

Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Visual World by Catherine Phillips. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007. v, 320 pp. + 31 b/w illus. ISBN 978-0-19-923080-8. ISBN 978-0-7546-6005-7. \$75.00; £30.00.

“You know,” Gerard Manley Hopkins told Alexander Baillie, “I once wanted to be a painter.” A small sampling of Hopkins’s art appeared in the *Journals and Diaries* (1959), and a larger representation in *All My Eyes See* (1875), edited by R.K.R. Thornton. His complete art will appear in *Sketches, Notes, and Studies*, also edited by Thornton, volume 6 of the *Collected Works*. Given the overall neglect of Hopkins’s art and art criticism, Catherine Phillips’s *Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Visual World*, whose methodological approach resembles Kate Flint’s in *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* (2000), readies us for serious attention to Hopkins’s art considerations. It analyses his art, connects it to his writings, teases out the environment from which that art comes, and probes the poet’s art commentary.

Perhaps too biographical and not enough critical, the study locates Hopkins within a middle-class family of artists, his father Manley Hopkins, aunts Anne and Maria, siblings Arthur, Everard, and Kate, and godmother Frances. The chapters “Early Influence” and “Hopkins’s Drawings” examine the family influence: “Manley gave Gerard a daily example of Christian belief, sensitivity to the natural world, and constant, amateur, artistic endeavour,” and Frances Beechey “used art to record a way of life and the relationship between nature and man.” His childhood circle, Phillips contends, “shap[ed] his early vision,” his university friends “reflected his view as a young man,” and his mature religious beliefs “govern[ed] his understanding of a visual world interconnected with an eternal one.” Hopkins developed his own nuanced vocabulary to describe art, such as “inscape,” “scaping,” “chromatic,” and “diatonic.” The most dominant influences on his aesthetic sensibilities were the Old Masters, John Constable, the Gothic, the Pre-Raphaelites, and nineteenth-century landscape artists, especially George Pinwell and Frederick Walker. The largely architectural neo-Gothic influence, which came through John Ruskin and William Butterfield, was developed during Hopkins’s Oxford years when buildings were being erected in that architectural tradition.

This study could have shown Hampstead’s influence on Hopkins’s artistic development. Hampstead was home to Hopkins and many prominent artists, and a site of much great art. Ford Madox Brown’s *Work* (1852-68) captures navvies installing sewers on Hampstead Road towards the Heath. Phillips might have situated Maria Giberne’s *Garden, Hampstead* (c.1863) and Hopkins’s own *North Road, Highgate* (1862) within the milieu of Hampstead art. Constable did over fifty paintings, among them *Branch Hill Pond* (1819,