

HOPKINS, MAHLER, BRUCKNER

The poet as a «post-romantic»

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La proposta di questo intervento in lingua originale non è giustificata soltanto dall'indiscutibile autorevolezza del suo autore – che è un anglista di grande rilievo dell'English Department della Saint Joseph's University (gestita dai gesuiti di Philadelphia), nonché Co-Editor del prestigioso Hopkins Quarterly (fondato nel 1974) – o dal prestigio della rivista scientifica in cui è stato originariamente presentato – «Thought. A Review of Culture and Idea» [vol. 65 (1990), n. 259, pp. 535-543] è un periodico pubblicato tra il 1926 ed il 1992 dalla Fordham University, l'ateneo dei gesuiti di New York –. Tra le altre ragioni che ne hanno suggerito l'inserimento in questa sezione dedicata alla Letteratura (in) Inglese, tengo ad evidenziare soprattutto la necessità che i docenti italiani coltivino un costante contatto con la ricerca (teorica ed ermeneutica) e con la didattica svolte all'estero e, più specificamente, nei paesi dei quali insegnano la lingua e cultura; la particolare attenzione alle dimensioni e alle dinamiche testuali; il ricorso ad una corretta prospettiva interdisciplinare che potrebbe risultare assai efficace nell'attività dell'insegnamento linguistico-letterario; la capacità di interpretare le varie fasi dell'evoluzione della cultura (britannica e non) secondo criteri che potrebbero essere anche reimpiegati per problematizzare talune consuetudini culturali dell'oggi. Segnalo infine che le versioni italiane delle tre citazioni più ampie dai testi poetici di Hopkins sono tratte da Dalle Foglie della Sibilla. Poesie e Prose 1863-1888, a cura di Viola Papetti (con testo inglese delle poesie), Rizzoli, Milano 1992, pp. 253 e 273. [Enrico Reggiani]

The poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins have been variously read as romantic Victorian and modern, but no one, to my knowledge, has viewed him as a «post-Romantic»¹ – as a poet, that is, whose verbal art resembles the musical art of Gustav Mahler and Anton Bruckner.² Yet such an approach, if valid, offers fresh insights: it places Hopkins in a continental framework, recognizes parallels with late nineteenth-century music, illuminates his experimentation, collects seven late poems into a new group, and suggests that Hopkins, despite his limited *donnée* and «the smallness of his output» (Mizener 114), stands with other contemporary masters in grasping the spirit of the time. And, I might note at the outset, Hopkins recognized the parallels between poetry and music, and explicitly praised newness and originality in both arts. Indeed, as a letter to Robert Bridges makes clear, in 1880 Hopkins even believed he had invented a new tonality in music that resembled the originality of his poetry's sprung rhythm: «I sorely wish I knew some harmony... I wish I could pursue music; for I have invented a new style, something standing to ordinary music as sprung rhythm to common rhythm: it employs quarter tones» (*Letters* 103). Hopkins prized experimentation in music as well as in poetry, and saw himself as a late-nineteenth-century experimenter in both.

[Cosa vuol dire «post-romantico»?]

The term «post-Romantic» (or «late-Romantic»), however, poses two problems. The first is definition. Used more in music than in literature, the word eludes precise definition since, like the words «Romantic» or «Modern», it includes so many elements. *The Larousse Encyclopedia of Music* simply (and unhelpfully) describes «post-Romantic» as «the idiom of composers such as Mahler who continued the essential Romantic expression in music after its high period in the mid-nineteenth century» (Hindley 543). *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and *The New Grove Dictionary* ignore the term. More helpfully, Donald Grout's *History of Western Music* describes «typical» post-Romantic music as complex, programmatic in nature, and demanding enormous performing resources (758). And *The New Oxford History of Music*, calling the style «late-Romanticism», provides an accurate

1. The word «post-Romantic» has occasionally been used in Hopkins criticism, but only as a synonym for «Victorian» (see, for example, Johnson 2-3, 9, 32; Sulloway 6).

2. Scholars generally consider Bruckner a conservative romanticist, in the tradition of Beethoven and Schubert. Yet many contemporaries considered him a Wagnerian; his harmonic chromaticism is sometimes Wagnerian; and many scholars stress the connection between Bruckner and Mahler. Doernberg refuses to categorize him, and stresses his «individuality» (24). On this whole question, see Doernberg, Redlich, Schönzeler, and Simpson.

(though brief) summary: «opulence of sound... is the most characteristic symptom of romantic texture in its last phase... paralleled by cultivation of grandiose structure.» A comment is added: «It was an over-ripe art» (Abraham 72, 78).

In treating Hopkins in parallel with Mahler and Bruckner, the other problem is whether the term «post-Romantic» applies to Bruckner. Though Anton Bruckner (1824-1896) and Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) share common traits, many scholars do not consider Bruckner a «post-Romantic» since they view his symphonies as developments of Beethoven's Ninth.² Yet Hopkins, besides resembling Mahler, also shares Brucknerian traits, and no better adjective is available. The phrase «Brucknerian-Mahlerian» is daunting in length, and perhaps too restrictive since Hopkins also resembles other post-Romantics.

The adjective «late-Romantic» has the same problem as «post-Romantic.» And so, admitting the semantic problem and wishing there were a better adjective, I still choose the word «post-Romantic» – tentatively and charily – to describe the similar form, content, mood, and performance-style of Bruckner and Mahler. Such usage, at least, fits the descriptions in the *History of Western Music* and the *The New Oxford History of Music*, for both Mahler and Bruckner wrote symphonies that are «long, formally complex» and demand «enormous performing resources»; they also share an «opulence of sound», «grandiose structure», «romantic texture in its last phase», and are both «over-ripe art».

Ignoring other post-Romantic composers – Richard Wagner, Richard Strauss, Edward Elgar – I focus on Bruckner and Mahler, and specifically on their symphonies, precisely because they worked in the traditional «form» of the symphony, just as Hopkins worked in the traditional «form» of the sonnet. And since Hopkins' post-Romanticism appears in seven late poems of the 1880's, I base my comparison on those symphonies of Bruckner and Mahler composed (at least in part) in the 1880's, namely Bruckner's Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth, and Mahler's First and Second.³ In Hopkins' work, the poems at issue are «To what serves Mortal Beauty?» (1885), «The Soldier» (1885), «Carrion Comfort» (1885), «Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves» (1885-86), «Tom's Garland» (1887), «Harry Ploughman» (1887), and «That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection» (1888).⁴ My central assertion is this: Hopkins resembles Bruckner and Mahler in form, content, tone, and performance-style, and in this sense Hopkins can aptly be called post-Romantic.⁵

[I post-romantici e la questione della forma]

All three artists began with traditional forms. Bruckner and Mahler named their works «symphonies», and frequently (though not always) worked within the symphonic tradition of four movements, a sequence of fast-slow-«dance»-fast, the

sonata-form of development within a movement, themes proper to a particular movement, and a score for orchestra alone. Indeed, according to one scholar, Bruckner's Sixth shows «a mastery of classical form» (Simpson 123). In his seven poems Hopkins too took up the sonnet-form he had often used before, frequently obeyed the requirements of the sonnet-tradition at least in part, and even described five of the poems as «sonnets» (*Poems* 284, 285, 287, 290, 293).⁶

But all three artists also strained against the limits of traditional form, and ultimately broke – or broke out of – the received form. The finale of Bruckner's Seventh is «unique in form and difficult to describe» (Simpson 153, 156, 161-62), and his Eighth pays minimal attention to the sonata form.⁷ Mahler's First was originally conceived in five movements – he later dropped one – and his Second actually has five movements (Cooke 34, 52). Furthermore, both Bruckner and Mahler violate the convention that a symphonic movement have self-contained themes, for they frequently recall and re-use themes from earlier movements (Schönzeler 167; Simpson 178; Cooke 58). Thus, both composers either refashion old forms or invent new ones (Schönzeler 150, 153; Simpson 156; Cooke 13).

Hopkins, for his part, also fractured his received form. In 1886 he called «Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves» «my long sonnet, the longest... ever made», since it has eight stresses to a line (*Poems* 284; *Letters* 246). But his experiments grow wilder: «Tom's Garland» – a «sonnet» – has twenty lines, «Harry Ploughman» nineteen, and «That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire» twenty-four. He also changes traditional meter: «To what serves Mortal Beauty?» «The Soldier», «Carrion Comfort», and «Heraclitean Fire» have the six stresses of alexandrines, with the caesura sometimes indicated, as in «That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the

3. Bruckner wrote nine symphonies, the last unfinished; to this group should be added the early, unnumbered symphony, # O Die Nullte. The symphonies were composed from 1865 to 1896; in the eighties he worked on Nos. 6, 7, and 8 (Simpson 19, 29, 124, 143, 160, 180). (Some very early sketches of No. 9 were begun in 1887 [Schönzeler 106]). Mahler wrote ten symphonies, the last unfinished; many critics add *Das Lied von der Erde*, which Mahler himself called a symphony. The dates of composition range from 1885 to 1910, with the first two symphonies begun in the eighties (Cooke 33, 52, 103, 118).

4. For the dating of the poems, cf. *Poems*, eds. Gardner and MacKenzie, and Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. Phillips.

5. Hopkins, I should note, never mentioned Bruckner or Mahler. This is not surprising, since «Bruckner's music became known only very gradually in the non-German speaking countries», and during Hopkins' lifetime the only British performance of a Bruckner symphony (the Seventh) was in London in 1887 (Schönzeler 83, 180). Mahler's First Symphony was not performed until after Hopkins' death (Mitchell 149). Hopkins did make a number of comments on Wagner, attended a Wagner concert in the winter of 1879-80, and in 1882 asked a friend for his «impressions» of «the Niebelungs' Ring» (*Further* 246, 250).

6. In «Pied Beauty» (1877) and other poems Hopkins had previously experimented with the sonnet form, at that time compressing the form into a «curtal sonnet» (MacKenzie 228-29). The longer sonnets at issue here are called «caudated» (having a tail), since to the traditional fourteen lines they add several codas (interestingly, a term from music); for this form Hopkins found an example in Milton (*Poems* 290).

7. On the controverted question of Bruckner's sonata form, see, e.g., Doernberg 14, Schönzeler 150, and Simpson 142, 146.

Resurrection»:

Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows | flaunt forth,
hen chevy on an air
built thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers, in gay-gangs | they
throng; they glitter in marches. (*Poems* 105)

[Fungo di nube, ciuffi strappati, guanciali gettati sventolano,
poi scorazzano per un viale
fatto d'aria: fanfaroni del cielo, in gaie brigate s'aggruppano;
splendono in marcia.]

By using new meters, adding multiple codas, and lengthening or shortening lines, Hopkins broke the sonnet form beyond easy recognition, even while preserving the rising rhythm, the rhyme of the octet, and the word «sonnet» as a designation. In such ways Bruckner, Mahler, and Hopkins tried to be both traditional and experimental, but while bowing to past forms, the three artists broke and transmuted their announced forms.

For all three the breaking of form also expanded the work's size, and their symphonies or poems are unusually lengthy. A Romantic symphony – say, by Beethoven or Brahms or Schumann – normally takes forty to fifty minutes. But Bruckner and Mahler commonly write «vast symphonies» of «great scale»; Mahler's Second takes eighty-five minutes, and Bruckner's Eighth approaches ninety and has an «enormously long-drawn close» (Cooke 8, 52; Simpson 125, 175; Rockwell). «Bruckner's genius», wrote one scholar, «demanded monumentality» (Doernberg 19). Hopkins' post-Romantic poems, as noted, are similarly long. Sometimes the change is within an individual line: the six stresses of «Mortal Beauty» or «Heraclitean Fire», and the eight stresses of «Sibyl's Leaves». Sometimes the overall length is changed: nineteen lines in «Harry Ploughman», twenty in «Tom's Garland», and twenty-four in «Heraclitean Fire». Several sonnets of Shakespeare could well be recited in the time needed to perform «Heraclitean Fire» with its alexandrines, pauses, outrides, and three codas. In similar manner, then, Bruckner, Mahler, and Hopkins take a received form, expand or break it, and bring it so far toward – or beyond – its limit of length that no further formal development seems possible. Could much else happen to a symphony or a sonnet? Yet in terms of form, such breaking and stretching is the essence of post-Romanticism.

[Quali temi per i post-romantici?]

In their choice of material Bruckner, Mahler, and Hopkins are also similar, but in its content post-Romanticism simply carries on the Romantic tradition, and briefer comments can suffice. All three celebrate nature and the simplicity of child, common man, or peasant. Bruckner does this in a typical

«God-in-nature» Scherzo (Cardus 24), Mahler in the childhood memories of his First Symphony (Cooke 33-36), and Hopkins in «Heraclitean Fire» («the bright wind boisterous»; «nature's bonfire burns on»), «Harry Ploughman» («barrowy brawn»; «churlsgrace»), and «Mortal Beauty» («lovely lads once, wet-fresh windfalls») (98, 104, 105). The artist's self and his troubled psyche, furthermore, are frequently at a work's center, and scholars note how Bruckner's and Mahler's symphonies develop from their conflicted lives.⁸ In Hopkins' «Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves», «our night whelms, whelms, and will end us», and «selfwrung, selfstrung, sheathe- and shelterless, thoughts against thoughts in groans grind» (97-98). More harrowing yet is the anguish of «Carrion Comfort»:

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

[No, Disperazione, conforto della carogna, non farò banchetto di te;
né scioglierò – per fiacchi che siano – quest'ultimi fili d'uomo
in me o, stanchissimo, griderò più non posso. Posso;
posso qualcosa, spero, desidero l'arrivo del giorno, non
scelgo di non essere.] (*Poems* 99)

Yet, despite his pain, the romantic and post-Romantic artist can still rise above self and express the great human hopes. Bruckner «encompasses the entire cosmos», Mahler voices «the discontents, longings and aspirations of humanity» (Schönzeler 147; Cooke 5-6), and Hopkins' «Heraclitean Fire» celebrates the resurrection in Christ both of the individual «I» and of «manshape» in general.

For all three artists, finally, God is important, even when they find it difficult to seek or find or even contact him. Mahler's and Bruckner's symphonies deal with God, death, and the value of life – Bruckner's Eighth has been called «world-embracing» (Rockwell) – and Hopkins' post-Romantic sonnets pass from the anguish of «Sibyl's Leaves» through the wish for «God's better beauty, grace» and the realization that «I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God», to the triumphant conviction that humankind – and the poet – are «immortal diamond» (97-98, 100, 106).

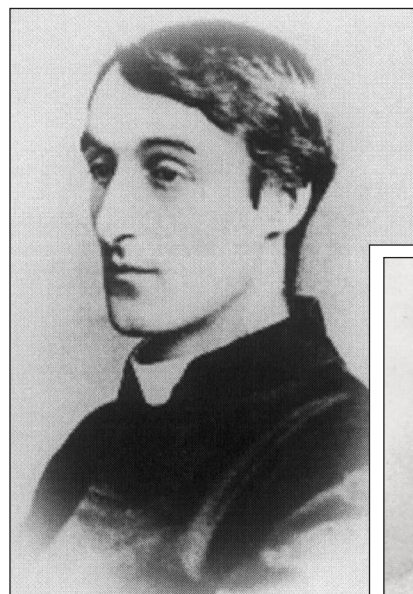
[L'orizzonte espressivo dei post-romantici]

Far more distinctive than content is the post-Romantic mood or tone (I use this word in its literary sense). Bruckner's and Mahler's long symphonies, some lasting over eighty minutes, are swelling, grandiose, large, weighty – some call them overwrought, inflated, and excessive. Bruckner's Adagios have a «vast scale», his Seventh enjoys «majesty and spaciousness», his endings are «massive», and he builds climaxes to «towering heights to which his music rises in a se-

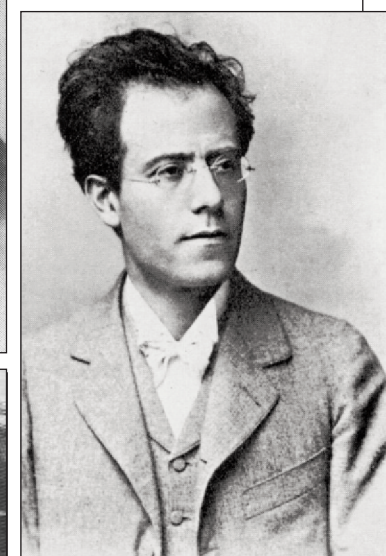
8. Simpson 160-61, 165; Cardus 24; Cooke 7-8, 10, 14, 53.

ries of symphonic waves» (Schönzeler 160; Simpson 158, 199). Bruckner's Eighth and Mahler's Second need massive orchestras, to which Mahler adds a chorus, soloists, offstage band, and organ for this symphony of a «vast time-scale» (Redlich 97; Cooke 52, 58). Hopkins' expanded sonnets are likewise huge in size, swelling in sound, rich in diction, grandiose in conception, and complex in construction. All seven sonnets are difficult to construe and, though compressed and dense, are unusually long. Individual words are granitic – «Churlsglance», «Amansstrength», «Manshape» – and the poems' music is richly scored: «Shivelights and shadow-tackle in long lashes lace, lance, and pair» (104, 105). Furthermore, Bruckner, Mahler, and Hopkins, just as they share in grandeur, also share in being considered inflated, uncontrolled, and overwrought. The Viennese music critic Eduard Hanslick found Bruckner's Seventh «bloated», and Mahler had great difficulty organizing his Second (Schönzeler 87; Mitchell 161-87). Hopkins called «Tom's Garland» and «Harry Ploughman» «works of infinite, of over great contrivance, I am afraid, to the annulling in the end of the right effect» (*Correspondence* 153). Indeed, to his irritation, he had to explain the meaning of «Tom's Garland» to two fellow poets, and he finally judged the poem «very highly wrought. Too much so, I am afraid» (*Letters* 272-74).

Yet however grandiose the typical post-Romantic tone, it can suddenly become light, rough, or sardonic – another common characteristic. Disparate elements are mixed or juxtaposed without warning or transition. Bruckner and Mahler, for example, introduce into their symphonies folksongs and peasant dances – the *Ländler* – and experiment with untraditional rhythms, strange tonalities, and dissonant sounds.⁹ Mahler uses such «banal sounds» as «bird-calls, bugle-fanfares, cheap popular music, [and] military marches» which make his music «intentionally» impure and provide «the truly revolutionary element in his music [and] the essence of his genius» (Cooke 15-18).¹⁰ Another critic makes the point more diplomatically: «Mahler... disturbs musical equanimity and taste» (Cardus 9). And Bruckner, writing in terms of «blocks of sound,» sometimes interrupts a string *pianissimo* with a brass *fortissimo*, and is even accused of «being unable to write a smooth transition» (Schönzeler 164; see Simpson, 200). In Mahler's First, a cuckoocall appears from out of nowhere and a military fanfare begins without warning; on such grounds one critic notes Mahler's «unexpected juxtapositions of sonorities» (Cooke 4, 34). Hopkins, too, can surprise. He provides an unexpected «trumpet crash» in «Heraclitean Fire», and his post-Romantic poems leap from working boots to a shining garland, from «danc- / ing blood» to «Purcell tune,» and from a sardonic «Jack, joke, poor potsherd» to an «immortal diamond» (98, 103, 106). The diction of «Heraclitean Fire» blends together «homely dialect words (squandering, shive), his own poetic compounds (*rutpeel*, *firedint*),... such Romance words as... residuary... [and] the simple and undignified worm» (MacKenzie 198). Such unexpected leaps, bizarre juxtapositions, and disparate mixtures provide the normal tone of a post-Romantic work.



A sinistra, in alto, Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889).



Sopra: Gustav Mahler (1860-1911).
A fianco: Anton Bruckner (1824-1896).



Yet perhaps the most characteristic post-Romantic tone – the encompassing one – is an intense and swelling excitement that grows from the work's very grandeur. A Bruckner symphony has been described as a «gigantic arch which starts on earth in the midst of suffering humanity, sweeps up towards the heavens to the very Throne of Grace, and returns to earth with a message of peace» (Schönzeler 169). His famous Adagios are often sublime; his great finales have «a momentum... unprecedented in symphonic music»; and in the climax of his Eighth «the strings persist in smoky figurations that burst into flame as the burning sun touches them; the last triumphant affirmation of C major is the complete reply to everything, and it contains elements of the main themes of all four movements. The end is abrupt but of tremen-

9. See Cooke 4,14; Redlich 61-62; Schönzeler 59, 78; Simpson 151, 161-64, 168, 177.

10. On Mahler's practice in his First and Second Symphonies, see Cooke 35-36, 56-57, and Redlich 147-49.

dous finality» (Simpson 135, 178). As for Mahler, the finale of his Second, following «a last overpowering 'cry of disgust' », «arrives at peace, affirms resurrection», and «after a mighty climax (resurrection theme in E flat), the original 'affirmative' music provides a broad peroration on orchestra and organ» (Cooke 58). And are not these last passages, mutatis mutandis, telling descriptions of the climax of «Heraclitean Fire» where that poem bursts into flame and flashes with a diamond's white light in its abrupt and tremendous climax:

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. (Poems 105-06)

[Sul mio ponte inabissantesi brillò
un faro, un raggio eterno. Ceda la carne, e la mortale scoria
tocchi al verme superstite; il veemente incendio del mondo,
lascia solo cenere:
in un lampo, a uno squillo,
subito sono quel che è Cristo, poiché lui fu quel che sono, e
questo aggeggio, gioco, povero coccio, citrullo, truciolo, diamante
immortale,
è diamante immortale.]

In such manner a post-Romantic work is able to create a magic spell, view the transcendent, and end in a stunning, affirmative crescendo.

[L'«esecuzione» di un lavoro post-romantico]

A few final comments on performance – more precisely, on performer and audience – complete the argument. (Since Hopkins intended his poems for performance and wanted them heard rather than read,¹¹ all comments on performance apply as much to a Hopkins poem as to a Bruckner or Mahler symphony). In presenting a symphony or poem, the performer, confronting a long and intense composition, must always keep in view the work as a whole. Given the length, size, and juxtaposed «blocks» of, say, a Bruckner symphony, a conductor can too easily relax, can deviate from an appropriate tempo, or can play an individual part well but lose a sense of propulsion toward a single grand climax (Simpson 135-36, 157-58, 164, 170). The symphony's essential shape and direction must be always kept clear. The genius of a great Bruckner or Mahler conductor like Claudio Abbado or Klaus Tennstedt is to maintain tension in every bar even while solidly working toward the symphony's major climax. So it is with a Hopkins poem: the performer of «Mortal

Beauty» or «Heraclitean Fire» must carefully choose what tempo to take, how to phrase, where to breathe, and which words to emphasize for rhythm as well as meaning. The performer of a Hopkins poem dare never relax, but must always keep the whole in perspective so that Hopkins' meaning springs upon a listener - «explodes» upon the listener - with appropriate clarity and power.¹²

The audience, correlatively, must concentrate deeply while listening to Bruckner, Mahler, or Hopkins. The works are so long, the structures so complex and original, the elements so multiple, the sound so rich, the mood so intense, that they demand a disciplined, attentive audience. The distracted or daydreaming hearer is in peril of catching only an occasional brass proclamation or passing phrase while missing the work itself. Bruckner's «never relenting intensity» (Doernberg 25) equally characterizes Mahler and Hopkins. Such is my portrait of Hopkins in post-Romantic costume. It has not, I trust, been a comparison of totally disparate compositions. At worst, I would hope, it establishes parallels between Hopkins and the Austrian composers, and highlights Hopkins' own experimentation. At best, it locates Hopkins in a broader framework and casts new light on his structure, style, and art. Three conclusions would then emerge. First, though parochial and limited in experience, Hopkins did have a sense of his age's mood, of its Geist. Second, like his musical contemporaries in Vienna, he composed in a late-nineteenth-century continental mode. Third, his seven expanded «sonnets» of the 1880's merit a separate category among his works and might well be called his «post-Romantic» poems.

Ironically, the disapproval of his friends and fellow poets Robert Bridges and Richard Watson Dixon caused Hopkins to turn from this post-Romantic style. Hopkins was clearly irritated when, on February 10, 1888, he wrote Bridges, «I laughed outright and often, but very sardonically, to think you and the Canon could not construe my last sonnet ['Tom's Garland']; that he [Dixon] had to write you for a crib. It is plain I must go no farther on this road» (Letters 272). And a few months later, after «Heraclitean Fire», which is dated July 26, 1888 (Poems 293), Hopkins replaced this post-Romantic, experimental style with the simpler diction and lighter texture of his four last poems, «St. Alphonsus Rodriguez», «The shepherd's brow», «Thou art indeed just», and «To R.B.» He had chosen to return to traditional sonnets,

11. On 11 December 1886 Hopkins wrote to his friend Robert Bridges, «Remember what applies to all my verse, that it is, as living art should be, made for performance and that its performance is not reading with the eye but loud, leisurely, poetical (not rhetorical) recitation, with long rests, long dwells on the rhyme and other marked syllables, and so on. This sonnet ['Sibyl's Leaves'] shd. be almost sung: it is most carefully timed in tempo rubato» (Letters, 246; Poems 284). Two Hopkins holograph manuscripts at the University of Texas -copies of «Spring» and «In the Valley of the Elwy» - have the poet's precise directions for recitation: such notations as «staccato», «Rall[entando]», «S[forzando]», as well as rhythmic markings (see Feeney, 20-21; 29).

12. The choice of the word «explode» is quite intentional, to underscore Paul Mariani's insight that «if the sonnet does not 'explode' in upon us, we have 'fabled and missed' the central meaning» (90-91).

even while maintaining some of his distinctive characteristics. But before he abandoned post-Romanticism, he did produce seven experimental sonnets of note and, at least in «Heraclitean Fire», he gave the world one of his finest poems and a brilliant example of post -Romantic art.

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