



Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Visual World

Catherine Phillips

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Gerard Manley Hopkins initially planned to become a poet-artist. For five years he trained his eye, learned about contemporary art and architecture, and made friends in the Pre-Raphaelite circle. In her fascinating and beautifully illustrated book, Catherine Phillips, whose knowledge of Hopkins's poems is expert, uses letters, new archival material, and contemporary publications to reconstruct the visual world Hopkins knew between 1862 and 1889, and especially in the 1860s, with its illustrated journals, art exhibitions, Gothic architecture, photographic shows, and changing art criticism.

Phillips identifies three artistic contexts for the Hopkins's life: his childhood circle of artistic relatives who were important in shaping his early vision; his friends at university and the criticism he absorbed while there that inflected his view as a young man; and the mature religious beliefs which came to govern his understanding of a visual world interconnected with an eternal one.

With chapters devoted to Hopkins own drawings, and to visual theories of the time, Phillips is able to suggest fresh links between this visual world and the startling originality of Hopkins's mature writing that will alter radically our understanding of Hopkins's practice as a poet.

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