, if possibly less malicious, than the words of filial love that come from the lips of Goneril and Regan. Shakespeare literally cannot imagine the reconciliation occurring in the politics of his day.

Each of the three paths of recovery we have examined seems to have failed. But then there is Edwin Muir. He eschewed the characteristics of 'modernity': in his maturity he refused to get caught up in the scepticism-dogmatism dialectic, the logical simplifications, the appeals to absolute authorities, that characterised many responses to the chaos of the 1930s. In a long and varied life Muir took care to pick up the epiphanies scattered along his path. In time they seemed to offer their own interpretation: they spoke of sin, of immortality, of original goodness, of hope and comfort, of forgiveness, of Jesus. They spoke of the man Jesus as the sign of God, not just an empty sign, but the sign who is God.

Simplicity; the Contest; Epiphanies; Wisdom

"What is the moral? Who rides may read."
(Rudyard Kipling)

In this essay I have attempted to follow four understandings of our present world, of 'modernity', which understand it as the result of a 'fall' from a 'pre-modern' ideal. In every case, memory of the past--More's "fayth of all the holy sayntes & of all the whole corp of crystendome this .xv. hundred yere", Shakespeare's vision of a past England given in the words of John of Gaunt, and his portrayal of the godly Henry VI, Hopkins's pre-Reformation England and his idealisation of youth and beauty, Muir's Orcadian childhood--has functioned both as a critic, exposing the 'evils' of the present, and as a guide to recovery, or as images of what recovery might be like. What has emerged, as these four writers look at the present, with one eye on the past and with hopes for the future, is that they highlight certain problems of their present day. There has been an interesting unanimity among them as to the characteristics of 'modernity'.

First, they all identify the essence of 'modernity' with some slippage or dislocation--of sign and signified, of word and thing/meaning. More and Hopkins both focus especially on the attacks on the Catholic understanding of the eucharist. More, as we have seen, shows a deep concern with a similar dislocation in language--a dislocation (associated with the brutal rise to power of Richard of Gloucester) giving rise to anarchy and tyranny (arbitrary definition). I have not dwelt on the problem of Hopkins's language except to remark upon its strangeness, but one may see in his wrestling with words--for example the strange compounds he comes up with, such as "throughther," "roundy," "louchèd,"--an attempt to overcome that slippage and restore a closer relationship between word and thing/meaning. This is, in fact, just the criticism that David Jasper makes of Hopkins's language¹. Shakespeare identifies the slippage as a political process-- the divorce of 'godly' from

disenchanted 'power' politics, symbolised by the murder of Henry VI, the rapacious policies of Richard II; and also the fate of language at the hands of people like Cordelia's sisters. For Muir, this dislocation was a personal experience, a fall from childhood and the Edenic vision into the brutality of the big, modern city (remember that within a few years of the transition his mother, father and two brothers all died), and his life was a recovery of a part of himself that had been taken violently from him. The slippage of lived-life and fable (the structure of meaning to that life) needed to be overcome; his various 'conversions' were attempts to do this.

Secondly, there is a recoil from a scepticism-dogmatism dialectic (at least for all except Hopkins). More sees very clearly that this is a result of the slippage: words have become ambiguous and will now be defined by the powerful; chaos in religion gives rise to the tyrannous desires of the civil power. Shakespeare portrays the dialectical character of Authority (e.g., Henry V) and Appetite (e.g., Falstaff) as the result of the rise of the 'machiavel' (both good and bad); and the 'machiavels' are characterised by their dissociation of appearance and intent (Goneril, Regan, and, perhaps, even Kent).² Muir decisively rejects the authoritarian responses of Communism and Fascism to the chaos of Europe between the wars.

Third, there is an increasing attempt to restructure the world according to the dictates of instrumental reason: that is, such reason becomes the legislating authority for what may and may not be. More saw this in the 'protestant' attempts to deny the real presence of Christ in the sacrament. Shakespeare portrays the scepticism of the 'machiavels'--of Edmund and Edgar alike, of Hotspur--and their rejection of enchantment. Hopkins protests against the disenchantment of his age--the assertion that such 'superstitious' things (such as the 'real presence') cannot be; cannot be, that is, according

to the dictates of a 'reason' (as in modern science) that seeks control and mastery of the world. Muir rejects the 'logicism' of both Calvinism and Bolshevism, noting that they both tend to deny what they cannot explain (see note 8 to part ii, section iv).

These three characteristics are inter-related, and are, I think, all manifestations of one underlying characteristic. Scepticism results from a despair over seemingly unfathomable complexity. In the face of apparent chaos and uncertainty there is an attempt to instil order by bringing things under control (the use of instrumental reason) according to some limited principle which is exalted into an absolute (dogmatism). Scepticism dissolves the fragile sign-signified relationship grounded in participation and dogmatism seeks to re-establish it again according to the partiality of the limited absolute--so that the power of the absolute, and not participation justifies their connection. Such re-established signs must, of necessity, because their justification is not participation but authority, tend to be signs of the modern sort--signposts to an other, self-effacing signs--even while they ostensibly witness to participation. This process is 'coloured' by the accompanying emotions of despair and anxiety and the tremendous relief that accompanies the restoration of order. Despair and anxiety are assuaged by bringing the chaos under control, by mastering the world. The new sign-signified relationships are made in accordance with this restructuring of the world: they are wholly dependent upon the will to reconstruct, they need have no other connection, and they will survive only as long as the will wills them.

What we are describing here is the drive towards simplicity. By simplicity³. I mean the attempt to dislocate or tear apart (do violence to) the world in which many diverse things are bound up together as an attempt to reduce the

confusingly rich complexity of things to more manageable dimensions. Where the signified participates in the sign, the sign is a complex thing; it is both itself and yet truly something else, and both the 'itself' and the 'other' are bound together indissolubly in one. The drive to simplify attempts to tear apart this mixture, so that the sign may be understood as sign, and the signified as signified: the two may then be associated, but they are without any real binding between them. The sign may be used to direct our attention, but, once directed, the signified may be contemplated on its own right. We are encouraged to deal with each on its own. All that remains then is the unravelling of the one isolated thing, the simplex.

We can give an example of this point in more detail by considering one variety of the sign-signified relationship, that of metaphor. Wordsworth's criticism of 'poetic diction' is, I think, a criticism of unnecessarily decorative and ornamental language (see 'Preface' to Lyrical Ballads (1802)). Following up this, Coleridge was very clear that the poetry of the 'moderns' (e.g., the school of Pope) consisted of "the most obvious thoughts in language the most fantastic and arbitrary"; that is to say, these poets took ordinary, everyday thoughts and dressed them up in 'poetic diction', thus, they believed, producing poetry. It was in response to this that Coleridge formulated his important critical maxim:

whatever lines can be translated into other words of the same language, without diminution of their significance, either in sense, or association, or in any worthy feeling, are so far vicious in their diction. (Coleridge, p. 12)

The contrast Coleridge is drawing here is between what I shall call reducible and irreducible metaphor.⁴ The reducible metaphor is one that may be so translated without diminution of its significance--where the metaphor "gilds all objects but it alters none" (Pope); this type of metaphor says nothing in itself, it does not proclaim itself, but acts as a decorative signpost pointing away to something to which we can have access independently of the sign. The signified may then be grasped entirely on its own terms, without

the aid of the sign. The irreducible metaphor cannot be so translated--the signified is only available in the sign. So in the sign both the sign and signified are bound together--they are not confused, but we may not get at the one without the other. Sign and signified in this irreducible metaphor form a complex--two different things folded up together. An attempt to tear the two apart, so that we may get at either of them on its own, in isolation from the other, so that we may treat it as a simplex, results in a loss of meaning, a "diminution of significance".

Irreducible metaphors are difficult to deal with: their significance cannot be neatly captured, they are elusive in their allusivity, there is always a measure of uncertainty and ambiguity. They cannot be mastered in order to be put to use because they always evade definition. On the contrary, there is a sense in which they can be said to master us, because, taken seriously, they provide endless reaches of richness for us to explore, so long as we are content to do so on their own elusive terms. Reducible metaphors are definable, and thus can be mastered and put to use. They may be used for entertainment or pleasure, or they may equally be used to convey limited blocks of information. They are the stuff of technical language.

The reducible metaphor, like the self-effacing sign, is an attempt to simplify the world, to tear apart the complex varieties of things in their allusive and mysterious togetherness. This simplification is both a closing down of uncommitted exploration and discussion, and a reductionism that reconstructs the world in terms of some limited authority.⁵

The Contest

Nietzsche claimed that Socrates closed off the Homeric contest by setting up

dialectic as an absolute authority which laid down judgments rather than allowing the successful to emerge on its own right from the contest. He writes this concerning the historical Socrates, but his interest is very much also in the fate of the philosophical tradition in his own day. I want, in this section, to use this discussion of Socrates as a commentary on the turn which characterises 'modernity'. Nietzsche, in an early fragment, "Homer's Contest", writes of the essential role of the contest for the Greeks. It is both a stimulus and a protection: a stimulus to exceed limits; and a protection from tyranny, because persistent challenges prevent any one from establishing control. The contest prevented any permanent victor, that is, prevented any tyranny: "that is the core of the Hellenic notion of the contest: it abominates the rule of one and fears its dangers" ("Homer's Contest" p. 37). There is only ever the temporary victor--the momentary flame of glory emerging from the struggle, "the flash and spark of drawn swords, the quick radiance of victory" (PTAG, p. 55). Love of the contest is the characteristic of a healthy culture. Nietzsche, in The Birth of Tragedy, sees Greek art as the result of just such a contest, that between the Dionysian and Apollonian drives.

Apollo is the god of individuation, of the setting of limits and boundaries, of security; Dionysus, Lysios, the loosener, is the drive towards the overcoming of boundaries, the undoing of differentiation, melting individuality back into the whole. The heroic character may be understood in these terms: for it is an impossible balancing act between ambition, the desire for glory, which requires an overcoming of limits, and self possession, that sense of moderation that accepts that there are indeed limits. The tragedy of the hero, then, is that the ambition which issues in glory may also lead to hubris and self destruction; the same drive that leads to what is most desired, glory, leads also, by transgressing limits, to that which is most feared, death.

The pre-Socratic philosophers were heroes: "One may present those older philosophers as men who felt the Greek atmosphere and mores to be constraining and limiting, hence as self-liberators" (Nietzsche, P&T, p. 134). Greek philosophy began to decay when its practitioners ceased to exemplify the heroic virtues. Nietzsche notices signs of this, for example, already in Parmenides: the desire for peace and certainty, the condemnation of the contest--i.e., the flux of becoming and passing away which allows no tyranny--in favour of what transcends the contest, that which is. Socrates is the philosopher who decisively closes down the contest, a closing off characterised by the drive to simplicity of rationality or dialectic. Consider, for example, the way he deals with Thrasymachus early on in The Republic. Thrasymachus complains that he is not being allowed to compete with Socrates except on Socrates's own terms:

But if I should speak, I know well that you would say that I am making a public harangue. So then, either let me say as much as I want; or, if you want to keep on questioning, go ahead and question, and, just as with old wives who tell tales, I shall say to you, 'All right,' and I shall shake and nod my head. (Book 1, 350 d,e)

The contest has been closed off to all who will not share Socrates's method, and, as Thrasymachus realises, to concede the method is to place all who do not follow Socrates at a disadvantage. Seen from the point of view of Thrasymachus, Socrates was being tyrannous. From another point of view, from Socrates's own, the closing down of the old contest was the opening up of a new one on a firmer basis. But this *agon* was to take place under the auspices of dialectic.

In terms of this new contest, Socrates is more of a hero than Achilles, and this is an argument Plato uses to establish the superiority of his philosophy over the Homeric teaching. Plato's criticism of Homer is that he cannot do what in fact he is said to do, that is, educate heroes, be-

cause a hero must scorn death, and yet even the great Achilles would exchange all nobility for life:

I would rather be on the soil, a serf to another
To a man without lot whose means of life are not great
Than rule over all the dead who have perished.

(from the Odyssey, xi, 489-91, quoted in the Republic, Book III, 386 c)

What is on the Homeric view, perhaps, the tragedy of the hero, is to Socrates an internal contradiction showing the inadequacy of the poet's teaching. In the Apology Socrates sets himself up as another Achilles. Philosophy is learning how to die, and Socrates can contemplate death with equanimity. Socrates's attitude towards death is more heroic than Achilles's, and therefore, by the standards of the new contest, Socrates is the hero to imitate. Homer, like Thrasymachus, is disqualified in advance from serious participation.

The closing off of the contest is always a simplification: it declares that certain previously acceptable participants are no longer eligible, it sets up new standards that will ensure that they are laughed out of court. So a struggle that has hitherto gone on between various contestants is now decided authoritatively, because one of the contestants has managed to erect an authority that is sufficiently powerful to disqualify or disadvantage its opponents. The establishment of a tyranny is the violent transition from one agon to its successor.⁶ It closes off the contest by establishing a 'total' victory. And in doing so it sets the rules for the opening of a new contest. But the drive to simplicity, and the victory of one standard, is never an arbitrary occurrence. It occurs when a need is felt; that is to say, when the contest is no longer perceived to be capable of providing even temporary solutions. Simplicity is always the response to what is perceived as chaos--much as, as Plato points out in The Republic, tyranny is the response to democracy. Nietzsche (in a text from a later

period than the others I have quoted from) makes this clear in his discussion of Socrates. Socrates took refuge in dialectic because he recognised the degenerate, disordered state of his society,

Everywhere the instincts were in anarchy; everywhere one was within five paces of excess. (Twilight, "Problem of Socrates" # 9)

It was in order to preserve something civilized in the increasing anarchy of the Homeric instincts that Socrates re-opened the contest on the basis of rationality.

Modernity, as I have described it, can be seen as a similar type of closing and opening. The closure was effected by the drive towards simplicity, which was, in this case, the drive, fragmenting in a variety of directions, to absolute authority. Henceforth any tradition which wished to be given a hearing would have to produce such an authority to validate its claims (as in the case of the Italian divines at the Council of Trent). The new contest that was opened up was the contest between absolute authorities.⁷ More wanted to discuss scripture--in the light of tradition, reason, and other things, no doubt, but he still thought that discussion of the passages would convince his opponents. They, however, seem to have begun from a specific interpretation which was their authority, to which they bowed down (their authority was simply scripture as they interpreted it).

Richard III, in both More's and Shakespeare's versions, was not open to discussion concerning the legitimacy of his rule. He may have tried to give it the façade of law, but in truth his only grounds for rule was his own ruthless ambition. It is important to contrast this with Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry VI. This godly king was, albeit under pressure, willing to discuss rights to the throne, and explicitly admit, if only to himself, the weakness of his claim, and reach a compromise solution. Hopkins fled from the simplicity of disenchantment to the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. He exchanged a simplicity which denied grace for one which affirmed

it. High-Church Anglicanism was not a serious option for him because it lacked authority, and only an infallibly authorised grace could be effective against the authority of materialism or scientism, the simplicity of disenchantment.

The war of authorities is the characteristic of the reconstituted agon which is opened up in the modern period. Shakespeare's history plays show the decline in the persuasiveness of divinely sanctioned politics and the resort to explicit power struggles, where there is no mediating sanction: again this is symbolised by the murder of Henry VI by Richard of Gloucester. 'Modernity' seems like nothing so much as the confused power struggle of various absolute authorities.

Epiphanies

Are we then back to Matthew Arnold and the early Hopkins? Are we participants in a world where "ignorant armies clash by night"? First and foremost we must avoid the simplicity of easy answers. We must do justice to the complex nature of our world. Nicholas Lash gave a sensitive comment in his memorable inaugural lecture at the University of Cambridge: we must live with the awareness, he wrote, of "the paradox that counterpoints Christian joy with the recognition that the world that lies before us, on Dover Beach, has neither 'certitude, nor peace, nor help from pain'" (Lash, p. 26). These are hard words for a Christian to affirm, but we cannot begin anywhere else without doing violence to the truth of our experience--"the sea has retreated too far down Dover Beach for it to be otherwise" (Lash, p. 4). There is no escape from this, we must face the full truth of our fallen world.

Notice, however what Lash is not saying. He is not saying that God is dead, he is not saying that God cannot be real and present to us, he is

not saying that Christians are whistling in the dark; but he is saying that our world is very confusing and very complex, and that we may not, without the "easy speeches that comfort cruel men", escape from that fact. He does actually quote that line from Chesterton, about the "easy speeches",⁸ and he understands this as a criticism of a facile dogmatism. Whether Chesterton would have approved of this usage I do not know; but I suspect he might have, for there are passages in his writings where he portrays the Christian life as a living without certainty of direction, but not any the less for that a living faithfully before the face of God.

In "The Vision of the King" from the Ballad of the White Horse, Alfred experiences an epiphany, a vision of the Blessed Virgin. He asks not to be shown heavenly things, but to know the fate of his attempt to defeat the invaders of his land; he asks for certainty regarding his course of action in the dark world. But it is precisely this certainty that he so much desired that is withheld from him. Part of the answer runs thus,

The men of the East may spell the stars.
And times and triumphs mark
But the men signed with the cross of Christ
Go gaily in the dark.

The final stanzas of the message are the most forbidding: Alfred is told,

... naught for your comfort,
Yea, naught for your desire
Save that the sky grows darker yet
And the sea rises higher ...

Yet in all this gloom and uncertainty there are epiphanies--"the heaviest hind (farm labourer) may easily/ Come silently and suddenly/ Upon me in the lane." The presence of such epiphanies--intimations of transcendence, signs of God (signs which themselves re-present, are participated in by God)--constitute the real experience of Christians in the world, I suspect, and it is these fleeting moments of vision, rather than any accessible absolute authority of the sort we pretend to believe in, or whose loss we lament, which serve indeed as an adequate lamp to our feet and light

to our path in a labyrinthine but not hopeless world. These epiphanies build that wisdom and discernment with which we may walk without despair in the labyrinth.

These epiphanies function as authorities. By the way they hang together with one another we suspect that they are one, but of that oneness we have only tentative cumulative experience; we cannot presume upon it as if it were a simple presupposition, and we never experience it except in and through the diverse manifestations. So we are not without authorities, nor without a sense of their oneness in their source, existence and destiny. But we may see authority functioning otherwise than as a power external to us to which we must make our experience conform--through which we must tear apart the complexities of the world and reduce all to the simple. Authority can function otherwise than by requiring us to attach ourselves to an absolute power and to recreate the world on that basis.

Wisdom

I am here talking about the recovery, or development of a notion of wisdom. Nietzsche, in an early work, has some helpful comments to make on this. Discussing the closure that takes place in philosophy with Socrates, he comments that what distinguished the pre-Socratics from Socrates and his followers was their trust in imagination, taste and intuition. While emphasising that the pre-Socratics were not giving us mythologies, or religious explanations of the world, Nietzsche nevertheless claims that they did not subordinate their imagination to calculating reason:

Philosophy leaps ahead on tiny footholds; hope and intuition lend wings to its feet. Calculating reason lingers heavily behind, looking for better footholds, for reason too wants to reach that alluring goal which its divine comrade has long since reached.
(PTAG p. 40)

Lingering reason alone is what post-Socratic philosophy has tended to become, and as such it is shut off from the wild and beautiful uplands (an

exile for which it is ever mournful), where philosophers prior to Socrates dared to roam.

It is like seeing two mountain climbers standing before a wild mountain stream that is tossing boulders along its course: one of them lightfootedly leaps over it, using the rocks to cross, even though behind and beneath him they hurtle into the depths. The other stands helpless; he must build himself a fundament which will carry his heavy cautious steps. Occasionally this is not possible, and then there exists no god who can help him across. (PTAG p. 40)

The second climber, as I interpret this passage, understanding it as a commentary not so much on post-Socratic philosophy in general but on the philosophical tradition in modern times, is the modern man who insists on having an absolute authority--the fundament--for whatever he does. For what is this desire for absolute foundations, an underlying immoveable basis, as opposed to the tumbling boulders in the stream, but the attempt to find certainty amidst the transitory resting places? What is it, in effect, but the metaphysical project, a failure of nerve, a comfort for anxious, despairing (or timid?) souls? True philosophical thinking may drag lumbering reason after it as best it can, but it is led by something quite different:

its feet are propelled by an alien, illogical power--the power of creative imagination. Lifted by it, it leaps from possibility to possibility using each one as a temporary resting place... (PTAG p. 40)

But imagination is not an arbitrary guide; on the contrary it has a rigour as keen (sharp, brave, knowing) as logic. The dance of imagination is discriminated not by logic but by a judgment internal to itself: by taste. It is this that guides the philosopher from tumbling stone to tumbling boulder, from crumbling fingerhold to crumbling toehold, which seeks not fundaments valid for all time but resistance enough for the next step.

The Greek word designating "sage" is etymologically related to *sapio*, I taste, *sapiens*, he who tastes, *sysiphos*, the man of keenest taste. A sharp savouring and selecting, a meaningful discriminating, in other words, makes out the peculiar art of the philosopher, in the eyes of the people. (PTAG p.43)

In philosophy as exemplified by the pre-Socratics, thought is guided and led by pre-theoretical discrimination, something that can sniff out the worthwhile while logic can only grind away senselessly: "Philosophical thinking ... is ever on the scent of those things which are most worth knowing, the great and important insights."

This connection of wisdom with taste that Nietzsche offers is a happy one. For taste can be understood as authoritative without the projection of the authority into the position of a transcendent power. Taste does not defer to standards outside of itself; still less does it impose judgments. Taste in art functions as a discriminating power and authority, but it is thoroughly internal to the act of creation or re-creation; it is not a second act imposed upon the act of creation. The notion of judgment in art, that is, the authoritative imposition of criteria upon the finished creation, is the Frankenstein's monster of aesthetics--an artificial abstraction endowed with real life. One may make judgments on art--moral, political, logical, theological judgments. But in art there are properly no judgments. Failure to recognise this leads to absurdities such as Popper's application of the test of falsifiability to artistic creation.⁹

However, to be without judgment is not necessarily to be capricious--that is the false antinomy of 'modernity'. We may yet talk of a rigour, discipline, and, in this way, an authority, which shapes and guides the act of creation and re-creation from the inside. The existence of this internal and constitutive discernment justifies both Keats's assertion that the development of poetry must be natural--"If poetry comes not naturally as leaves to a tree it had better not come at all"--that is to say, poetry must develop according to its own internal growth, and not in accordance with external standards, and R.S. Thomas's objection,

Natural, hell! What was it Chaucer

Said once about the long toil
That goes like blood into the poem's making
Leave it to nature and the verse sprawls,

Limp as bindweed, if it break at all
Life's iron crust. Man, you must sweat
And rhyme your guts taut, if you'd build
Your verse a ladder.

(Poetry for Supper)

that is, poetry is a rigorous discipline, by no means without powers and authorities, which, in their own ways, must be satisfied. The rigour and discipline of taste in artistic creation or re-creation may be a useful model for an understanding of the function of authority in wisdom. Indeed, I am inclined to think, and Nietzsche's remarks certainly point in this direction, that the same 'faculty' of taste may be the authority in wisdom as in artistic creation--or rather, re-creation: that is, that the discernment required for coping with our steps in this dark world is essentially no different, from the discernment required in appreciating and achieving some level of understanding of a poem, or a painting or a novel. Once people talked of the world as God's other Book; perhaps today we could talk of the world as God's other poem.

My aim so far has been to preserve the sense of complexity and even confusion of the world from the temptation to any premature explanations--what would be simplifications made in accordance with some limited but absolute authority. My criticism of such authorities is that they are (or are indistinguishable from) projections endowed with their authority by human will that cannot cope with the anxiety instilled by complexity. Such absolute authorities work by providing grounds for the imposition of order, that is, by judgments, by subjecting the world to this projected authority. Taste, as it may be seen to function in artistic creation, may provide a notion of authority without judgment. It does not, therefore, presuppose the simplistic and simplifying erection of an absolute authority. It allows us a notion of authority without fleeing from complexity. I

understand it as a way of coping with, but not mastering, complexity, or as a relaxed way of living with what appears to be confusion. It gives us some discrimination when we are faced with difficult choices in the labyrinth. Taste may allow the complexity to remain a complexity without leaving us without any means of discerning a limited direction. Such taste, however, is not merely a capricious intuition, for it is formed and shaped by our experiences, especially by what I call epiphanies--the moments of lucidity in the labyrinth, the flash and spark in the confusion that for a moment transfigures the world and bears witness to something awe-ful and tremendous (sublime? numinous? holy?). This implies a trust in creation--that the glory of God will "flame out, like shining from shook foil"--and a trust in ourselves--that what we are struck by is not the mere product of our own desires, and what genuinely strikes us may be taken as real. This is the same sort of trust that Coleridge appealed to when he wrote, concerning the Bible, "whatever finds me bears witness for itself that it has proceeded from a Holy Spirit" (quoted in Willey, 1949, p. 41). It is hard to get away from the paranoia of 'modernity' that will believe nothing unless it be validated by an absolute authority; and it is even harder to do this without spinning off into some complete rejection of authority altogether. My attempt to get out of this dilemma is to try to see authority as an internal discernment that guides and shapes our journey, and that grows and develops by the epiphanies that we receive on that path. Such expressions as we can give of it are abstractions, useful, perhaps in their way, but certainly no more than tentative progress reports.

Let me try to illustrate this with a little parable.

"It is as if, early one morning, a basket of jewels were found in the market square of a small country town. Immediately the people gather to view this wonder. But it is rumoured that some of the jewels are false. The common multitude have no way of knowing which are true and which are not. They might give a cursory examination but, left to their own devices they would end in scepticism, and deny the very possibility of discerning

the genuine from the counterfeit, or they would conclude that it did not matter which was which since both sparkle pleasantly.

"However, there are a few in the crowd who see the opportunity opened up by the situation; they set themselves up as experts and close off any discussion there might have been by authoritative pronouncements based only on some partial, one-sided scrap of knowledge they once picked up. Naturally, these self-appointed experts disagree. The crowd responds to this disagreement by attempting to discriminate between experts. Their attention shifts entirely to the experts. Although the decision is about the jewels, the crowd's decision will be based entirely upon the degree of conviction they have about the various figures of authority. The many disappear into the various parts of the town, following their chosen experts, and they listen to speeches and debates. Meanwhile, the basket of jewels sits alone in the empty market square.

"But there are one or two isolated individuals who actually remain to examine the jewels. They neither chose according to the self-appointed authorities, nor put themselves forward as authorities, but have the discernment and patience to enable them to make their decision by a careful study of the jewels themselves. In time, they find, by the flash and spark of light, the true jewels, and they enjoy their radiance until darkness falls. Meanwhile, weary and disillusioned by the conflict of authorities, the many return to their homes thinking that the very existence of a basket of jewels is a cruel joke."

Such a notion of wisdom,¹⁰ so sketchily described, may be a means for recovery for us who live in what many feel is the tail-end of 'modernity'. What it does, I hope, is encourage us to close down the dogmatism/scepticism dialectic and the contest of absolute authorities. In effect I see this as an attempt to close down a closure: I feel strongly the need to do this, but perhaps my lack of appreciation for the opening up which also took place in 'modernity' is my simplicity, for if all closures are driven to simplicity then this attempt to close 'modernity's' agon is too. However, what I have tried to point to may be a means to avoid the choice between tyranny and chaos, between an uncontrolled slippage of meaning and an authoritatively established technical language. It may be a means to establish anew political clashes of power positions on a basis that would allow the participants jointly to explore the complexities of the issues. It may allow us to confess the labyrinthine nature of the world we experience without the scepticism of despair or the dogmatism of escape; it may allow

at least those whose epiphanies tell of Jesus and the witness of the Christian Church, those who are "signed with the cross of Christ", to go gaily there in the dark.

Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom
and with all thy getting get understanding.
Exalt her, and she shall promote thee:
she shall bring thee to honour. when thou dost embrace her.
She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace;
a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

(Proverbs, 4:7-9)¹¹.

Endnotes (Introduction)

1. See Alan MacFarlane, The origins of English Individualism, and The Culture of Capitalism.
2. David Jones, The Anathemata, p. 15-16.
3. More specifically, the two tetralogies: the first is the cycle of the three parts of Henry VI and Richard III; the second cycle consists of Richard II, the two parts of Henry IV, and Henry V.

Endnotes (part i. 'Images of paradise')

1. In effect I am suggesting that the Utopia is to be read as a criticism of Plato, and also, perhaps, of Renaissance humanism. Thus I appreciate the comments of John A. Guegen in his article "Reading More's Utopia as a criticism of Plato":

The More I have met in the Utopia and throughout his works is not, however, a representative of Renaissance or early modern thought--at least not as his friend Erasmus and other members of the More circle are representatives of it. More impresses me as a consistent contributor to the culture, and especially the spiritual heritage, of medieval Christendom. (p. 43)

Guegen's reading of the Utopia is interesting, but I find even he tends to think of it as something of direct portrayal of More's views.

2. This participation does not, of course, mean a univocal relation; such a relation would identify sign and signified so that they spoke with one voice. Thus completely identified, they would collapse into one simple thing. The importance of the eucharist, as understood by More and Hopkins, is that the body of Christ is really present, but only under the appearance of something else.

3. It should not be necessary to point out that belief in witchcraft has often been seen as quite compatible with Christian belief. Indeed, historically it has been argued that the decline in belief in such 'superstition' is the first step to atheism: Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1688), for example,

For my part I have ever believed, and do now know, that there are witches: they that doubt of these, do not only deny them, but Spirits; and are obliquely and upon consequence, a sort not of Infidels, but Atheists.

Quoting this, Basil Willey comments,

When "God" became a scientific hypothesis, almost identifiable with absolute space, it is not surprising that the religious consciousness should express itself through "Satan". It is probably for this reason that those who, as the scientific philosophy strengthened its hold adhered tenaciously to a supernatural worldview, felt that they must cling to Satan in order to keep God. The idea that to abandon belief in witches was to begin on the slippery slope to atheism was a common one at the time. (Willey, 1953 p. 61)

And Keith Thomas makes the same point, again with reference to the seventeenth century (Thomas, p. 639)

4. And to Traherne and Vaughan, as Muir himself points out (A p. 179).

Endnotes (part ii. section i. "Thomas More ...")

1. This compares almost exactly with 'More's's advice to Hythloday in the Utopia: Hythloday claims there is no place for philosophy "in the councils of princes," to which 'More' replies,

Yes, there is ... but not for the speculative philosophy which thinks all things suitable for all occasions. There is another philosophy that is more urbane, that takes its proper cue and fits itself to the drama being played, acting its part aptly and well. That is the philosophy you should use ... You ruin a play when you add irrelevant and jarring speeches, even if they are better than the play. So go through with the drama in hand as best you can, and do not spoil it because another more pleasing comes into your mind. (Utopia, p. 23).

2. As Hythloday would: "If I were at the court of some king and proposed wise laws to him and tried to root out of him the dangerous seeds of evil, do you not think I would either be thrown out of his court or held in scorn?" (Utopia, p. 18).

3. Erasmus tells a similar story in a letter to Ulrich von Hutten (Antwerp, 23 July, 1517? 1519?; reprinted in Gallagher, p. 72), and so does Harpsfield, (p. 111).

4. I think this is an example of what Rainer Pineas calls praeterito--"mention by declaration of intent not to mention" (p. 179)--or rumour technique (p. 197), a common feature of renaissance polemics; see Pineas, Thomas More and Tudor Polemics.

5. Buckingham: "What! talking with a priest, Lord Chamberlain!/? Your friends at Pomfret, they do need the priest:/? Your honour hath no shriving work in hand" (Richard III act iii, scene ii).

6. I call this a peculiarly modern phenomenon for reasons which I hope

will become apparent by the final chapter. For the moment it is sufficient to say that the modern period opens with an acute anxiety about the possibility of true knowledge--the breakdown of the traditional optimistic accounts of knowing and the concern over distance, 'thinking about the object' rather than 'thinking the object'--hence scepticism becomes a very real problem. Attempts to compensate for this are made by the erection of various absolute authorities which will authorise, certify, knowledge--hence dogmatism. Indeed these are present perhaps in late medieval times, particularly in the movements for simplicity and purity, such as the rise of the Franciscan order, and various heretical groups, and indeed probably in all the reforming movements. What was decisive about the Reformation was that in the scepticism over complexity and the resulting dogmatism, the protest ceased to be a reforming movement, which could be absorbed back into the whole, and became a revolutionary schism, thus establishing this dialectic as an independent power. The Reformation, however, is only one example of what was a wider cultural phenomenon. Having argued that this dogmatism-scepticism dialectic is essentially modern, I should repeat what I say in the text, that is, that I think it may be seen as the modern variant of the democracy-tyranny relationship outlined in books eight and nine of Plato's Republic. In my final chapter I make some tentative exploratory connections between such a dialectic and the closing of the contest, implying that such combinations recur in history.

7. See CW 2, p. 24 and p. 82.

8. The sign characteristic is by no means done away with according to the notion of transubstantiation. For the bread still appears as bread, even though at its 'heart' it is flesh. The flesh remains hidden and can only

be reached through the appearances of something else. Similarly it is a mistake to call More's interpretation of the words "Hoc est enim corpus" a 'literal' one, because, again, the bread does not change its appearances--it does not simply become flesh--on the contrary, the words refer to what appears as bread and is the sign of the "real presence" beneath the appearance.

9. In an article discussing Luther's and More's understandings of tradition, "The Reformation as Crisis in the understanding of tradition", John Headley seems to claim that More's was a modern invention, a break from medieval understandings and implying, perhaps, a modern idea of progress (Headley, p. 9), although only a page later he insists on its continuity with medieval practice (p. 10). He contrasts this with Luther's attempt to identify tradition with an "unchanged body of knowledge whose binding force exists in its going back in origin to a divine message as its source" (p. 6). Luther insists on an absolute distinction between custom, which is "of uncertain origin, free, mutable" and the Word of the gospel which is "certain and immutable" (p. 11). This contrast is Luther's "machine de guerre" (p. 11). In my view, what Luther does, in fact, is attempt (violently?) to untangle the supposed complex of man's word and God's word, in order that he may locate a simple, accesible, absolute authority--'the Word of God'.

10. Marius is quite clear about this: in an earlier article, he wrote, "I think he (More) was heart and soul a conciliarist" ("Henry VIII, Thomas More, and the Bishop of Rome" p. 106). Against this, John Headley has argued that in the controversy with Luther "More began that line of logic, worked out in the Counter Reformation, whereby, if the old church was to be preserved at all, it must submit to an ever greater degree of centralization around the papal office" (p. 90 of the following). The controversy between Marius

and Headley may be found in Moreana 64 (March, 1980) p. 89-99. Clearly I have sided with Marius on this, for reasons which I hope are apparent in the text. On the hardening of attitudes in the Roman Catholic Church after the Reformation see note 3. to part ii. section iv. It would be a most interesting question to ask whether the failure of the conciliarists in the 15th century was an early stage in the drive to authority that, I suggest, characterises the modern world.

Endnotes (part ii, section ii, "Disenchantment ...")

1. Zwingli's eucharistic doctrine was formulated under an extreme spirit-matter dichotomy, which left the reformer unable to do full justice to the Incarnation--his own statements on this seem close to both the Nestorian and Adoptionist heresies. See E.M. Henning, "the Architectonic of Faith: Metalogic and Metaphor in Zwingli's Doctrine of the Eucharist" p. 351-2, note 47. The significance of understandings of the eucharist to disenchantment will be further touched on in the following section.

2. However, to this standard picture we should add the important, but, as I understand it, still debated argument of Alan MacFarlane, articulated first in The origins of English individualism, and in subsequent studies, most accessibly in a recent collection of essays, The culture of capitalism. MacFarlane suggests that, in England, individualism and other characteristics of capitalism predate the reformation by at least several centuries

many of the strands of political, religious, ethical, economic and other types of individualism are traced to Hobbes, Luther, Calvin, and other post-1500 writers. Yet if the present thesis is correct, individualism in economic and social life is much older than this in England. In fact, within the recorded period covered by our documents, it is not possible to find a time when an Englishman did not stand alone. Symbolised and shaped by his ego-centered kinship system, he stood in the centre of his world. This means that it is no longer possible to 'explain' the origins of English individualism in terms of either Protestantism, population change, the development of a market economy at the end of the middle ages, or other factors suggested by the writers cited. Individualism, however defined, predates sixteenth century changes and can be said to shape them all. (MacFarlane, 1978, p. 196).

MacFarlane's argument cautions us against making any too complacent connection between protestantism, capitalism, and disenchantment in the sixteenth century. But rather than destroy the connections between these phenomena, it encourages us to look for the presence of all three in the later part of the middle ages. Such research is, however, beyond the scope of this study.

3. I have discussed the similarities between Berman's and Barfield's analyses of the pre-modern and the modern in a short article entitled "Re-enchanting the World: A Christian Project"

4. Henry Bolingbroke was the Earl of Hereford until his exile; later, upon deposing Richard II, he became Henry IV, father of Henry V.

5. The story, interestingly, appears originally in More's Dialogue Concerning Heresies and probably reached Shakespeare via John Foxe's Acts and Monuments (see Walter M. Cordon, "The Argument of comedy in Thomas More's Dialogue Concerning Heresies"). A story that More was secure enough to tell in a dialogue aimed at criticising protestantism becomes in Shakespeare's play an important sign of the ungodliness of the world.

Endnotes (part ii, section iii, "Gerard Manley Hopkins ...")

1. The separation of sign and signified (or 'signum' and 'res') is very clearly effected in Zwingli's eucharistic doctrine: since Augustine, each sacrament had been customarily viewed as a sign of figure: *sacrae rei signum, invisibilis gratiae visibilis figura sive forma*, writes E.M. Henning,

Zwingli accepts the conventional view, but gives it an unconventional twist by emphasising the permanence of the gap or distance between *signum* and *res*, as well as the consequent impossibility of any substantial, objective union between them. If it actually contained the sanctifying grace that it signifies, the sacrament would no longer be a sign; it would be the thing itself: *sacra res*. But then, perforce, it would cease to be a sacrament, *sacrae rei signum*.

This is a fine example of the modern dialectic and its relationship to the drive towards simplicity: either the sign and signified are to be identified, in which case there would simply be the signified, the sacred thing, which is absurd, or the two must be quite separate, in which case there can be no possible talk of union between the two. Anything in between would make the sign and signified form a complex, and thus violate the norm of simplicity. Henning describes Zwingli's notion of a sign thus:

As a visible sign of invisible grace, each sacrament is at bottom only a sensible image (*exemplum*), reflection, or shadow (*umbras quondam ac species*) of the transcendent reality that it signifies. Between the reality and the sign, moreover, there is only an historical connection, never a natural, ontological one. (Henning, p. 332)

This comes very close to what, I suggest, is the predominant modern notion of a sign, the 'self-effacing sign' (see further discussions in the text).

2. Mark Pattison, a contemporary of Newman's, saw this very clearly; in a discussion of changes in atmosphere at Oxford in the mid-nineteenth century he wrote,

Newman had laid down that revealed truth was absolute, while all other truth was relative—a proposition which will not stand analysis, but which sufficiently conveys the feeling of theologians towards science. More than this, the abject deference fostered by theologians for authority, whether of the Fathers, or the Church, or the Primitive Ages was incompatible with the free play of the intellect which en-

larges knowledge, creates science, and makes progress possible. In a word, the period of Tractarianism had been a period of obscurantism... (Pattison, p. 237-8)

3. Clemo is a good example of this tendency. He deliberately takes refuge in the bleak, desolate clay pits on St. Austell Moor, in his native Cornwall, and shuns the beauties of nature, believing them to be an almost satanic distraction. He took his theology from early Barth, for whom God was a transcendent, wholly Other coming to man only despite everything creaturely. It seems to me that this sets up a disastrous antagonism between grace and nature, between God and the world. It sees Christian belief as an unsupported and unsupportable act of the will, humanly speaking, made in defiance of experience. Clemo's Barthianism is best expressed in early poems like A Calvinist in Love and Christ in the Clay-Pit. Like Barth, his views somewhat moderated in later years.

4. Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), son of Thomas Arnold, the famous headmaster of Rugby School. I refer to him several times in this chapter and the conclusion. My focus is mainly on poems like Dover Beach and Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse which express very clearly the 'mid-Victorian crisis of faith'. The best short introduction to his writings that I know of is chapter x. of Basil Willey's Nineteenth Century Studies.

5. "For nature, heartless, witless nature,
Will neither care nor know
What stranger's feet may find the meadow
And trespass there and go,
Nor ask amid the dew of morning
If they are mine or no."
(from "Tell me not here")

6. "We wonder, ever wonder, why we find us here!
Has some Vast Imbecility,
Mighty to build and blend
But impotent to tend
Framed us in jest and left us now to hazardry?
Or come we of an Automaton
Unconscious of our pains? ...
Or are we live remains
Of Godhead dying downwards, brain and eye now gone?" (etc.)

(from Nature's Questioning)

7. Mrs Ward was the niece of Matthew Arnold. About the turn of the century, Guy Thorn, who tried to do for Anglo-Catholicism what Mrs Ward did for agnosticism, described her thus, under the name of Mrs Hubert Armstrong, in his novel When it was dark,

the famous woman novelist ... when she spoke, always in full, well chosen periods, it was with an air of somewhat final pronouncement. She was ever ex cathedra./ The lady's position was a great one. Every two or three years she published a weighty novel admirably written, full of real culture and without a trace of humour. In these productions, treatises rather than novels, the theme was generally that of a high-bred philosophical negation of the Incarnation. Mrs Armstrong pitied Christians with passionate certainty. Gently and lovingly she essayed to open blinded eyes to the truth. With great condescension she still believed in God and preached Christ as a mighty teacher ... After the enormous success of her book, John Mulgrave (i.e., Robert Elsmere), Mrs Armstrong more than half believed that she had struck a final blow at the errors of Christianity./ Shrewd critics remarked (as W.E. Gladstone actually did in a review of Robert Elsmere) that John Mulgrave described the perversion of the hero with great skill and literary power, while quite forgetting to recapitulate the arguments which had brought it about. (Thorn, p. 191)

Robert Elsmere was actually dedicated to T.H. Green, the Oxford philosopher and father (to some extent) of British Idealism. Melvin Richter has some interesting publications suggesting that British Idealism was the direct product of secularised evangelicalism (see references in bibliography).

8. The celebrated Victorian novelist. Frederic W.H. Myers, one of those Victorians whose yearning to believe some religious truth made him a founding member of the Society for Psychical Research (and something of a nuisance at meetings of the Synthetic Society!), recalls the following encounter with George Eliot:

I remember how, at Cambridge, I walked with her once in the Fellows' Garden at Trinity, on an evening of rainy May; and she, stirred somewhat beyond her wont, and taking as her text the three words which have been used so often as the inspiring trumpet-calls of men,—the words God, Immortality, Duty,—pronounced with terrible earnestness, how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute the third. Never, perhaps, have sterner accents affirmed the sovereignty of impersonal and unrecompensing Law. I listened, and night fell; her grave, majestic countenance turned towards me like a Sibyl's in the gloom; it was as though she withdrew from my grasp, one by one, the two scrolls of promise, and left me the third scroll only, awful with inevitable fate. And when we stood at length and parted amid the columnar circuit of the forest-trees, beneath the last twilight of starless skies, I seemed to be gazing, like Titus at Jerusalem, on vacant seats and empty halls,—on a sanctuary with no Presence to hallow it, and heaven left lonely of a God. (quoted in Willey, 1949, p. 204)

The last sentence here expresses very much the same feelings that we find in Hopkins's Nondum; and the image of the stars as vacant of a Presence is a common one in literature of this period.

9. Harold Weatherby has a good study on Newman, pointing out and criticising his sceptical turn, entitled Cardinal Newman in his Age.

10. See Clough's tremendously poignant poem Easter Day, Naples, 1849, particularly the lines, "We are most hopeless that had believed most high,/ And most beliefless that had most believed." And compare this with what was said of Clough during his time at Oxford when he fell under the influence of W.G. Ward: "There goes Ward mystifying poor Clough and persuading him that he must either believe nothing or accept the whole of Church doctrine."

This was in the early 1840s shortly before both Ward and Newman converted to Roman Catholicism. See Francis J. Woodward, The Doctor's Four Disciples. A Study of four pupils of Arnold of Rugby.

11. See Maisie Ward, The Wilfrid Wards and the Transition, vol 2, p. 255.

12. See above note three. The quotation is from Stanza's from the Grande Chartreuse (1855).

Endnotes (part ii, section iv, "Labyrinths, complexity ...")

1. Institutes of the Christian Religion I:v:12, editors footnote no. 36, in the edition edited by John T. McNeill and translated by Ford Lewis Battles. There is further discussion on Calvin's use of the 'labyrinth' imagery in Bouwsma, 1988, p. 46-7)

2. Mumming was prohibited in the time of Henry VIII, and persons disguising themselves in such apparel were ordered arrested as vagabonds and committed to gaol for three months. In this period female transvestitism, an extreme form of 'mask', became to be seen as a serious problem. At certain festivals women were allowed to take up certain masculine characteristics, the festivals marked a time of release from the order of society, a time of limited confusion. But what became seen as a problem was such behaviour at other times. R. Valerie Lucas writes that such behaviour was a "challenge to the existing socio-hierarchy" (Lucas, p. 80). However, the deep concern of the male pamphleteers over this problem may be seen as concern over what they perceived as a tide of confusing appearances and challenges to the 'Natural' that would lead to anarchy. See Lucas, "Hic Mulier: The Female Transvestite in Early Modern England".

3. Whitehead's interest in the Roman Catholic Church dated from the 1890s, and indeed at one point at this time he considered converting to it: in which case he would almost certainly have been aware of Wilfrid Ward's article on "The Rigidity of Rome", written at this time, in which Ward argues in some detail the point concerning the Roman Catholic Church that Whitehead later made so succinctly:

To preserve her very existence the Church had to resist the Reformers à outrance. The papacy was for nearly three hundred years in a state of war ... The Catholic and Roman Church accepted at Trent ... the state of siege ... She decided that rigid definition, and the concentration of her own forces, were the only course if vital principles were to be effectively defended. Her work became primarily militant

... The deep truths and ancient traditions, which the Church was pledged to preserve, for the moment needed some other protection than the normal process of being gradually analysed and developed by living intellects within the Church. They could not be left to derive growth and nourishment freely from the intellectual life of the age, as plants do from the surrounding light and oxygen. The speculation abroad was perverse and unfair. Contact with surrounding thought and its attendant analysis might easily lead to corruption and destruction. The truths had to be placed in safety in their existing state of development. They had to be promptly encased and iron-bound in formulae ... Above all, authority ... became necessarily in practice more prompt and absolute. Tyranny is among the greatest dangers in time of peace; in time of war the pressure of the peril to the community acts both as a guiding and restraining force on the ruler, and as a motive in soldiers and followers for preferring the chance of some injustice to the risk of insubordination. Again, debate and dispute, the very life of civil constitutions, the normal means of giving citizens a share in public affairs and in determining the fortunes of the country, the safeguard against injustice, and against the sense of injustice, are fatal in time of war. At such a time all must act together, and generally all must act promptly. Authority is rightly appealed to constantly. There is need for a dictator ... The result is a tendency to close all questions and rule them, at least provisionally, in one sense, for the sake of union and concentration against the foe."

(See the long extracts in Maisie Ward's The Wilfrid Wards and the Transition p. 338-341)

4, Bouwsma has subsequently published a very fine full length study of Calvin, John Calvin, A Sixteenth Century Portrait. In this he presents Calvin as a mixture of both revolt against the ambiguity of 'modernity' and a thoroughly modern sceptic (see p. 230-31). While I have tended to see Calvin as one who thoroughly participated in the anxiety of his age and reacted against it, seeking escape to certainty, Bouwsma does not seem to want to relate the dogmatic and sceptical sides of Calvin in this way. He also explores Calvin's use of the 'labyrinth' symbol, but in a different (and, I think, less interesting) way than I have.

5. On Calvin's anxiety see Bouwsma, 1988, chapter 2. E.g.,

He thought anxiety universal. "Before men decline into old age, even in the very bloom of youth," he observed, "they are involved in many

troubles, and they cannot escape from their cares, weariness, sorrows, fears, griefs, inconveniences, and anxieties to which mortal life is subject." Amid the many uncertainties of life, "we cannot be other-than continually anxious and disturbed." "We know by daily experience how various are the numerous and uncertain cares that distract our minds." "We are always fearful for ourselves in this life." (Bouwsma, 1988, p. 37)

6. Calvin's drive towards simplicity can be seen in his desire for clarity and his 'abomination of mixtures'--

when Calvin associated disorder with obscurity, he could conceive of correcting it by sharpening the contours of the various entities composing the world; once one thing has been clearly distinguished, physically or conceptually, from others, it can be assigned its proper place in the order of things. Descartes was not the first European, or even the first Frenchman, who craved clear and distinct ideas. Calvin's concern about such matters is one source of his famous clarity of style; he stabilized the meanings of words ... but therefore also the structures of the universe he inhabited, by such linguistic devices as frugality in the use of adjectives. Thus he abominated "mixture", one of the most pejorative terms in his vocabulary; mixture in any area of experience suggested to him disorder and unintelligibility. He had absorbed deeply not only the traditional concern for cosmic purity of a culture that had restricted mixture to the sublunary realm but also various Old Testament prohibitions. Mixture, for Calvin, connoted "adulteration" or "promiscuity," but it also set off in him deep emotional and metaphysical reverberations. He repeatedly warned against "mixing together things totally different," "When water is mixed with fire," he observed, "both perish." He abominated the papacy above all because it had, as he believed, mixed human invention with divine ordination, earthly with heavenly things. *Scriptura sola* was intended precisely to prevent such mixture. (Bouwsma, 1988, p. 34-5)

7. The emotion and fervour, the result of anxiety and despair, are the colouring of the act of the will in its commitment.

8. See his article "Bolshevism and Calvinism", originally published in 1934.

For example both are

essentially logical. The water tight system, the determinism assuring ultimate victory, the practical and realistic temper, the unity of aim rejecting everything which lies beyond its scope ... all these things follow self-evidently from one another... every practical... attack upon tradition takes the form of rationalising certain things which before had been settled by custom and experience ... We can now

have a clearer picture of Calvinism and Bolshevism. Deterministic, simple, practical, rational, anti-romantic, functional: these qualities are qualities that cut clean through the complexity of life and custom and deliberately exclude everything which is useless or distracting or inimical to themselves. Simple and logical and exclusive; such are the ideas of Calvin and Marx ..." (p. 126)

9. Muir gave his own commentary on the ideas in the poem in an article, "Yesterday's Mirror: Afterthoughts to an Autobiography", published originally in Scots Magazine, 1940. My quotations are taken from those included in Butter, 1966, p. 186-8.

10. For while human words may (and always must) indicate, present, clothe, express, teach (etc.) the divine, they cannot authorise, or validate, it. This attempt to validate God is a failure of nerve on the part of the Church, the mark of the way the Church has succumbed to the anxiety and despair of 'modernity'.

Endnotes (Part iii, "Simplicity; the contest ...")

1. E.g., "Signifier and signified have an intrinsic relationship, not an arbitrary one. Meaning inheres in the concrete form of the word, and is related specifically to the precise object described. The word is the thing as it is in a language which is diachronic and not synchronic ... But here we reach the tragedy of Hopkins's life. His bright, sharp poetic actualizations of the inscapes of nature and self are finite affirmations of a creation, divine and Christlike in its potential, but unable of itself to possess the divine infinity of heaven" (Jaspers, p. 19).

2. The modern dialectic is that between 'Appetite' and 'Authority'. The conflict between Richard of Gloucester and Henry VI marks the transition from the 'pre-modern' to the 'modern'.

3. These comments on simplicity are taken from William Rowe's inaugural lecture, "Our Simplicity", given to mark his appointment as Senior Member in the History of Philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto. In that lecture Rowe defined 'simplicity' as "the closing off of a one unto itself; simplicity is self-relation in the form of closure" (p. 13)

4. I take these terms from John Coulson's important study, Religion and Imagination, which is itself a reflection on the work of Coleridge, J.H. Newman, and T.S. Eliot.

5. We might call this simplification 'idolatry' which exalts a limited aspect of the world into an absolute and seeks to explain the world in terms of it.

6. All contests have their violence, perhaps. But I have reserved this term for use on two occasions: there is inevitably a violence in all closure, in any reconstruction of the agon; but the 'modern' age, built as it is upon dislocation and the conflict of absolute authorities is inherently and essentially violent. It can envisage struggle in no other way except the clash of absolutely exclusive authorities. Furthermore, it is, of course, all the more violent for being our violence, the violence we suffer in our world. I am inclined to think, for example, that the medieval agon (let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that there was such a thing) while being a real struggle was not violent in the way the modern is--but, of course, this may just be an idealisation.

7. Really I want to go further than merely commenting on 'modernity' that it is another cycle of closure and opening. There is, also, something pathological in 'modernity' and I think that this can be seen in representative figures, such as Luther, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche. Yet, in one sense they are no more pathological than Bernard of Clairvaux or the Apostle Paul. The difference between St. Bernard and Luther is that the former was a reformer, while the latter, whether he wanted to be or not, became a revolutionary. St. Bernard's drive for purity and simplicity took place within the context of the whole Church, Luther's became a whole church, separate and adequate in its own right. What is healthy in the context of a wider body becomes pathological when it tries to provide the sole foundation. What is pathological about 'modernity' is not so much that it begins with a drive to purity and simplicity, or with tendencies to scepticism and dogmatism, but that these alone form its foundations.

8. The line comes from the second stanza of A Hymn. Several of Chesterton's poems provide a delightful attack on the various simplicities of his day--vegetarianism and prohibition--and the story The Flying Inn is an attack

on these under the guise of an attack on Islam.

9. See his autobiography, Unended Quest, where he attempts to use in art "another application of the method of trial and error" (p. 67). Taste, for Popper, seems to be the reflective judgment on the composition; he is not interested in the act of creation at all, but only in the critical reflection on what has been composed.

10. Despite the quotation from the Old Testament wisdom literature that ends the text I do not myself know what the relationship might be between the 'wisdom' I have described and the Biblical notion of wisdom.

11. The main reading room of the Central Reference Library of the City of Manchester, England, has, appropriately, this very text inscribed around the rim of its domed ceiling. The temptation to despair of books, of scholarship as a wearying and apparently hopeless confusion (so well symbolised by the notion of the library as a labyrinth in the stories mentioned earlier by Borges and Eco) is a temptation to simplicity. It is the temptation to leave learning and 'live'--as if life were any less complex (though we consistently pretend that it is--like Thoreau hiding away at Walden Pond, shouting, "simplicity, simplicity, simplicity"). I began this essay with various quotations, the first was from Browning's Master Hugues of Saxa Gotha in praise of simplicity and criticism of complexity. It is fitting to close with another of Browning's characters, the "Grammarians", who gives all his life to the pursuit of wisdom and rejects the temptation to try to escape from the complexity of scholarship:

'What's in the scroll,' quoth he, 'thou keepest furled?
Shew me their shaping,
Theirs, who most studied man, the bard and sage,--
Give!'--So he gowned him,
Straight got by heart that book to its last page;
Learned, we found him!
Yea, but we found him bald too--eyes like lead,

Accents uncertain:
'Time to taste life,' another would have said,
 'Up with the curtain!'
This man said rather, 'Actual life comes next?
 Patience a moment!
Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text,
 Still, there's the comment.
Let me know all. Prate not of most or least,
 Painful or easy:
Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the feast,
 Ay, nor feel queasy!'

Bibliography

- ADAMS, Robert Utopia. A new translation, backgrounds and criticisms.
Translated by Robert Adams. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975)
- ALLCHIN, A.M. 1967 "The Theological Vision of the Oxford Movement" in
The Rediscovery of Newman: an Oxford Symposium edited by John
Coulson and A.M. Allchin (London: Sheed and Ward, and SPCK, 1967)
- ALLCHIN, A.M. 1984 The Joy of all Creation (London: DLT, 1984)
- BARFIELD, Owen Saving the Appearances. A study in idolatry (New York:
HBJ, 1965)
- BERMAN, Morris The Reenchantment of the World. (1981; New York: Bantam
Books, 1984)
- BORGES, Jorge Luis Labyrinths and other stories (Harmondsworth, Middx.:
Penguin Books, 1964)
- BOUWSMA, William J. 1982 "Calvin and the Renaissance Crisis of Knowing"
Calvin Theological Journal 17 p. 190-211.
- BOUWSMA, William J. 1988 John Calvin, A Sixteenth Century Portrait
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988)
- BUTTER, P.H. 1962 Edwin Muir (New York: Grove Press, 1962)
- BUTTER, P.H. 1966 Edwin Muir: Man and Poet (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1966)
- CALVIN, John Institutes of the Christian Religion Edited by John T. McNeill,
translated by Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press,
1960)
- The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent. Translated by J. Waterworth
(London: Burns and Oates, 1888)
- CHAMBERS, R.W. Thomas More (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935)
- CHESTERTON, G.K. Orthodoxy (London: John Lane, 1915)
- CHESTERTON, G.K. The Collected Poems of G.K. Chesterton (London: Methuen, 1933)
- COLERIDGE, S.T. Biographia Literaria or Biographical Sketches of my
Literary Life and Opinions (1817; London: Dent, 1948)
- COMENIUS, John Amos The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the
Heart (1623) Translated by Matthew Spinka (Chicago: National Union
of Czechoslovak Protestants in America, 1942)
- CORDON, Walter M. "The Argument of Comedy in Thomas More's Dialogue Con-
cerning Heresies" Renaissance and Reformation XVI (1980) no. 1,
p. 12-32.
- COULSON, John Religion and Imagination: 'in aid of a grammar of assent'
(London: Oxford University Press, 1981)
- COURSEN, H.R. The Leasing out of England. Shakespeare's Second Henriad
(Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982)

- DANBY, John F. Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature; a study in King Lear (London: Faber and Faber, 1949)
- DEVLIN, Christopher "Hopkins and Duns Scotus" (1935) reprinted in Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Casebook Edited by Margaret Bottrall (London: Macmillan, 1975)
- DICKSON, David "Science and Political Hegemony in the 17th Century" Radical Science Journal (1979) p. 7-37
- DIX, Gregory The Shape of the Liturgy (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1945)
- DOUGLAS, Nigel Charles, "Re-enchanting the World: A Christian Project" Anakainosis 8:3 March, 1986, p. 1-5
- ECO, Umberto The Name of the Rose (New York: HBJ, 1983)
- Edwards, David Christian England. Vol. 3. From the 18th Century to the First World War (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984)
- ELTON, G.R. Reform and Reformation. England 1509-1558 (London: Edward Arnold, 1974)
- FERNS, John "Activity in Silence: G.M. Hopkins's Journal, 1866-1875" Hopkins Quarterly Vol.2 no. 4 (January, 1976) p. 163-174)
- FREUND, Julian The Sociology of Max Weber Translated from the French by Mary Ilford (New York: Random House, 1968)
- GALLAGHER, Ligeia (ed.) More's Utopia and its Critics (Chicago: Scott, Foreman, 1964)
- GARDNER, W.H. Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy in relation to Poetic Tradition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948)
- GRANT, Patrick Literature and the Discovery of Method in the English Renaissance (London: Macmillan, 1985)
- GUEGEN, John A. "Reading More's Utopia as a Criticism of Plato" in Qincentennial Essays on St. Thomas More. Selected papers from the Thomas More College Conference. Edited by Michael J. Moore (Boone, N.C.: Albion, Dept. of History, Appalachian State University, 1978)
- GUY, John A. The Public Career of Sir Thomas More (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980)
- HARPSFIELD, Nicholas "Life and Death of Sir Thomas More" (c 1537) in Lives of Saint Thomas More Edited by E.E. Reynolds (London: Dent, 1963)
- HEADLEY, John "The Reformation as Crisis in the Understanding of Tradition" Archive for Reformation History vol. 78 1987 p. 5-22
- HENNING, F.M. "The Architectonics of Faith: Metalogic and Metaphor in Zwingli's Doctrine of the Eucharist" Reform and Reformation XXII (1986) no. 4 p. 315-365
- HUIZINGA, Johan Erasmus and the Age of Reformation (1924; New York: Harper and Row, 1957)

- JASPERS, David "God's Better Beauty: Language and the poetry of G.M. Hopkins" Christianity and Literature vol. 34 (1985) no.3 p. 9-22
- JONES, David The Anathemata (1952; London: Faber and Faber, 1972)
- LASH, Nicholas Doing Theology on Dover Beach (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978)
- LEGGIO, James "The Science of Sacrament" Hopkins Quarterly vol.4 (Summer, 1977) no. 2 p. 55-67
- LUCAS, R.Valerie "Hic Mulier: the female transvestite in early modern England" Renaissance and Reformation XXIV (1988) no. 1 p. 65-84
- McCHESNEY, Donald A Hopkins Commentary (London: University of London Press, 1968)
- MACFARLANE, Alan 1978 The Origins of English Individualism (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978)
- MACFARLANE, Alan 1986 The Culture of Capitalism (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986)
- MACINTYRE, Alasdair "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science" Monist 61 (1977) p. 453-472
- MARITAIN, Jacques Three Reformers. Luther-Descartes-Rousseau (1928; London: Sheed and Ward, 1950)
- MARIUS, Richard 1978 "Henry VIII, Thomas More and the Bishop of Rome" in Quincentennial Essays on Saint Thomas More. Selected papers from the Thomas More Collge Conference. Edited by Michael J. Moore (Boone, N.C.: Albion, Dept. of History, Appalachian State University, 1978)
- MARTZ, Louis "Thomas More: The Sacramental Life" Thought 52 (1977) no. 206 p. 300-318
- MARX, Karl Grundrisse Edited by David McLellan (St. Albans: Paladin, 1973)
- MERCHANT, Carolyn The Death of Nature. Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980)
- MILLER, J. Hillis The Disappearance of God. Five Nineteenth Century Writers (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1963)
- NEWMAN, John Henry Apologia Pro Vita Sua (1864; London, Fontana Books, 1959)
- NIETZSCHE, Friedrich The Birth of Tragedy Translated by Walter Kaufman (New York: Random House, 1967)
- NIETZSCHE, Friedrich "Homer's Contest" and "Twilight of the Idols" in The Portable Nietzsche Edited and translated by Walter Kaufman (Harmondsworth, Middx.: Penguin, 1976)
- NIETZSCHE, Friedrich Philosophy and Truth Edited by Daniel Breazeale (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979)

- NIETZSCHE Friedrich Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks Translated by Marianne Cowen (Washington, D.C.: Gateway Editions, 1962)
- ONG, Walter "Bird, Horse and Chevalier in Hopkins's 'Windhover'" Hopkins Quarterly Vol. 1 (July 1974) no. 2, p. 61-75
- PATTISON, Mark Memoirs (London: Macmillan, 1885)
- PINEAS, Rainer Thomas More and Tudor Polemics (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968)
- PLATO, The Republic Translated by Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968)
- POPPER, Sir Karl Unended Quest (La Salle: Open Court, 1978)
- PUSEY, E. B. The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Doctrine of the English Church...(Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1857)
- RICHTER, Melvin 1956 "T.H. Green and his audience: Liberalism and surrogate faith" Review of Politics 18 p. 444-72
- RICHTER, Melvin 1964 The Politics of Conscience: T.H. Green and his age (London: Wiederfield and Nichols)
- ROPER, William "The Life of Sir Thomas More" reprinted in Two Tudor Lives Edited by Richard S. Sylvester and David P. Harding (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962)
- ROWE, William "Our Simplicity", typescript from author
- SPEIAGHT, Robert Nature in Shakespearian Tragedy (London: Hollins & Carter, 1955)
- THOMAS, Keith Religion and the Decline of Magic (New York: Charles Scribner, 1971)
- THOMAS, R. S. Selected Poems, 1946-68 (1973; Newcastle upon Tyre: Boodaxe Books, 1986)
- THORN, Guy When it was Dark; the story of a great conspiracy (London: Greening & co., 1903)
- WARD, Mrs. Humphrey Robert Elsmere (London: Smith & Elder, 1903)
- WARD, Maisie The Wilfrid Wards and the Transition. Vol. 1 The Nineteenth Century (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1934)
- WEATHERBY, Harold The Keen Delight. The Christian Poet in the Modern World. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975)
- WEATHERBY, Harold Cardinal Newman in his Age (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1973)
- WHITEHEAD, A. N. Science and the Modern World The Lowell Lectures, 1925 (1925; New York: Mentor Books, 1948)
- WILLEY, Basil 1949 Nineteenth Century Studies (1949; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980)

WILLEY, Basil 1953 Seventeenth Century Background (London: Chatto & Windus, 1953)

WOODWARD, Francis J. The Doctor's four Disciples. A Study of Four Pupils of Arnold of Rugby (London: Oxford University Press, 1954)

ZYLSTRA, Bernard "Modernity and the American Empire" International Reformed Bulletin 68 1977 p. 3-19 p. 7.