

## I. Introduction

In his poetry, Hopkins continually oscillates between two virtually opposite poetic trends – tradition and modernity. My aim in this thesis is to explore and analyze the tension between tradition and modernity in his poetry, and demonstrate that Hopkins's poetry is modern because of this tension.

The problem in examining the tension between tradition and modernity in Hopkins's poetry lies in the correct defining of the terms. Tradition in poetry is understood as a long established custom or belief viewed as a set of guiding source. However, it also bears the connotation of orthodoxy and concepts from the distant past, which the living generation may find preposterous. An example of the first instance is seen in Hopkins borrowing the accentual meter from the Anglo-Saxon poetry and the Welsh *cynyhanedd* for his unique sprung rhythm. However, paradoxically it is this very sprung rhythm that freed the poetic meter from the fetters of Victorian tradition and paved way for the free verse that Eliot was to use later. Tradition as orthodoxy in Hopkins's poetry is pervasive in the sense that his poems are heavily influenced by the philosophy of Duns Scotus, the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius and biblical references in his poetry are copious.

Modernity, simply defined is something modern. If something is modern, then it must break away from the existing tradition. This certainly does not mean anti-traditionalism because "the most individual parts of [the poet's] work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously" (qtd. in Brooks 106). Hopkins's break away from the Victorian tradition and his employing a meter, similar to the dominant meter of the Anglo-Saxon poetry justifies the above statements. Anyway, Hopkins's poems were modern not because of the mere use of sprung rhythm in the Anglo-Saxon way, but because of the total complex of style, in

which the natural strong beat of the freer kind of accentual verse is reinforced by the alliteration, assonance, internal rhyme, and half-rhyme.

Modernity certainly is a wider phenomenon that encompasses every breakaway from the commonly held conviction. Nevertheless, this thesis will try to see Hopkins's poetry as modern especially with reference to the literary trend that swept both sides of the Atlantic between the Wars – modernism. The most representative characteristic of modernism was the never-ending tug-of-war between tradition and originality. Providing historical background upon modernism Stanley Sultan writes:

In 1967, Frank Kermode postulated “two phases of modernism, our own and that of fifty years ago,” a tradition oriented strain “affirming a relation of complementarity with the past” and, “between them, a continuity of crisis,” a successor “anti-traditional” phase. (102)

This extract clearly points out that the concept of tradition will certainly popup as we talk of modernity. Considering this, in the second chapter, entitled “Modernity and Tradition”, I have briefly explored the concepts ‘Modernity’ and ‘Tradition’ providing some historical background to Modernity and explaining it in relation to tradition. I believe that concepts like Modernity and Tradition will be too broad to work with. So to narrow it down, I have first enumerated as what will count as modernity and tradition in Hopkins's poetry, and have provided a brief exposition of the terms enumerated.

The third chapter, which is the textual analysis, moves on a three step process. First step is to analyze Hopkins's poetry in relation to tradition. This step has two areas of focus. The first is discussing Hopkins's major and most ambitious work “The Wreck of the Deutschland” both as a poem and as work of spiritual exercise,

according to the rule of St. Ignatius. This analysis reveals structural orthodoxy and underscores thematic orthodoxy in the poem.

The second area, with which the first step deals, is the pervasive influence of the Bible in his poetry. This area does not simply point out biblical imagery and allusions in his poetry, but will show that biblical influence is present in his poetry to an obnoxious extent. Such obnoxious use not only challenges his position as a modern poet but makes his look too orthodox and too traditional.

Despite all these, in the second step, I deal with Hopkins's poetry as modern. This I do by revealing the originality and experimentation of language and technique in his poetry. It is interesting to note that "The Wreck of the Deutschland" was rejected by a catholic magazine because of its oddness. In analyzing the originality and experimentation of language and technique, I focus especially in his celebrated "sprung rhythm", his use of alliteration and assonance, his complex sentence structure, his use of fresh words that he himself coins, his theory of inscape and instress, his purposeful violation of the rules of grammar, his arrogance in breaking of a word, for instance "king-/ dom"(Hopkins 69) just to make his alliteration go; which makes his poems sound to many readers "like a cat yowling in the backyard" (Engle i) but to some like Auden and Berryman a model to work with.

The final step will explore the tension. It compares both tradition and modernity in Hopkins poetry and shows how the welding of apparently opposite classes of things can generate unexpected yet fruitful results. Say, for instance, how a poem with Biblical content in an experimental form can virtually efface the orthodoxy out of it. But more interestingly, this chapter shows how the welding of same class of things too can generate unexpected yet fruitful results. This I do by showing how

when the inspiration from Bible and the philosophy of Scotus are brought together can generate seemingly religious yet very sensuous poems.

Already stated, this dissertation is an investigation into the tension between tradition and modernity in Hopkins's poetry. More precisely, it studies the ways tension is generated and the results it produces. The "Conclusion" sums up all the chapters, cites passages that supports the proposition that modern poetry welds past and the present, and suggests other possible related themes of study.

## II. Modernity and Tradition

### Introduction

The brief discussion in “Introduction” claims that these two concepts -- modernity and tradition are mutually inclusive. There is no modernity without the legacy of tradition. However, the most defining trait of modern work of art is that it "consists in a revolt against the prevalent style... and modernism does not establish a prevalent style of its own; or if it does, it denies itself, thereby ceasing to be modern" (*Literary Modernism* 13). Inferring from the above citation, it would be more appropriate to say that modernity and tradition are neither inclusive nor exclusive.

In course of defining modernity all we can do is rely on its dictionary meaning that it is a state of being modern. Otherwise it is not obvious what we mean by the word modernity. Its meanings are elusive and changing: the modern is, by its nature, transitory; “contemporary” is a quality that vanishes as soon as we name it. There are as many modernities and traditions as there are epochs and societies: the Renaissance age was modern compared to the Medieval, as Donne was to Chaucer. The “modernist” poetry of Eliot is now a standard classroom material, and *Ulysses* now strikes us more as a hymn than a sexually charged novel. The modern age cannot help but be tomorrow’s tradition.

What does this word modernity mean? When did it begin? Some believe that it began with the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the discovery of the Americas; others claim that it began with the birth of the nation-states and the institution of banking, the rise of mercantile capitalism, and the creation of the bourgeoisie; others emphasize the scientific and philosophical revolutions of the seventeenth century, without which we would have neither our technology nor our industries. Each of these opinions is partially correct; taken together they form a coherent explanation. For that

reason, perhaps, most cultural historians tend to favor the eighteenth century: not only did it inherit these changes and innovations, it also consciously recognized many of those characteristics that we now claim as ours.

Modernity began as a critique of religion, philosophy, morality, law, history, economics, and politics. The principal concepts and ideas of the modern age — progress, evolution, revolution, freedom, democracy, science, technology — were born from that criticism. A criticism of the world, of the past and present; a criticism of certainties and traditional values; a criticism of institutions and beliefs, the throne and the altar; a criticism of mores, a reflection on passion, sensibility, and sexuality; the discovery of the “other”: Chinese, Persians, American Indians; the changes of perspective in astronomy, geography, physics, biology. In the end, a criticism that was incarnated in history: the American Revolution, the French Revolution.

The nineteenth century may be seen as the apogee of modernity. The ideas born from criticism, which had a polemical value in the eighteenth century — democracy, the separation of church and state, the end of royal privileges, freedom of beliefs, opinions, and association — became the principles shared by both sides of the Atlantic. The West grew, extended its boundaries, and held fast.

However, at the end of the nineteenth century a deep unease spread through the centers of our civilization, one that affected the social, political, and economic systems as much as the systems of beliefs and values. The reactionary criticism — rationalism, skepticism — allied itself with a nostalgia for precapitalist societies.

So is the modernity at the end of the nineteenth century different from modernity of the earlier time? To this only we could answer an affirmative “yes.” And

it is this part of modernity, and especially modernity in literature, called literary modernism or simply modernism that this thesis is concerned with.

So what is literary modernism then? Literary modernism is no less complex and elusive than modernity itself. It is not a term to which a single meaning can be ascribed. It may be applied both to the content and to the form of a work, or to either in isolation. It reflects a sense of cultural crisis which was both exciting and disquieting, in that it opened up a whole new vista of human possibilities at the same time as putting into question any previously accepted means of grounding and evaluating new ideas. Modernism is marked by experimentation, particularly manipulation of form, and by the realization that knowledge is not absolute. Marx, Freud, and Darwin had unsettled the human subject from its previously secure place at the centre of at least the human universe, and had revealed its unwitting dependence on laws and structures outside its control and sometimes beyond its knowledge. Historical and material determinism, psychoanalytic theories which reveal the self as a pawn in a process dominated by an inaccessible unconscious play of forces, and a conception of evolution and heredity which situates humanity as no more than the latest product of natural selection—these theories conspired to threaten humanist self-confidence and to provoke a feeling of ideological uncertainty.

In so far as the Arts were concerned, such insecurity proved immensely productive. It engendered an aesthetics of experimentation, fragmentation, ambiguity, and nihilism. Modernism was built on a sense of lost community and civilization. It embodied a series of contradictions and paradoxes. Since it had no stable centre it could embrace a multiplicity of features of the modern sensibility which might have appeared, in a logical sense, mutually exclusive. The loss of a sense of tradition, for example, was a theme common to Modernist writers, but it was lamented by some in

an extreme form of reactionary conservatism, and celebrated by others as a means of liberation from the stranglehold of past practices. Revolution and conservatism coexisted, not necessarily peaceably, under the Modernist umbrella. The increasing dominance of technology was another prevalent Modernist preoccupation, but it was condemned by some as vehemently as it was embraced by others who saw it as the flagship of 20th-century progress.

Besides, modernism heavily borrowed from other diametrically opposite literary trends and movements. From Symbolism it took allusiveness in style and an interest in rarefied mental states. From Realism it borrowed an urban setting, and a willingness to break taboos. And from Romanticism came an artist-centered view, and retreat into irrationalism and hallucinations. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* describes modernism as:

...a literary movement, spanning the period of the last quarter of the nineteenth century in France and from 1890 in Great Britain and Germany to the start of the Second World War. It may also be viewed as a collective term for the remarkable variety of contending groups, movements, and schools in literature, art, and music throughout Europe over the same period: Symbolism, Post-Impressionism, Decadence, Fauvism, Cubism, Expressionism, Imagism, Vorticism, Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism and so on. The period was a time of confrontation with the public, typified by the issuing of manifestos, the proliferation of “little magazines”, and the rapid dissemination of avant-garde works and ideas across national boundaries or linguistic barrier. (654)

The above definition cannot give a concrete picture of modernism. But still it asserts the point that modernism was a diverse and complex movement and many

movements like Imagism and Futurism, that shares nothing in common, are categorized under it.

Why is it so irrationally diverse then? It is diverse and complex because as Irving Howe asserts “modernism does not establish a prevalent style of its own; or if it does, it denies itself, thereby ceasing to be modern” (13). So, what may be modern for Hopkins may not be modern for Eliot, and what may be modern for Eliot may not be modern for Berryman. This indicates that the source of modernism and tradition in every writer is different. One of the sources of modernity in Hopkins’ poetry *sprung rhythm* is very traditional today. If someone will write a poem following the model of *The Waste Land* today it will be a traditional poem. To be precise, every writer’s sources of modernity and tradition are different. Before analyzing Hopkins’ poetry as a blending of tradition and modernity I will enumerate and explain some of the sources of tradition and modernity in his poetry.

#### The Sources of Tradition and Modernity

There are many concepts that can be counted as the sources of tradition and modernity in Hopkins’ poetry. This section will first enumerate the sources of tradition and explain it and then it will take sources of modernity in the same way.

#### The Sources of Tradition

So what are the sources of tradition in Hopkins’ poetry? The philosophical and religious sources are many. Of the many sources this thesis will only consider the rules of St. Ignatius, and the Bible, although occasional references to the philosophy of Duns Scotus will be made. Of the poetic sources for tradition are, paradoxically, the *sprung rhythm*, the use of alliteration, and most of the same things that the thesis will claim as sources of modernity later in this chapter.

To be concise, the following paragraphs will explain, the rules of St Ignatius and discuss about the Bible.

### St Ignatius of Loyola and his *Spiritual Exercises*

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, born in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, was a Spanish ecclesiastic. He founded the Society of Jesus which and the Order of the Jesuits.

Loyola was born in Guipúzcoa. Before becoming a spiritual leader he tried many jobs. First he worked as a page and later entered military service. Significant turn occurred in his life only after 1521 when he was wounded at the siege of Pampeluna. While recovering, he read a book of lives of the saints, with the result that he resolved to devote himself to a spiritual life. In 1522 Loyola retired to a cave near Manresa and lived and prayed in great austerity for ten months, after which he undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

After his return to Spain, Loyola began his education, entering a grammar school and then going to University. While at the university he formed the pious fraternity that later developed into the Society of Jesus. Pope Paul III gave official confirmation to The Society of Jesus in 1540. The following year Loyola was elected first general of the order. In addition to administering the affairs of the rapidly growing order, he devoted his time to writing and completing his *Spiritual Exercises* which took its basic shape during his stay in Manresa.

The *Spiritual Exercises* were formulated by Loyola during his retirement at Manresa. He wrote this handbook to explain his method of leading people through an organized program of prayer and reflection. Today people know this method as the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. He developed this method of prayer by reflecting on his own experience of God and by speaking with anyone else he could find. These conversations continued throughout his life; through them the experience of many

women and men also contributed to the spiritual guide he developed. From these conversations came the carefully worked-out way of trying to discover what God asks of an individual.

*Spiritual Exercises* is essentially a manual for meditation on the meaning of life and on the development of a way of life. The meditations are divided into four periods or weeks: the first dealing with the reformation of a person affected by sin; the second, with the conformation of the reformed person to the Divine model, Jesus; the third, with the strengthening of the person so conformed through appreciation of the passion and death of Christ; and the fourth, with the transformation of the whole person in identification with the risen and triumphant Savior honoring God the Father.

This work does encourage the appreciation of nature as long as it does not lead to mere hedonism. In his *Spiritual Exercises* St. Ignatius writes:

Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.

And the other things on the face of the earth are created for man and that they may help him in prosecuting the end for which he is created.

From this it follows that man is to use them as much as they help him on to his end ...(14)

This was what Hopkins needed to justify his sensuous imagery in appreciating God in poems like “The Windhover” etc.

The Bible

Bible also called the Holy Bible, is the sacred book or Scriptures of Judaism and of Christianity. The Bible is a religious book, not only by virtue of its contents but also in terms of its use by Christians and Jews. It is read in practically all services of

public worship, its words form the basis for preaching and instruction, and it is used in private devotion and study. The language of the Bible has informed and shaped the prayers, liturgy, hymn of Judaism and Christianity, and western literature for all ages after its appearance.

Many confess that the Bible is an authority in the light of tradition in two ways: first, the full and sufficient guide in all matters of faith and practice, and second, the continuous belief and practice of the church since apostolic times. This thesis views Bible as a source of tradition in the first way.

It is commonly known that the Bible, in its hundreds of different translations, is the most widely distributed book in human history. Moreover, in all its forms, the Bible has been enormously influential, and not only among the religious communities that hold it sacred. The literature, art, and music of Western culture in particular are deeply indebted to biblical themes, motifs, and images. Translations of the Bible, such as the Authorized Version (or King James Version, 1611) and Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into German (first completed in 1534) not only influenced literature but also shaped the development of languages. Such effects continue to be felt in emerging nations, where translations of the Bible into the vernacular help to shape language traditions.

The influence of the Bible can be seen in all stages of the development of English language and literature. The presence of the Bible can be seen in the poetry of Geoffrey Chaucer to Donne; Milton to Eliot; Bradstreet to Byron; and Hopkins to Ginsberg. This hints us to the fact no one can escape the tradition she is born into.

The Sources of Modernity

What are the sources of modernity in his poetry then? What are the elements that makes Hopkins's poetry not just another Victorian poetry but 'modern?' What

makes Hopkins's poetry modern was in fact the overall impact of the forceful singing of the poetry influenced by the rules of St. Ignatius and the Bible in a 'discordant' rhythm, which attributed this to the 'excuse' that it tries to create the 'inscape' of the things in the poets.

However, I have counted "sprung rhythm" and Hopkins's theory of "inscape and instress" as sources of modernity in his poetry. The following paragraphs provides a brief exposition to these sources.

### The Sprung Rhythm

Sprung rhythm is an irregular system of prosody developed by the 19th-century English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. It is based on the number of stressed syllables in a line and permits an indeterminate number of unstressed syllables. In sprung rhythm, a foot may be composed of from one to four syllables. (In regular English meters, a foot consists of two or three syllables.) Because stressed syllables often occur sequentially in this patterning rather than in alternation with unstressed syllables, the rhythm is said to be "sprung." The sprung rhythm is the least forced, the most rhetorical, and emphatic of all possible rhythm. It combines, two seemingly opposite excellences – markedness of rhythm and naturalness of expression.

Hopkins claimed to be only the theoretician, not the inventor, of sprung rhythm. He saw it as the rhythm of common English speech and the basis of such early English poems as Langland's *Piers Plowman* and nursery rhymes such as "Ding, dong, bell/ Pussy's in the well."

Besides, Sprung rhythm is a bridge between regular meter and free verse. An example of Hopkins' use of it is in his poem "Spring and Fall" in which he addresses a young girl as, "MARGARET, are you grieving/ Over Goldengrove unleaving?" (88).

Because of all these, there are some advantages in using sprung rhythm. As

the poet would not be bound to a fixed number of syllables in every line, he can get nearer to the natural and sometimes more forcible rhythms of ordinary speech. And, not being bound to an underlying rhythm dictated by a predetermined meter, the poet has far greater freedom to make the sound of his words and phrases enhance his logical meaning. And Hopkins always attached great importance to the oratorical effect of poetry, insisting that poetry was meant to be read out loud and to be heard for its own sake even over and above the interest of meaning. But the most important advantage that use of sprung rhythm gave was to help him try to create the inscape of the object or event in his poetry.

#### Inscap and Instress

Gerard Manley Hopkins used two terms, "inscape" and "instress," which can cause some confusion, is a major key to the understanding of his poetry. The confusion exists because Hopkins never clearly defines these two terms. The meaning of these two terms is inferred through its use in Hopkins journals.

To accept the most widely accepted inference, by "inscape" he means the unified complex of characteristics that give each thing its uniqueness and that differentiate it from other things, and by "instress" he means either the force of being which holds the inscape together or the impulse from the inscape which carries it whole into the mind of the beholder. These concepts arise from the realization that for the artist a mere vague impression of natural beauty is unsatisfactory. "Inscap" is thus the distinctive pattern perceived in nature by the artist, the species of individually distinctive beauty, and "instress" is the effect on the artist's mind of the perceptions "inscaped."

With his theory of inscap and instress Hopkins occupies an important place in the poetic line that reaches from the major Romantic poets, especially Wordsworth

and Keats, to Pater, Yeats and the symbolists, and finally to Ezra Pound and the Imagists. His insistence that inscape was the essence of poetry and that consequently, what he called "Parnassian" poetry (i.e., competent verse written without inspiration) was to be avoided has much in common with the aestheticism of Walter Pater (one of his tutors at Oxford) and the Art for Art's Sake movement, and sounds very much like the theoretical pronouncements of the Imagists of the early twentieth century.

### III. Tension Between Tradition and Modernity in Hopkins's Poetry

In this chapter, I will first point out and discuss the orthodoxy and traditionalism in Hopkins's poetry. To achieve the goal stated, I will analyze his poem and reveal the extremity to which the *Spiritual Exercises* and *The Holy Bible* has informed and influenced his poetry. I will introduce Hopkins's longest and most ambitious poem "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and discuss how the Ode is a spiritual meditation according to the rule St. Ignatius (spiritual meditation according to the rule St. Ignatius as a source of both tradition and orthodoxy). I will also point out Hopkins's orthodoxy in appealing for the conversion of England and of dubbing Luther as "a beast of the waste wood" (58). In the second section of this chapter, I will take some other major poems (especially "God's Grandeur"), and discuss the pervasive presence of Bible (Bible as a source of both tradition and orthodoxy) in those poems.

In the second place, I will discuss Hopkins's bold and daring experimentation in technique and style with frequent references to sprung rhythm, instress, and inscape. Besides, I will try to lay bare the existentialist dilemma echoed in his poetry.

And finally. I will deal with the tension between the tradition and modernity in Hopkins's poetry.

#### I. Tradition and Hopkins Poetry

##### St. Ignatius and Hopkins's Poetry

Gerard Manley Hopkins blends his vocation as a Jesuit priest and as a poet in the poem "The Wreck of the Deutschland." The poem starts with Hopkins examination of the self and moves to the narration of the sinking of the ship Deutschland during a sea storm. The poem is an ode of thirty-five eight-line stanzas,

divided in two parts. The first ten stanzas, is only loosely connected with the second, and might quite easily stand as a complete poem by itself. Hopkins himself felt that the poem would have been more interesting if there were in it more of the wreck and less of discourse. Nevertheless, the poem is not primarily a narrative. It deals not so much as the actual wreck and the drowning of the nuns as with the effect of the tragedy on the poet himself, and this effect is nearly all contained in the first part. In fact, the first part is wholly the study of his own mind and self at the moment when the poem was written. Moreover, it relates to Hopkins's spiritual vicissitudes during his religious exercises as a novice prior to his becoming a Jesuit priest. Hopkins relates in detail various events through which he felt that God was guiding and comforting him. The second part is almost wholly narrative: the sailing of the ship, the rising of the storm, the wreck, the heroism, and death of the nuns – all described with passionate emotion. This wreck is described in the first seven stanzas. In the next fourteen stanzas, Hopkins relates the heroic acts of one of five German Franciscan nuns who had been exiled from Northern Germany because of the anti-Catholic Falck laws and who drowned with many of the other victims of the wreck. In the last four stanzas, Hopkins directly addresses God, and in the true spirit of St. Ignatius, implores God for the conversion of England.

A first reading of this poem does reveal any surprises in reference to the role of this heroic Franciscan nun. A closer reading of the poem shows how, in the same stanza where Hopkins is discussing the Franciscan nun, he suddenly introduces the name of Gertrude juxtaposed to the name of Luther, and ends the poetic configuration proclaiming Gertrude lies in Christ's good books and Luther in Christ's bad books.

It has become a common knowledge that at some point in his life Hopkins's burnt all his poetry and promised himself never to write again . Nevertheless, the

newspaper accounts of this tragedy had affected him so much that when he talked about it with his superior, the latter encouraged him to write a poem on the subject. On the approval from his superiors, he started with this poem.

In Hopkins's poetry the effects of the rules of Ignatius is clearly demonstrated. In his *Spiritual Exercises* St. Ignatian writes:

The First Prelude is a composition, seeing the place. Here it is to be noted that, in a visible contemplation or meditation—as, for instance, when one contemplates Christ our Lord, Who is visible—the composition will be to see with the sight of the imagination the corporeal place where the thing is found which I want to contemplate. I say the corporeal place, as for instance, a Temple or Mountain where Jesus Christ or Our Lady is found, according to what I want to contemplate. In an invisible contemplation or meditation—as here on the Sins—the composition will be to see with the sight of the imagination and consider that my soul is imprisoned in this corruptible body, and all the compound in this valley, as exiled among brute beasts: I say all the compound of soul and body. (26)

The passage emphasizes two points. First is “seeing the spot” which means the disciple is directed to re-create in his imagination in rich detail the whole matter of the meditation. The second “soul is imprisoned”, which is not as explicit as the first, ask the practitioner to imagine the events taking place within one's soul.

Hopkins successfully accomplishes in adhering to the spirit of St. Ignatius and writing poetry. In his poetry, religious meditation and poetic process become one. At first, Hopkins relies on the factual images of the wreck of the Deutschland. Besides, he weaves strands of mysticism, in the poetic figure of the Franciscan nun, which are

implied by the connotative name of Gertrude. At the same time, Hopkins fuses himself with the nun/Gertrude as sharing the mystic vision with Christ, fulfilling both jobs at the same time – doing his spiritual exercises and writing a poem.

Hopkins prepares the ground for his ultimate fusion with Christ already in the first part of the poem. In the first stanza of “The Wreck of the Deutschland” Hopkins writes:

Thou mastering me

God! giver of breath and bread;

World’s strand, sway of the sea

Lord of living and dead;

Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh,

And after it almost unmade, what with dread,

Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?

Over again I feel thy finger and find thee. (51)

In this stanza, Hopkins positions God first as his master, then his maker and ultimately his motivator or his guide. By doing so, he asserts that man is not only created and ruled by God but with faith and devoutness he can have a spiritual union with the creator himself.

Propounding the principle and foundation of the *Spiritual Exercises* St.

Ignatius writes:

Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.

And the other things on the face of the earth are created for man and that they may help him in prosecuting the end for which he is created. (14)

Bluntly put, it means every event is worthy if it happens to bring man back to God. Therefore, even the tragedy of the Deutschland is for Hopkins a pious occasion because it brings man back to God. It is through God's grace that man becomes aware of his need for God. From the second-last line of the seventh stanza to the end of the eighth stanza, Hopkins describes this sudden awareness:

Where none would have known of it, only the heart, being hard  
at bay,  
  
Is out with it ! Oh,  
  
We lash with the best or worst  
  
Word last ! How a lush-kept plush-capped sloe  
  
Will, mouthed the flesh-burst,  
  
Gush! – flush the man, the being with it, sour or sweet,  
  
Brim, in a flash, full ! – Hither then, last or first,  
  
To hero of Calvary, Christ's feet –  
  
Never ask if meaning, wanting it, warned of it – men go.  
  
(Hopkins 53 – 54)

Hopkins has a strong conviction that grace is an action which takes place only according to God's wishes and which requires self-sacrifice through love to God in order to gain salvation. Therefore, the poetic call of the heroic nun to Christ and the example she provides for the other people on the ship facing immanent death, represent a divine action by grace to help people to return to God. Consider these lines where the nun calls Christ to come quickly, which is followed by Hopkins's meditation upon the nun's word:

She to the black-about air, to the breaker, the thickly  
  
Falling flakes, to the throng that catches and quails

Was calling "O Christ, Christ, come quickly":

The cross to her she calls Christ to her, christens her wild-worst

Best.

The majesty! What did she mean?

Breathe, arch and original Breath.

Is it love in her of the being as her lover had been?

Breathe, body of lovely Death.

They were else minded then, altogether, the men

Woke thee with a we are perishing in the weather of Gen-

nesareth.

Or is it that she cried for the crown then,

The keener to come at the comfort for the feeling the combating

keen? (Hopkins 59)

Moreover, as mentioned before, the Ignatian meditation encourages the exercitant to form concrete images of the matter, no matter how abstract (check the first citation in this chapter from the *Spiritual Exercises*). Therefore, Hopkins consciously introduces the specific name of Gertrude into the poem to ascribe to one of the Franciscan nuns the mystic qualities that are associated with St. Gertrude. If he had meant to highlight the actions of the actual Franciscan nuns as German martyrs, he could have established their case by using their real names and explaining the reasons for their expulsion from Germany, namely the Falck laws, which had been very detrimental for the Catholic Church in Germany. However, Hopkins makes only brief mention of the Falck laws. He is not interested in historical facts. Rather he creates an analogy by juxtaposing the name of Gertrude, Christ's "lily," (58) Abel to the name of Luther, Cain "Beast of the waste wood" (Hopkins 58). He differentiates between evil and

good and shows and how a town, in this case, Eisleben, can be the birthplace of both.

Hopkins recounts:

She was first of five and came

Of a coifed sisterhood.

(O Deutschland, double a desperate name!

O world wide of its good!

But Gertrude, lily, and Luther, are two of a town,

Christ's lily and beast of the waste wood:

From life's dawn it is drawn down,

Abel is Cain's brother and breasts they have sucked the same. (Hopkins 58)

Besides, in stanza twenty-two, Hopkins tells that the nuns are five, and that this number is also a cipher for Christ's suffering. He writes:

Five! the finding and sake

And cipher of suffering Christ

Mark, the mark is of man's make

And the word of it Sacrificed.

But he scores it in scarlet himself on his own bespoken,

Before-time-taken, dearest prized and priced --

Stigma, signal, cinquefoil token

For lettering of the lamb's fleece, ruddying of the rose-flake. (Hopkins 58)

Again, the reference here is indirectly to St. Gertrude, since she, like St. Francis and other Saints, had received the stigmata. The stigmata are a sign of God's grace and a means by which, they may be raised to the highest perfection, and all rebellious movements may be calmed within them.

In stanza twenty-eighth, Hopkins sees in the cry of the nun a mystic vision and wants to join in and fuse his words with hers.

But how shall I ... make me room there:

Reach me a ... Fancy, come faster --

Strike you the sight of it? look at it loom there,

Thing that she ... there then! the Master,

*Ipsa*, the only one, Christ, King Head:

He was to cure the extremity where he had cast her;

Do, deal, lord it with living and dead;

Let him ride, her pride, in his triumph, dispatch and have done  
with his doom there.

Hopkins fuses his sensuous emotions with the nun's words and in stanza thirty cries out:

Jesu, heart's light,

Jesu maid's son,

What was the feast followed the night

Thou hadst glory of this nun? (Hopkins 61)

Moreover, Hopkins ends the poem in spiritual dialogue with God, praying in these words:

Our King back, oh, upon English souls!

Let him easter in us, be a dayspring in the dimness of us, be

a crimson-cressed east,

More brightening her, rare-dear Britain, as he reign rolls,

Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest,

Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' chivalry's throng's

Lord.

This stanza clearly demonstrates his appeal for the return of England to Catholicism.

In conclusion, we can assert that by focusing on Hopkins' Ignatian fervor, the poem "The Wreck of the Deutschland" reveals how Hopkins the priest, the mystic, and Hopkins the poet have become one. Poetic inspiration and Ignatian meditation have become the means, the action of Divine Grace, by which Hopkins reaches God.

#### Biblical Influences in Hopkins's Poetry

It is not simply the Ignatian rules that rule his poetry. The Bible equally holds sway upon his poetry. Although in many of his poem Hopkins does not use any specific quotations from the Bible, he does employ images in almost all of his poems that evoke a multiplicity of biblical verses and scenes. Through its biblical imagery, the poems manage to invoke, at various points, images of the Creation, the Fall, Christ's Passion and the like.

#### The Light Imagery

"The world is charged with the grandeur of God" (66), the opening line of "God's Grandeur" takes us to the first chapter of the Bible. One cannot help but remember these lines from the Bible: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1.3). The word "charged" leads one to think of a spark or light, and so thoughts of the Creation, which began with a spark of light, are quickly evoked. This imagery of light is not limited to "God's Grandeur" only. For instance, consider these lines from "The Wreck of the Deutschland,"

O at lightening and lashed rod...

To flash from the flame ... to the grace...

To the star ... starlight ... glow glory thunder ...

Thou art lightening and love ... warm ...

... wiry and white-fiery... (Hopkins 52).

Or consider the first three lines from “The Windhover”, where Hopkins gets a glimpse of “this morning morning’s minion, king – / dom of daylight dauphin, drapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his/ riding.” See how words like “lightening”, “flash”, “starlight”, and “fiery” from “The Wreck of the Deutschland” and words like “daylight”, “dawn”, and double repetition of “morning” too direct us to the light imagery from the first chapter of the Holy Bible.

Nevertheless, the most striking light imageries are from "God's Grandeur" itself. In the remaining part of the octave after the light imagery, he will show us the how a terrible uneasy lurks upon humankind because of their irresponsibility toward the Almighty and his creation. However, he will end the sestet in a hopeful note, consoling that nobody can ever douse the light off. We are and will always be under the benevolent “light” of the Almighty.

#### The Olive Imagery

Hopkins is defiantly affirmative in his assertion that God's work is still to be seen in nature, if men will only concern themselves to look. Refusing to ignore the discoveries of modern science, he takes them as further evidence of God's grandeur rather than a challenge to it. To do this he brings two images side by side from the “God's Grandeur” where he says, “It will flame out like shining from shook-foil;/It gathers to a greatness, like of the oil”(66). With “shook-foil”, Hopkins is trying to bring the mage of gold-leaf foil and with “ooze of the oil”, he is trying to bring the image of olive oil. Gold-leaf foil is related to achievement in Physics and the olive oil, on the other hand, is an ancient sacramental substance, used for centuries for food (1 King 17.12-13), medicine (Luke 10.34), lamplight (Exodus 27.20), and religious

purposes (Psalms 23.5). This oil thus traditionally appears in all aspects of life, much as God suffuses all branches of the created universe. Thus, both the images of the foil and the olive oil bespeak an all-permeating divine presence that reveals itself in intermittent flashes or droplets of brilliance.

Moreover, to the casual reader, this image of the oozing of the crushed olive oil may seem unnecessarily crude. It contrasts sharply with the brilliant imagery of gold foil from the Physics. The word "ooze," on the other hand, generally possesses a disagreeable connotation. Yet this contrast must be deliberate. For the Incarnation is, after all, a very crude thing. This is because God is not only omnipotent and omniscient but also possesses immanent beauty. Yet, denying all those privilege he comes down to the land of sinners and take the form of a man. Moreover, he subjects Himself to the limitations of humanity, in order to save men who are still sinners. Thus, the olive oil imagery is yet another imagery Hopkins carefully places in his poetry.

#### The Bird Imagery

Hopkins is complex when he uses the bird imagery in his poetry. The most noted use is in the poem "The Windhover" which is subtitled "To Christ Our Lord" where he compares the Falcon with Christ himself in these starting lines:

I caught this morning morning's minion, king –  
 dom of daylight's dauphin, drapple-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  
 In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,  
 As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and

gliding

Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding

Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of, the mastery of the thing! (69)

Hopkins was certainly referring to the force and liberty the birds possessed. However, this idea of comparing Christ can be seen as blasphemous by devout Christians. This was because God placed man over a higher rank than the birds (Genesis 1-2). But, it was certainly not this that Hopkins was alluding to. Apart from the force and liberty, he was referring to the faith and belief of the birds which is akin to Christ. Christ did not recant and suffered because he believed in his heavenly father, and thus resurrection followed. The birds behave in the way of Christ. They neither “sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly father (God) feeds them” (Matt. 6.26). They have immense faith in our heavenly father.

The Rod Imagery

There is yet another important, the “rod” imagery from “God’s Grandeur” which finds an appropriate correspondence in Isaiah:

And there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him ...His delights *is* in the fear of the Lord ... Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.

(11.1-5)

These lines from Isaiah clearly suggests that by “rod” in “Why do men then now not reckon his rod?”(66) from “God’s Grandeur”, Hopkins means Christ himself. Thus, here he expresses his annoyance towards the people for not heeding to Christ’s teaching, who subjected himself to the humiliation of not only human form but also of human suffering.

These influences from the Holy Bible, and the influences from the rules of St. Ignatius with color of mysticism, justify Hopkins's poetry as deeply submerged in tradition and orthodoxy. However, this dependence upon the past is not confined to Victorian period, but to a much greater realm.

## II. Modernity and Hopkins Poetry

### Experimentation in Technique and Style

The technical innovations, which Hopkins introduced in his poetry begins with "The Wreck of the Deutschland". It was especially due to his to capture the "inscape" of things and events in his poetry. To achieve the goal stated, he had to free himself from the straitjacket of Victorianism and Parnassian poetry, and look for a new meter and a new poetical language. The new meter was Hopkins called the "sprung rhythm" and his poetical language was the current language but heightened to such degree that it was transformed out of recognition.

"The Wreck of the Deutschland" and "The Windhover" were Hopkins major poem as regards his experiments in technique. The meter used here is the "sprung rhythm." This meter, he thought, would have the flexibility of prose rhythm with real pattern capable of endless subtleties and varieties. The sprung rhythm was a natural result of Hopkins's theory of "inscape" as the end and aim of poetry. The new rhythm was dictated by living individuated speech, just as the new diction was dictated by a heightening of the current language of the day.

Hopkins felt that the sprung rhythm offered him all the freedom of Walt Whitman's free verse without its sprawling shapelessness. Hopkins also said that his poetry was less to be read than heard. The first stanza from "The Windhover" is ample proof to sustain his claim:

I caught this morning morning's minion, king –

dom of daylight's dauphin, drapple-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  
In his ecstasy! (69)

See, how with the flexibility of the sprung rhythm Hopkins grasps motion of the falcon's flight. Reading the poem synchronously both visually and orally certainly makes the reader feel the flight of the bird. The poem starts with "I caught this morning morning's minion" which brings the image of the wide morning sky, where we look for the "unknown" minion on Hopkins's report. And, with the second line we are awe-struck with the flight of the bird that looks like an arrow shot straight toward us. To achieve this effect Hopkins uses the continuous /d/ alliteration and heightens it with forming a compound word "drapple-dawn-drawn" with the same /d/ alliteration. Notices, how he daringly breaks the word "king-/dom" to suddenly make us face the arrow of the falcon's, and to check the bluntness that would have resulted, had he started the second line with "of." Compare these two lines:

dom of daylight's dauphin, drapple-dawn-drawn Falcon  
of daylight's dauphin, drapple-dawn-drawn Falcon

See how on starting the second line of "The Windhover" makes the bird's flight blunt and less forceful.

Hopkins's originality of method in his poetry is twofold: he uses a rhythm the like of which is never been heard by the Victorian ears; and he treats words (and grammar also) with a freedom which is even disconcerting even today. Nevertheless, this originality and a great daring is not limited "The Windhover" and "The Wreck of

the Deutschland” only. Consider how, from the opening words in “The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo”, through the technique alone, Hopkins shows desperateness and a burst of passion:

How to keep – is there any any, is there none such, nowhere  
 konwn some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace, latch or  
 catch or key to keep  
 Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, ... from vanishing  
 away?  
 O is there no frowning of these wrinkles, ranked wrinkles deep,  
 Down? No waving off these most mournful messengers, still  
 messengers, sad and stealing messengers of grey? (91)

A coiled energy that pervades through these above lines. It especially results from the simple use of asyndeton which helps him merge a couple of sentences into one. *The Merriam Webster's 11<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Dictionary* defines asyndeton as an “omission of the conjunctions that ordinarily join coordinate words or clauses.” But this simple omission of conjunctions can produce tremendous compression and energy in rhetorics as in this famous line “I came, I saw, I conquered.” Similarly, although, the above quoted lines from “The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo” looks like three simple question but there are many more embedded within indicating the presence of a coiled energy that expresses a burst of passion. The targeted effect also results from the repetition of the same words, assonance, consonant chiming, the sprung rhythm, and most importantly from Hopkins’s desire to create an inscape of his passion.

Throughout his poetry, Hopkins puts his great technical skill at the service of his deepest insights, and the packed utterance in the poem is simply amazing. Because of Hopkins’s untiring dedication to fertility, originality and modernity in the

spheres of language, imagery and versification, his poetry has a rare lyric intensity, unheard of after the Romantics:

As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and

Gliding

Rebuffed the big wind.

... No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillion

Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,

Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold vermilion.

(Hopkins 69)

The lyric intensity in these lines from "The Windhover" is incredible. Nevertheless, any reader can note that the lyric intensity of the above lines results not only from the rhythm, rhyme and alliteration but also from the corpulent rich imagery pervasive in these lines.

Besides all these, the directness of speech is one of the most important and original contributions of Hopkins to the technique of poetry. Hopkins really heightened the language of his day, raising the language to a higher level of expressiveness. Several means had to be employed to achieve this object. There is, for instance, the frequent use by Hopkins of interjection. His poetry is studded with Oh's, Ah's, and O's. These exclamations always strike a note of true feeling. Wherever they are used, they show the writer's sincerity and seriousness. Thus in his poetry, we read:

O feel-of-primrose hands, O feet (Hopkins 32)

O Father, not under thy feathers nor ever ... (Hopkins 55)

O unteachably after evil, but uttering truth, (Hopkins 57)

O Deutschland, double a desperate name!

O world wide of its good! (Hopkins 58)

... valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume...

...more dangerous. O my Chevalier! (Hopkins 69)

Then there are the questions which the poet asks in such a way as to reveal the depths of his heart. The Deutschland poem is studded with such question. The terror and fear expressed in the following line, “and dost thou touch me afresh?”(51) is noteworthy. There is a hopeless question in the following, “[W]here, where was a, where was a place?”(52). In addition, in these lines from “Thou Art Indeed Just” the hopelessness is even higher with the very informal way of addressing God as “sir”:

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend

With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.

Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must

Disappointment all I endeavour end? (Hopkins 106)

Closely connected with the tendency to ask question is the frequency with which Hopkins uses the form of address thus approaching affective speech. The Deutschland poem starts with a cry to god in the opening lines. The poem continues in this strain: “O Christ, O God” (Hopkins 52). Later he addresses St. Francis (59), the drowned nuns (57), and again Christ and God (61, 63). At one point he addresses “Fancy,” (60) and he addresses his own heart, too: “My heart, but you were dovewinged,” (52). The interjection, the exclamatory phrase, and the form of address, then, are some of the more obvious means by which Hopkins heightened the logical language of mere information.

Hopkins often ignores the traditional syntax. One favourite device, as already discussed above, is the use of asyndeton to merge many sentences. But this is not all. Sometimes, for instance, the relation between the clauses or even between two coordinated sentences is indicated through mere uses of the colon. The colon

precisely introduces the dependent, though coordinated, sentence; it signals the reader to attend what immediately follows. For instance he writes, “Thou knowest the walls, alter and hour and night; / The swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl of thee trod ...” (52).

Another frequently used device, to disturb the traditional syntax and creates a Hopkins trademark, is the dash. It signals attention to the contrast between two sentences in such lines as “Never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it – men go” (54). Sometimes, the dash introduces an afterthought or the correction of the foregoing statement as when he says, “Comfortless unconfessed of them – / No not uncomforted ...” (61). There are as many as twenty-two colons and twenty-four dashes in the *Deutschland* poem alone. If we do not understand the significance of these reading signs in Hopkins poetry, what he says often becomes obscure.

Hopkins defiance of the rules of grammar results most importantly from his modernizing of the language. He follows the logic of his experience rather than the logic of the system: what first presents itself to the poet’s mind is expressed first. Thus the psychological subject of a sentence or phrase may not be the same as the logical subject as, for instance, in the following line, when he contemplates, “The Majesty! What did she mean?” (Hopkins 59). The inverse order in another consequence of this logic of experience: “Into the snows she sweeps / Hurling the heaven behind, / The *Deutschland*, on Sunday” (Hopkins 55).

Language in his poetry was greatly influenced by his desire to express precisely the inscape and instress of external things and of his own mind as well. One such way, which is already discussed, was to find new compound words and epithets as in the case of “drapple-dawn-drawn” (69) from “The Windhover”. “The Wreck of the *Deutschland*” is also strewn with such compound adjectives: “dappled-with-

damson” (53) west; “American-outward-bound” (55); “before-time-taken”(58); “sodden-with-its-sorrowing” (60) heart; “the last-breath” (62) penitent spirits; etc.

There are still other two similar methods. One was to use two or three separate words as a single adjective. For instance, the Deutschland poem opens thus, “Thou mastering me / God!” (51). Here, what the poet means to say is thou god mastering me. Hopkins treats the whole of the first line as an adjective for “God.” In stanza thirty-two of the same poem we have the expression “past all grasp God” (62) where the words “past all grasp” are collectively used as an adjective for God to mean that God is beyond all human comprehension. Post position of the adjective is another feature; for instance, “womb-life grey” (53). Compound words formed in different ways abound in his poems: “lush-kept-plush-capped” (54), “flesh-burst” (54), “flint-flake” (55), “white-fiery” (55), “heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled” (62), and “A miracle-in-Mary-of-flame” (62). All this is undoubtedly original, striking, and even arresting, novel, and modern but certainly not easy to comprehend or admire.

Again, as already discussed, alliteration, assonance and internal rhyme are other devices integral to Hopkins’s theory of language for the purpose of bringing out the inscape and instress of the objects. The previous discussion restrained itself within “The Windhover.” Here are some examples from “The Wreck of the Deutschland” of the use of these devices: “I feel thy finger and find thee” (51); “O at lightening and lashed rod” (52); “Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle” (52); “stroke and a stress that stars and storm deliver” (53); “The goal was a shoal” (55); “wiry and white fiery” (55); “and canvas and compass, the whorl and the wheel” (56) etc. Indeed, Hopkins’s ingenuity in this respect is amazing.

Pondering upon all these experiments in style and technique Hopkins is undoubtedly a modern poet. He shows a great capacity for capturing complex spiritual

states in vividly symbolic pictures, as he does in the following stanza of the Deutschland poem:

I am soft sift  
 In an hourglass – as the wall  
 Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,  
 And it crowds and it combs to the fall; (Hopkins 42).

Throughout the poem this metaphoric invention enables him to portray completely the spiritual drama which he is describing and memorable too is the stanza containing a picture of the ship sailing into the snowstorm: we have here a striking example of Hopkins's new realism and his revolutionary use of language already illustrated above:

Into the snow she sweeps,  
 Hurling the haven behind,  
 The Deutschland, on Sunday; and so the sky keeps,  
 For the infinite air is unkind, (Hopkins 55)

#### Existential Dilemma in Hopkins Poetry

Existentialist awareness is present in Hopkins's most ambitious poem "The Wreck of the Deutschland." This awareness was triggered by the "natural" death of the German nuns. Moreover, this awareness precedes the mass murder of European Jews, the genocides in Cambodia and Rwanda, the merciless murder of more than twenty in the Nepalese April Uprising and various other persecutions and state-sponsored programs of collective homicide, and may even seem quaint today.

However, in language as strong, original, and rich as the English Hopkins imprints the event deep into our psyche. Hopkins doesn't sugarcoat the shipwreck. Instead he points blankly the murderous capacity of the world to destroy fragile human beings. People die senselessly. Children perish before their parents' eyes.

Prayers for a miraculous delivery go unanswered. Those generous to save others life becomes the first to die. The innocent are destroyed along with the sinful:

One stirred from the rigging to save  
 The wild woman-kind below,  
 With a rope's end round the man, handy and brave –  
 He was pitched to his death at a blow ...  
 ... They fought with God's cold—  
 And they could not and fell to the deck  
 (Crushed them) or water (and drowned them) or rolled  
 With the sea-romp over the wreck.  
 Night roared, with the heart-break hearing a heart-broke  
 rabble,  
 The woman's wailing, the crying of child without check ...  
 (Hopkins 56-57)

Herein is the existentialist awareness as it sees the human predicament: alone amid an accidental universe, its boundaries without end, stars dying and being born in a random, ultimately purposeless process of following out the cosmic consequences of the Big Bang.

The subtle use of language and the rising of existential awareness by Hopkins may not appeal to those who champion literary decorum and adhere blindly to tradition. However, Hopkins's poetry offers us a syntax, a vocabulary, and an idea that challenges Victorian orthodoxy in those matters, and achieves such defamiliarization that his poetry can be deemed as nothing but modern.

### III. The Tension

Basing on the preceding analysis, it can be safely assumed that “Tradition and Modernity” are neither contradictory nor exclusive. They are merely two different classes of things which can in many ways interact beneficially. However, the interaction isn’t that simple and the atmosphere of tension lurks constantly.

The Holy Bible and *The Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius were the bases upon I stood to claim Hopkins poetry as traditional. And, it was citing Hopkins’s experimentation in style and technique and the existential consciousness present in his poetry I analyzed and discussed his poetry as modern.

However, modern poetry is not that simple to analyze. Since it was the most incoherent of movements, it was something like the elephant for the blinds. What is seemingly a realistic work may be a perfect model of modern art as it was in the case of D. H Lawrence. Viewed casually, Lawrence’s novels were realistic, which is opposite to modern, and the sexual shock in his works could not supersede those of Byron’s. Nevertheless, when we take both realism and sexual frankness at the same time, we realize that Lawrence too was a guru of modern art.

The same is true in case of Hopkins. Bible per se may indicate tradition. But when Biblical references are yoked forcefully with Hopkins experimentation and oddities of technique the result is not a hymn but something like a “cat yowling in the backyard” (Engle i). These lines from stanza twenty-seven of “The Wreck of the Deutschland” are perfect sample to support the above proposition:

The jading and jar of the cart,  
 Time’s tasking, it is fathers that asking for ease  
 Of sodden-with-its-sorrowing heart,  
 Not danger, electrical horror; the further it finds  
 The appealing of the Passion is tenderer in prayer apart:

Other, I gather, in measure her mind's

Burden, in wind's burly and beat of endragoned seas. (60)

These lines, simply paraphrased, mean that the reason to call God was the tiring unpleasantness of daily life, not the horror of thunderstorm. Human beings find much peace in contemplating Christ's suffering in solitary prayer and while others are afraid of the sea the nun was not troubled because of those things.

But when read aloud and carefully one won't get the poem merely the way I paraphrased above. One can't help but wonder Hopkins's mastery of expressing the dullness of routine work through the repetition of /j/ σουνδ ιν φαδινη ανδ φαρ, ανδ μορεοπερ, φυρτηερ συππορτινη ιτ ωιτη τη ε χονσεθυεντ πρεσενχε οφ δουβλε /τ/ σουνδ ιν Time's tasking." The absurd use of "fathers", the coining of a complex adjective "sodden-with-its-sorrowing", the naming of thunderstorm as "electrical horror", the off-beat rhythm, and the heavy assonance are some of his technique that makes it a complex work that clearly alludes to the Bible, and yet, is unacceptable by a Jesuit magazine as *unBiblelike*.

Inspired with St. Ignatius idea "to see with the sight of the imagination the corporeal place where the thing is found which I want to contemplate" (26) and with Duns Scotus idea of "haecceitas" (impulse behind any individual and momentary materialization of ultimate reality) or in Hopkins's words "this-ness" of things, he presented such concrete details in his poetry that Pound and other Imagists practiced much later. Consider these lines from "Duns Scotus's Oxford" where in just four compressed lines Hopkins's presents a graphic picture of Oxford:

Towery city and branchy between towers;

Cuckoo-echoing, bell-swarmed, lark-charmed, rook-racked,

river-rounded;

The dapple-eared lily below thee; that country and town did

Once encounter in, here coped and poised powers; (79)

Or consider these lines from “The Wreck of the Deutschland” where Hopkins imagines the “corporeal” incident:

Into the snow she sweeps,

Hurling the haven behind,

The Deutschland, on Sunday; and so the sky keeps,

For the infinite air is unkind,

And the sea flint-flake, black-backed in the regular blow,

Sitting Eastnortheast, in cursed quarter, the wind;

Wiry and white-fiery the whirlwind-swivelled snow

Spins to the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps. (55)

Both of these above cited stanzas clearly exhibit Hopkins’s innovative use of language which makes his poems a picture-poetry (Picture poetry as not appreciated by the traditional standards). Hopkins’s was never an iconoclast in introducing these innovations to poetry. He remained within the framework of tradition, orthodoxy, and religious values and produced modern, unorthodox and seemingly sacrilegious (as when he addresses God in one of his terrible sonnets “Thou Art Indeed Just” as “sir”) poetry. He searched within the framework of tradition, orthodoxy, and catholic religious values for ideas that will help him rationalize the artistic leap that he dared to take in his poetry. For instance, the graphicness in his poetry as a technique was attributed to the “imagining of the corporeal place” (26) from the rules of St. Ignatius, and the “this-ness” of Duns Scotus. Moreover, he was quick witted to borrow heavy imagery from the Bible itself, so none could question the lavish imagery in his poetry, as he does in “God’s Grandeur.” His sacrilege would be attributed to his attempt to

compose poetry in his trancelike state, or in case of his terrible sonnets “his spiritual crisis.” But, all these just served to one end – it heightened the tension.

Besides, there also lurks the tension between the Ignatian principle of self-denial and the dwelling upon “I” in Hopkins’s poetry. The Ignatian principle is based upon selflessness, asceticism, plainness etc. Hopkins’s chooses this Ignatian principle as his moral and artistic guideline (“The Wreck of the Deutschland”) and gets lost in style, self-consciousness, and dwells on selfhood as the final perfection. No doubt, Hopkins was a master artist in making religious meditation and poetic process one. However an uneasy tension remains. He did what Hammond does in Crichton’s *Jurassic Park* – bring together mutually inadaptable things: dinosaur and man in *Jurassic Park*, tradition and innovation in Hopkins’s poetry. Yet, the effect is powerful there in Crichton’s novel and here in Hopkins’s poetry.

Generally, his standing as a modernist rests much upon the celebrated sprung rhythm. However, sprung rhythm too is not Hopkins unique innovation. As discussed in the chapter two Hopkins is only the theoretician, not the inventor, of sprung rhythm. It was the rhythm of common English speech and the basis of such early English poems as Langland’s *Piers Plowman* and some nursery rhymes. And, adding one more paradox to his account, it was also the basis for the free verse that rocks modern poetry even today.

Here lies yet another tension that rules Hopkins’s poetry and that of most modernist. The rhythm that Hopkins’s favored was the rhythm of common English speech. In rejecting the traditional Victorian rhythm Hopkins didn’t pick up some “otherworldly rhythm” but the most common rhythm of English language. Consider these two couplets:

MARGARET, are you grieving  
Over Goldengrove unleaving? (88)

and,

Ding, dong, bell  
Pussy's in the well.

The first couplet is from Hopkins's poetry "Spring and Fall" and the second from a common nursery rhyme. Still, see the rhythm of both couplets is clearly sprung. However, the nursery rhyme was not composed following the rhythm from Hopkins's poetry but on the contrary Hopkins's poetry followed the rhythm from the nursery rhyme.

Existentialist awareness in his poetry too could not avoid this tension. Hopkins highlights the suffering of the crew in "The Wreck of the Deutschland" especially in stanzas sixteen and seventeen. He expresses the human predicament of being alone amid an accidental universe where sinful and just suffer the same fate. But to a true Christian salvation comes only through suffering because his master Jesus Christ too suffered. Thus on one level where the stanzas sixteen and seventeen expresses the existential dilemma, on the other level it implicitly expresses such Truth that shapes Hopkins world along with that of most Christians.

To sum up, his devotional poems were rejected by some Jesuit magazine as *unBiblelike*, his imagery were sensuous and yet heavily borrowed from the Bible and tradition, his rhythm was borrowed from common nursery rhymes, his existential dilemma bore within itself eternal Truth: it all resulted in a tension that no way could be resolved, but heightened his poetry to a new level where only a few could make to.

#### IV. Conclusion

In course of analyzing Hopkins's poetry, for some moment, it seems that Hopkins was an orthodox who could blindly adhere to tradition. However, it soon gets clear that in the body of this cleric is bound the spirit of a modern poet that continuously prods Hopkins for a freedom of expression. Embodying both the spirit of tradition and freedom of experimentation with equal love, Hopkins creates a never resolving tension.

In this thesis, the concept of tension is understood to mean both the uneasy blending of the tradition and modern, as well as the potentiality of modernity in the tradition itself. Examples of the first instance are the use of Biblical content in an experimental structure, or the making of spiritual meditation and the poetic process one as seen in "The Wreck of the Deutschland." The second aspect, the potentiality of modernity in the tradition, is exemplified by Hopkins's faith in *Spiritual Exercises* and Scotus's philosophy which justify his concrete images.

Hopkins addressed the tension by welding the tradition with the modern. However, paradoxically, by blending tradition with the modern he didn't allay but heightened the tension. This is the core of all modern art. Once all tension resolved, all anxieties settled, all uncertainties answered, all opposition pacified, the result would be just another poetry not a great work of art.

The continuous conflict, the unresolved tension in a work of art creates a force that shocks us out of our complacency and makes it modern. Hopkins has yoked Bible with an obscure structure, and now, no matter how we justify there is an eternal tension between the biblical content and the obscure form. The moment the tension gets resolved Hopkins will lose his standing as a modern poet.

Charles Williams the second editor of *The Selected Poems of Gerard Manley*

*Hopkins* sums up Hopkins achievement in the following words:

Poets will return to him as a source not a channel of poetry; he is one who revivifies, not merely delights, equivalent genius ... He is "barbarous in beauty". But he is also "sweet's sweeter ending". This again is the result of and the testimony to his poetic energy. (qtd. in Gardner xxvi)

Certainly what made Hopkins a genius was the tension that ruled his poetry.

The analysis of the tension between tradition and modernity in Hopkins's poetry makes no claim to be comprehensive. No analysis of poetry can ever be adequate to its mysterious power. Even after breaking a couplet to a hundred pieces to justify a proposition, all we realize is that we are in the same place where we started. Only the couplet is mutilated. Nevertheless, the tension that lurks upon Hopkins's poetry is palpable, and it serves to make his poetry modern.

This dissertation has concerned itself with the tension between tradition and modernity in some selected poetry of G. M. Hopkins. Areas of further research could include the tension between the aestheticism and asceticism in Hopkins poetry with special reference to poems like "The Habit of Perfection", "Pied Beauty", etc. or the religious tension with references to his "Terrible Sonnets." Other subject of interest would be a comparison between Hopkins's treatment of tradition with other modernist as T. S. Eliot, and the comparative study of Biblical imagery in Hopkins and Milton.

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