

G. M. Hopkins “A Sensuousness Technical Poet”: An Inventor

Jasvir Kaur^{1*} Dr. Amit Dhawan²

¹ Research Scholar, SBBS University, Jalandhar

² Assistant Professor, SBBS University, Jalandhar

Abstract – In this paper I would like to examine some interesting prospective which made Hopkins differ from others. Hopkins' had outstanding skill to understand his internal feeling and sensitivity for his surrounding especially for nature and religion but the way he invented his own theory of poetry was exceptional. He invented his own language for his poetry which later known as possible rhythms. Hopkins' concept of poetry is a combination of music, painting and poetry. Before him the Romantic tradition of Wordsworth and Keats was on trend. Hopkins found a tradition in English poetry which was older and stronger than the one in possession in his day. He found a rhythmic tradition which could cut under and around the “running” or “common” rhythm of the nineteenth century.

Key Words – Technicality, Thought and Feeling towards Nature, Possible Rhythms.

-----X-----

As Hopkins was a gifted painter and has a great leaning towards music, he desired to imbibe the silent features of music and painting in poetry. Naturally he set a difficult task for a poet. He is very must clear that thought, delight and inspiration come together and just as a child is born with the co-operation of father and mother, poetry is born with the co-operation of thought and feeling. Hopkins' poetry is basically about the relationship between man, nature and God. He started his career as a sensuous poet like John Keats. His early poetry echoes with the romantic tradition later on after his conversion he shunned all his sensuousness and became an ascetic but shunning sensuousness was not an easy task there was a great made a happy reconciliation of those though Dons Scouts who said that God is supreme beauty and he is present in all the objects of nature. Hopkins' poems reveal the presence of a God of infinite goodness and beauty in Nature and they are full of excited joy at the meaning and reality given to nature by the religious concept[1]. Hopkins's passion for nature and his mastery over the resources of language enabled him to give us vivid and striking pictures of nature[2]. In the poem “The Windhover” we get the striking pictures of nature.

*I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of
daylight's dauphin, dapple- dawn-drawn Falcon in his
riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air and
striding*

*High there, how he rung upon the rein of a
wimpling wing[3].*

The Windover

In this poem The Windhover the falcon serves as a direct symbol of Christ. The perfect self-control and the poised daring of the falcon bring home to the poet the spiritual riches of Christ. In the last three lines of his sonnet Hopkins suggests that even the humblest objects, events and actions can give off the radiance of the obviously beauty Falcon. In these last three lines Christ's humility and suffering, rather than his princely glory, have been indicated[4].

Hopkins' was against that kind of poetry which have lack of ideas. In his letter to R.W Dixon he writes:

*Insight is more sensitive in fact is more perfect
earlier in life than later and especially towards
elementary impressions. I remember that crimson
and pure blues once saw, but can hardly dwell on it
and should not care to do so. Another is – or it
comes to one of the above- the greater impatience
with technical faults. In the particular case of
Tennyson's “Ode to Memory” I find in my own case
of all these: it has a mysterious stress of feeling
especially in the refrain – I am to my Loss less
sensitive to that it has no great meaning of any
importance nor power of thought -I am to my
advantage more alive to that, from great familiarity
with the style I am deadened to its individuality and*

beauty, which is again my loss and I perceive the shortcomings of the execution, which is my own advance in critical power. Absolutely, speaking, I believe that if I were now reading Tennyson for the first time I should form the same judgement of him that I form as things are, but I should not feel, I should lose, I should never have gone through, that boyish stress of enchantment that this Ode and the "Lady of Shalott" and many other of his pieces once laid me under[5].

Here Hopkins stresses on the importance of technicality in poetry. In the poem to Robert Bridge he had expressed the idea that the poet should go on revising the drafts of the poem. Here in the letter he finds fault with Tennyson's poetry because he is unable to make a combination of thought and technique. He has all praise for John Milton and his poetry. He finds that Milton was able to write a kind of poetry which is technically marvelous[6]. In the letter to R.W Dixon he writes:

The Lake poets and all that school represent, as, it seems to me, the mean or standard of English style and diction which culminated in Milton but was never none of these men unless perhaps Landor were great masters of style, though their diction is generally pure, lucid and unarchaic[7].

In the same letter he describes the different schools of Sonneteers. He says that there is a school of William Morris, the other is of Pre-Raphaelites and the third is of romantic school. The fourth is of Lake Poets and also of Shelley and Landor. This letter is interesting because it reveals Hopkins idea of English poets and their style. Hopkins had a great liking for Thomas Hardy. His contemporary, he wrote in his letter to Robert Bridges. "In my judgement the amount of gift and genius which goes into novels in the English literature of this generation is perhaps not much inferior to what made the Elizabethan drama, and unhappily it is in great part wasted. How admirable are Blackmore and Hardy! Do you know the bonfire scene in the Return of Native and still better the sword – exercise scene in the Madding crowd breathing epic? Or the wife – sale in the Mayor of Casterbridge (read by Chance?)(8).

It is clear here that Hopkins likes those novels that contain great intensity of feeling the novels where language reaches the height of poetry. Hopkins theory of poetry is that thought and feeling should be bind together. A happy and unhappy scene may inspire the poet to write poetry. The feeling is passionate. It is just like a flame which is intense but momentary also. The poet preserves it for a long time. In other words a poet is struck by a particular kind of experience (9).. The experience arouses certain kind of feeling and inspires him to write poetry. The poem once written is revised and after that re-revised and finally it comes to its proper shape. Hopkins then expresses the view that there are different schools of poetry originating from great

writers like Shakespeare and Milton(10). Hopkins, born in 1844 saw nature in all her beauty in his childhood and youth. His youth he lived in nature and played in Nature. In his early age, he became an expert climber of trees. In his school days he played games and specialized in swimming. The study of architecture extended his prospect. All kinds of buildings the Gothic structure attracted him most. Architecture provided him a concrete vocabulary which he developed and perfected in his poetry(11). The first poem "Escorial" belongs to his school days and he got first prize. Almost Keatsian in description the poem is an attempt to combine nature and art. Perhaps Hopkins follows the 18th century concept of art and nature. The accuracy of Hopkins' description is unmistakable. It is found in many of his early poems. In "The Sea and Skylark":

"Left hand, off land, I hear the Lark ascend, His rash-fresh re-winded new skeined score,

In crips of curl off wild, winch& pour

And pelt music, till none's to spoil nor spend."(12)

The Sea and Skylark

The great quality of Hopkins was that he was sensuous but deeply religious. His early poem "The Escorial" A Vision of the Mermaids are written in this vein. The poems he wrote during Oxford days are both secular and religious poems. The poem "Rosa Mystica" is the culmination of his ideas of the Oxford period as the influence of the Oxford movement led by Newman, Keble and Pusey and Matthew Arnold brought great changes in Hopkins' world view. He sincerely felt that nature was a part of God's vast design and therefore, he must write poetry in Praise of God and His love(13). Hopkins has coined many novel and complicated terms to express his thoughts about the poetry as he was a successful poetic theorist. The term " Sprung Rhythm in a most spontaneous manner. It is different radically from the conventional Rhythm which Hopkins called standard rhythm, It is measured by feat of from one to four syllabus regularly, and for special impacts any number of weak or slack syllabus many be used. It has one stress which falls on the only syllable, if there is only one if there are more than scanning as above, on the first and so gives rise to fur kinds of feet a monosyllable accentual trochee Dactyl and the first Peaon. Hopkins developed his theory of Sprung Rhythm almost to perfection. Norman H. Mackenzie has beautifully brought it out when he remarked:

"It is surely no service to Hopkins to claim for the useful techniques of analysis presented in his Sprung Rhythm theory an unassailable perfection which no other prosodic system before or since his day can be said to have achieved"(14).

The new metre and new diction that Hopkins felt were required to ensure the distinguished quality in poetry, His diction was not be archaic or obsolete like that of the 19th century "Parnassian" poetry descending from Milton and Dryden to Wordsworth and Tennyson(15).

CONCLUSION

Hopkins style, diction and technique are fully applicable for his feeling that he wanted to express. Hopkins' uniqueness or invention in this respect has given him an incomparable position. Mainly Hopkins belongs with Shakespeare, Donne, T.S Eliot and the later Yeats as opposed to Spenser, Milton and Tennyson.

REFERENCES

1. Sanjay Kumar Swarnkar: Gerard Manley Hopkins A Critical Study, Chapter n.2, pgno.7, Atlantic Publishers, ISBN 81-269-0547-6.
2. Dr. S. Sen, Book: G.M Hopkins Selected Poems- A Critical Evaluation, Chapter n.6, pg.no. 62, Unique Publishers, ISBN 978-93-5187-187-3
3. Margaret R. Ellsberg: The Gospel Manley Hopkins, Selection from his Poems, Letters, Journals and Spiritual Writings, Plough Publisher House Walden, New York, USA, ISBN 13-978-0874868227(103).
4. W.H Gardner, Poems or Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Author's Preface,9.
5. Catherine Phillips, Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Oxford Authors, 253.
6. Second edition of Hopkins's Poems edited by Charles Williams (with an Appendix of Additional Poems and a Critical Introduction).
7. Phillips, Catherine, ed. Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Major Works. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 2002.
8. Mariani, Paul. Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Life. New York: Viking, 2008.
9. Sir Herbert Read, essay in literary Criticism, London: Faber & Faber 1951), 197.
10. Catherine Phillips (ed); G.M Hopkins. The Oxford Authors, 211
11. K.R.S Lyenger (1977). Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Man and the poet (New York: Haskell House Pvt. Ltd. 1977)
12. Margaret R. Ellsberg: The Gospel Manley Hopkins, Selection from his Poems, Letters, Journals and Spiritual Writings, Plough Publisher House Walden, New York, USA, ISBN 13-978-0874868227(101).
13. W. H. Gardner, "Introduction", Penguin, 1960), XXV.
14. N.H Mackenzie, Hopkins.(Edinburgh &London),109.10.
15. Dr. S. Sen: Book-G.M Hopkins Selected Poems, A Critical Evaluation, Unique Publishers, ISBN 978-93-5187-187-3.

Corresponding Author

Jasvir Kaur*

Research Scholar, SBBS University, Jalandhar