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"I Caught This Morning . . ." A Study Of Gerard Manley Hopkins

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"I CAUGHT THIS MORNING..."
A STUDY OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS
by
Ann T. Bertagnolli

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English
Of Carroll College in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for Academic Honors with the
Bachelor of Arts Degree in English

Carroll College
Helena, Montana
March 1973
For Sallie A. Joyce
PREFACE

My interest in Gerard Manley Hopkins began after I read a brief collection of his later poetry for the first time. Hopkins' acute sensitivity and tremendous depth of character reveal the man's search for meaning in life, spirituality, and final communion with God. His greatness, as a man and a poet, rests in his diligent effort to comprehend the mysteries of his own existence within the Essence and Existence of God.

All of this mystery, this God-focus, can be seen in the poem, "The Windhover", written in May of 1877. Utilizing falcon imagery, Hopkins exposes his own religious struggle, compounding it with his revelation of purpose and consolation. Because this brief poem so significantly subsumes Hopkins' theory of poetry, stylistic devices, and philosophy, I have isolated it for specific study. The objective of this thesis, then, will be to explore the religious transcendence of the poet in "The Windhover"; two other poems, "Peace" (October 1879) and "The Caged Skylark" (September 1877) will further clarify and develop this transcendence by
stressing the bird as a symbol in all three poems. Chapter One will deal with the bird itself in "The Windhover," its transition into symbolism in terms of myth, and the religious implications which underlie the bird imagery as Hopkins uses it. Chapters Two and Three, dealing with the poems, "Peace" and "The Caged Skylark," will also be concerned with the religious implications underlying the bird imagery as specifically seen in "The Windhover."

Special acknowledgment must be given to W.H. Gardner and Norman Weyand, S.J. whose works I have found invaluable. W.H. Gardner has published a series of comparative studies of the life and the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. The merits of these studies have influenced me profoundly in the development of this thesis.

Coming as it does at the end of my undergraduate study, this thesis reflects the influence and ministry of four years of professors and courses, all of whom deserve acknowledgment. Special thanks are given to Mr. Robert B. Heywood for his guidance, to Dr. Joseph T. Ward and Dr. Allan Pope, my readers, and to Sister Miriam Clare, O.S.F., my thesis advisor, who has so patiently provided me with direction, inspiration, and friendship.
THE WINDhover:

To Christ our Lord

CAUGHT this 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

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!

brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here

buckle! and the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

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.

PEACE

When will you ever, Peace, wild wood dove, shy wings shut,

'our round me roaming end, and under be my boughs?

When, when, Peace, will you, Peace? I'll not play hypocrite

To own my heart: I yield you do come sometimes; but

That piecemeal peace is poor peace. What pure peace allows

Alarms of wars, the daunting wars, the death of it?

O surely, reaving Peace, my Lord should leave in lieu

Some good! And so he does leave Patience exquisite,

That plumes to Peace thereafter. And when Peace here does house

He comes with work to do, he does not come to coo,

He comes to brood and sit.

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THE CAGED SKYLARK

As a dare-gale skylark scanted in a dull cage
Man's mounting spirit in his bone-house, mean house,
That bird beyond the remembering his free falls;
This in drudgery, day-labouring-out life's age.

Though aloft on turf or perch or poor low stage,
Both sing sometimes the sweetest, sweetest spells,
Yet both droop deadly sometimes in their cells
Or wring their barriers in burst of fear or rage.

Not that the sweet-fowl, song-fowl, needs no rest--
Why, hear him, hear him babble and drop down to his nest,
But his own nest, wild nest, no prison.

Man's spirit will be flesh-bound when found at best,
But unumbered; meadow-down is not distressed
For a rainbow footing it nor he for his bones risen.

Gerard Manley Hopkins deals specifically with the
Italian (Petrarchan) sonnet type in the three poems pre-

onsented in this thesis. "The Windhover" is an excellent
example of this particular classification.

The sonnet, a lyric poem of fourteen lines, is highly
arbitrary in form and follows one or another of several
set rhyme schemes. More specifically, the Petrarchan
sonnet form is distinguished by its bipartite division
into the octave and the sestet. The octave consists of a
first division of eight lines rhyming abbaabba and the
sestet, the second division, consists of six lines
rhyming in various rhyme schemes; odecde, odicdc, or
odecde. The octave bears the burden, presents the problem,

doubt, reflection, query, cry of indignation or desire
or the vision of the ideal. The sestet eases the load, resolves the problem or doubt, answers the query, consoles the yearning or realizes the vision. In other words, the octave presents the narrative, stating the proposition or raising the question; the sestet makes an abstract comment, applies the proposition, or solves the problem.

English poets have, however, varied these items greatly. The octave and sestet division is not always kept; the rhyme scheme is often varied, but within limits. Iambic pentameter is essentially the meter, but here again, we find variations with certain poets.
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CHAPTER I

"THE WINDHOVER"

W.H. Gardner defines true poetry as being "like an earnest prayer". For Hopkins, "want of earnest" and "unreality" were synonymous. To Patmore he wrote, "want of earnest I take to be the deepest fault a work of art can have." To Bridges he wrote, "I did find one fault... which seems indeed to be the worst fault a thing can have, unreality. This leads me to say that a kind of touchstone of the highest or most living art is seriousness; not gravity but the being in earnest with your subject--reality." Hopkins possessed an eye for pure beauty which was informed by his vigorous moral sensibility and reflective of the profound morality of his person. One cannot read a page of his criticism without sensing his intense concern for art; but his deepest reaching, we should not forget, was a reaching for goodness. Hopkins was caught up in an attempt to bring in the particular: to see, to feel, to distinguish, to "catch" (as he often puts it) the individually distinctive and artistic inscapes.
"The Windhover: To Christ our Lord" is often considered the greatest of Hopkins' poems of this period (1877-1888), greatest in the implications of its subject, greatest in its metrical accomplishment. Hopkins himself referred to it as 'the best thing I ever wrote' in his Letters to Bridges. The integration of structure lends to the poem's unified inscape, the interacting parts perfectly blended in function. The imagery in the poem is remarkable in originality, fresh vigor, and colorful life. The poem's strength lies in Hopkins' energetic effectiveness and instinctive beauty itself.

From the first line, "I caught this morning morning's minion" to "the achieve of, the mastery of the thing," the poet is in an ecstasy of amazement at the mastery and brilliant success of the Windhover—a beauty so great that it is difficult to imagine any that has its equal. The verb "caught" suggests sudden surprise and a sense of joyful triumph at the sight of the bird who, being the "morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin," is likened to a "darling of the dawn" or the heir-apparent of daylight's kingdom. Signified in terms of "minion" and "dauphin," the falcon is portrayed as possessing a certain self-assurance and haughtiness associated with a court favorite and an heir. He seems fearless and self-willed in the face of his opposition.

Hopkins' exquisite awareness of detail becomes especially apparent with "dapple-dawn-drawn": "Dapple,"
one of Hopkins' favorite descriptive words, implies a varicolored beauty which, being part of the total beauty of the bird in flight, overwhelms the poet's soul. Hopkins' theory of beauty is always the changeable, the speckled or varicolored—symbolic of man and his becoming—seen against the changelessness, symbol of God and His Being. "Drawn," perhaps, could be descriptive of the bird etched against the dawn in silhouette—form or it could signify the dawn's calling forth the bird from slumber into action. Hopkins praises the falcon's strength when, in his "riding," he subdues or conquers the rolling turmoil of the early morning air into steadiness and level calm. The poet's thrill of admiration stems from the bird's "striding high there" as a result of his riding over opposition with a fling of joyous, conscious power.

The octet itself is an empathic recreation of the flight of the windhover in its magnificent and triumphant career. The prosody is instrumental; it seems to move with the rhythm of flight (swirl, soars, whirls again). The reader participates in the bird's flight, empathizing with the windhover's freedom, daring the gale with it. The very rhythm tells the story, after the fashion of descriptive music. "Rung," a technical term from falconry as it is defined by the New Oxford English Dictionary, designates a hawk's rising spirally in flight. Musically, though, it becomes a sound picture, an audio-action made even more dynamic by "wimpling wing." The "wimpling wing"
is the bird's fulcrum of power; it "reins in" the bird's flight. The feathers on the wing thus are swept into graceful folds, the mechanics of banked flight requiring the pivotal wing to be contracted and the shortened span of the wing forcing the surface into little bulging ripples—"wimpling." Hopkins' sharp eye delights in noting such details of nature lore, and his ability to express the observation so acutely indicates high poetic power. The joy of fulfilling its function, the thrill which compensates the bird's noble exertion, throbs through every line of the poem. But Hopkins is gripped and inspired by the bird soaring joyously "in his ecstasy!" not merely because it is a manifestation of such graceful beauty and thrilling valor, but because it is a revelation that spirited action is a key to happiness.

In his essay, "The Contemplation to Obtain Love," Hopkins states that:

All things...are charged with love, are charged with God and if we know how to touch them give off sparks and take fire, yield drops and flow, ring and tell of him.

This essay reflects Hopkins' sacramental view of Nature: each thing by being itself proclaims God. Much more has God a purpose, an end, a meaning in his work...he meant the world to give him praise, reverence, and service; to give him glory...It is a bird he teaches to sing...The Creation does praise God, does reflect honour on Him...

The birds sing to Him... For Hopkins, beauty is simply
reality seen with the eyes of love; art (his poetry) discovers and gives back to God His loveliness and beauty in Creation. There is "No wonder of it" (the beauty in the falcon's flight) because this beauty reflects a natural law based on Divine law and love.

For Hopkins, the bird, on reflection and by sudden illumination, becomes a symbol. The transition into symbolism, according to Jung, points to man's need for liberation from any state of being that is too immature, too fixed or final. The symbol concerns man's release from—or transcendence of—any confining pattern of existence, as he moves toward a superior or more mature stage in his development. According to Mircea Eliade, the falcon is a symbol of cyclic renewal (baptism) and of the solar and unmanifested light. It is through the meditation of the myths that the salvation inaugurated in the fine point of the soul penetrates even to the depths of the psyche. A religious symbol allows man to discover a certain unity of the World and at the same time to become aware of his own destiny as an integral part of the World.

Hopkins' falcon is a vivid, real, natural object which becomes, for the poet, a revelation of Christ. The beauty and valor of the winging falcon are Christ's own beauty and valor in an unthinking (indirect) and finite form. Thus, in a sense, the windhover is Christ; Christ is the windhover. Richard Eberhart, in a lecture at the Library of Congress where he was Poet Consultant
in 1961, saw the windhover at the moment it is rebuffing the wind and hanging steady in the gale as almost the image of Christ on the Cross when all of His powers are buckled together in His hour of supreme pain and glory and accomplishment. From a Christ symbol to a Christian symbol, the falcon becomes symbolic of the Christian knight valiantly warring against evil. Certainly the triumphant beauty of the bird’s struggle in flight stirs the reluctant soul of the poet to resolutions of heroic deeds in more active service of Christ in advancing His Kingdom among men. These resolutions are underscored by their analogies to the energetic bird whose toil and pain also result in intensified splendor.

Other critics believe that Hopkins sees in the falcon "one facet of nature reflecting and declaring God’s immanence by its instinctive fulfillment of its natural destiny, thereby asserting its selfhood and making the poet see how far he and his fellow men fail to live up to this ideal." Aroused to a sudden envy by the sight of the bird’s splendid nobility, Hopkins experiences a pang of remorse for his own slackness in the battle for Christ’s cause. Inwardly, he expresses a renewed impulse to participate in noble action on behalf of Christ.

He has seen now more clearly that nobility and beauty of life lie, by the very nature of things, in brave action, in exertion of will to ever greater deeds of dedication and sacrifice. He is on the verge of an
heroic decision.

The metaphysical fulcrum of the poem is the ambiguous verb, "Buckle". According to Schoder, the absence of a comma after "here" causes "buckle" to become imperative and indicative. This analysis rules out any reading of the poem as one of defeat, despair, jealous pining, passive resignation or anything other than the spirit of the Kingdom of Christ's meditation (in The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius as well as in the mind of Hopkins). The term itself implies a grappling or a preparation of Self for a contest or undertaking; a vigorous application of Self to a task. In reference to the windhover, "Buckle" connotes the bird's swooping down and his flight being crumpled by nature's opposition. However, the line "brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume" exquisitely describes the bird in a symbolic act of self-sacrifice, self-destruction, and mystical self-immolation which sets off a "fire" greater than any natural beauty. It is in the act of buckling, when every sinew and chord of the identity thrills, at grips with its appointed function, that the beauty of the Self flares brightest. For Hopkins, then, the example of Christ's life linked together three relevant and complementary meanings of "Buckle!": buckle within (discipline), buckle to (labour), buckle under (sacrifice). Certainly the dedication of the poem, "To Christ Our Lord," is not accidental; it is organic to the whole poem.
Because of the bird's valiant action, Hopkins considers him somewhat of a hero. It is significant, also, that "for Hopkins, Christ is the supreme Hero of all time, who of His own free choice undertook the greatest, most painful and terrifying mission ever laid on man's shoulders..." In his Sermon (N 260-266) Hopkins writes:

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, my brethren, is our hero, a hero all the world wants... He is a warrior and a conquerer... he is a King... He is all the world's hero, the desire of the nations. But besides he is the hero of single souls... all his servants take up their cross and follow him. And those even that do not follow him, yet they look wistfully after Him, own him a hero, and wished they dared answer to his call...26

In terms of Hopkins' sacramental view of nature, the poet now makes us aware that heavenly grace is offered, but a sacrifice is demanded in return. And man is prepared for this: the highest reaction to beauty is a feeling of exalted humility—the desire to imitate, to create in terms of one's own talents an equivalent beauty. To see 'all creatures in God and God in all creatures' is to become aware of 'the living reality' of that World of Becoming, the vast arena of the divine creativity, in which the little individual life is immersed.

The transition from the bird to self, from the objective ideal to its personal application and realization, is admirably direct and definite. Hopkins' deep desire is to put the bird's inspiring achievement into operation
in his life. The phrase, "my heart in hiding," artfully prepares the transition from the falcon to Self and the phrase, "Ah my dear," confirms this transition; it clearly implies that the poet has been addressing his own heart in the sestet. From the beginning of "My heart in hiding" to "the master of the thing!," the poet is reflecting upon his own reaction to the bird's flight. His emotions and will, as well as his mind, have been stimulated to act. He has been "in hiding" from this attention because of fear and the bitter implications of life and Christ's challenge to a more heroic plane of activity. As a Jesuit, Hopkins is dedicated to the greater glory of God. St. Ignatius asks in The Spiritual Exercises: "What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ?". Held back by fear and weary of his struggle against Self, Hopkins hides from Christ's challenge.

To Hopkins, a wild bird is not a symbol of escape into sweet oblivion; rather, it is a stinging reminder of his own difficult vocation. The poet undergoes a subliminal conflict and a profound reconciliation of those elements intrinsic in his nature: personality and character, poet and priest. I.A. Richards, in The Dial, states that "the poet in Hopkins was often oppressed and stifled by the priest...(His is) an asceticism which failed to reach ecstasy and accepts the failure. All Hopkins' poems are in this sense poems of defeat."
last judgment or other initiatory trial of strength; it is a journey of release, renunciation, and atonement, presided over and fostered by some spirit of compassion. In the rapturous vitality of birds, in their splendid glancing flight... is somewhat of Bethlehem... somewhat too of Calvary in their self-giving pains.

The poem expresses a burning proclamation, a cry of selfless heroism and undaunted valor in Hopkins' deep-set conviction of the nobility and splendor of Christ's cause. The poet realizes his positive call to action for to be possessed by love is to be filled with a power which will not be denied, which will do anything, brave anything, suffer anything, endure anything, for the sake of what it loves. The emphasis on "AND" in the sestet connotes the poet's realization of the consequential results of his acceptance of Christ's challenge. His soul will acquire in his own eyes and in Christ's a new splendor, the glow of active virtue and love proved by deeds. In his Conclusion of the Principle or Foundation, Hopkins writes:

Man was created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and thereby to save his soul. And the other things on the face of the earth were created for man's sake, and to help him in the following out of the end for which he was created... But what we have not done yet we can do now, what we have done badly hitherto we can do well henceforward, we can repent our sins and BEGIN TO GIVE GOD GLORY. The moment we do this we reach the end of our being, we do and are what we were made for, we make it worth God's while to have created us.
This is a comforting thought; we need not wait in fear till death; any day, any minute we bless God for our being or for anything...we do and are what we were meant for, made for—things that give and mean to give God glory...

You cannot mean your praise if while praise is on the lips there is no reverence in the mind; there can be no reverence in the mind if there is no obedience, no submission, no service...

It is not only prayer that gives God glory but work...everything gives God some glory if being in his grace you do it as your duty.

The dedication, "To Christ our Lord," signifies that the whole poem is actually a votive offering to Christ; it is like a document proclaiming Hopkins' consecration of himself to Christ's more active service. Hopkins accepts the challenge mysteriously revealed to him in the action of the bird for he realizes that the best praise of God is to fulfill his destiny—even if it entails trial and distress. The words "air, pride, plume" are thus not to be taken as a merely parenthetical aside or counterpart, to be set off by commas. The scansion is against this and the words are too important to the sense and effectiveness of the line as a turning point. Stirred by his excited admiration when the bird is in difficult activity, the poet understands that the radiance of divine grace will flame out from his soul, too, roused from complacency to brave exertion, "a billion times told lovelier" because the exertion is more dangerous; grace surpasses nature; spiritual struggle frequently accompanies even while outshining
physical combat. Hopkins' revelation of his own mystical self-destruction is his decisive acceptance of Christ's challenge. If he too submits all his faculties and energy to Christ's work, heedless of the cost to self, his life will be thereby the more glorious. Professor H. Marshall McLuhan, however, suggests that the poem's theme is passive: "Just as 'the fire that breaks from thee then', after the mirror of mortal beauty has been buckled to the hidden heart, is not a fire produced by any direct action or valor, so the fire that breaks from the 'blue bleak embers' is not the effect of "ethos" but "pathos," not of action but of suffering or patience." W.H. Gardner insists the necessity of both action and patience when he says: "The windhover flashes a trail of beauty across the morning sky; but the beauty in action, the inspiration, the glory of Christ (and in a lesser degree of the plodding, inhibited poet priest) is far, far lovelier. The taut, swooping windhover is the terror of the air; but the disciplined life of the spirit is much more dangerous, because it is menaced by, and must itself attack and overcome, a far greater foe—the powers of evil."

A theme of "quasi-martyrdom," then, is implied in the poem in terms of self destruction, dedication, and immolation. The law of glory through struggle, Hopkins thus reminds his heart ("ah my dear") prevails not only when the struggle is one of joy, as with the
falcon, but also when it implies pain and the wearisome cross of undiversified drudgery, as in the galled ember and plodding plough. Perhaps, after all, his ardent resolution to do great things for Christ, in the crusading spirit of the dauntless bird and the knight, will bring him, not to their plane of external activity before the eyes of an admiring world, but rather to the hidden, unglamorous, less adventuresome struggle of patient plodding in his duties as a priest, or (as it actually did) to a slow martyrdom in the dying fires of undermined health. The concept of martyrdom, however, does not stand alone. Hopkins makes us well aware of his devout belief in consolation: "...sheer plod makes plough down sillion shine, and blue-bleak embers... Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion." When the plough turns the earth over, a lowly task of "sheer," unmitigated, unrelenting toil, even the sillion, the earth, begins to gleam and shine and the "blue-bleak embers" blaze out into sudden final glory if they fall from their place of seeming death and suffer a "galling" wound which makes them burst into an orange splendor from their 'bleeding' "gashes." The compensatory refulgence of the embers' symbolic agony has not only the painful red of spilt life-blood, but the glorious gold of nobility, quasi-martyrdom, and that generous sacrifice which 'is precious in the sight of the Lord.' Hopkins' feelings of weariness
despair have been transvaluated into spiritual triumph.

Beyond the consolation of Hopkins' own spiritual triumph lies the consolation and trust of Christ. Christ, as the Paraclete, is the Comforter, as well as the One Who encourages, cheers, persuade, and urges Man forward. "The Windhover" is a poetic restatement of the great meditation on the "Kingdom of Christ" found in The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. The intention of the meditation is to enflame the Christian soul with a determination to follow Christ in the battle against evil and to uplift and beautify the souls of men for the Father's glory. The dramatic scene which St. Ignatius here draws is as famous as it was familiar to Hopkins:

Christ, the eternal King, noblest and worthiest of leaders, whose very aspect and example move the soul to deepest loyalty and reverence, summoning His subjects individually and announcing to them his intention to subdue the whole world and all His enemies, and thus enter into the glory of his Father. He Himself will set the example, and bear every hardship, labor, and suffering of the campaign, so that His follower has only to share with Him the toil, if he would also share with Him the fruits of the inevitable victory—and this in proportion to his valor and services.

Christ had a beautiful public life but "a billion times told lovelier" was His self-immolation on the Cross. His sacrifice was transmuted by fire and love into something far greater than any mere natural beauty. Hopkins, somewhat of an "alter Christus," has a natural propensity for vicarious suffering, strengthened by his intellectual
bias and a continuous brooding over the spiritual decadence of man. As John Pick so aptly affirms, "The Windhover" is the story of Christ and it is the story of Gerard Manley Hopkins.
FOOTNOTES


2 Ibid., p. 356.


4 Ibid., p. 71.

5 Hopkins uses this term in "The Wreck of the Deutschland," "Ried Beauty," and "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves".

6 Pick, Hopkins: Priest and Poet, p. 70.


8 Ibid., p. 291.

9 Ibid., p. 292.


11 According to Carl Jung (Man and his Symbols), the bird is a universal religious symbol. He states that religious symbols are, in fact, collective representations emanating from primeval dreams and creative fantasies and that it is the role of religious symbols to give a meaning to the life of man.
In The Paradise Tree: On Living the Symbols of the Church, Vann quotes Eliade as saying "...the accessibility of Christianity lies in great part in its symbolism: that the 'universal images which it in its turn resumes have considerably facilitated the diffusion of its message.'

Eliade states further that the falcon is a symbol of continual creation and renewal.


Christ also stirs the mind to admiration with His utterly intrepid comportment in the face of opposition: "They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them and they were astounded and followed in fear." (St. Matthew 26:46)


Weyand and Schoder, p. 278.

According to Carl Jung (Man and his Symbols), religious history is a series of initiatory events.


The word, "oh" (line 9) remains noncomittal, open to either acceptance of the nouns and a verb; it seems clear that "buckle" must be taken as a challenge in the direct imperative—not as an assertion of fact.

This idea of mystical fire is further developed in the last three lines of the sonnet: "plough down sillion shine"; "blue-bleak embers...gash gold-vermillion."


25 Weyand and Schoder, p. 289.

26 Ibid., p. 290.

   Schoder also points out that hero imagery is developed in "The Wreck of the Deutschland," (st. 8) "To hero...feet," (st. 33) "Hero...priest," in "Carrion Comfort," "the hero...trod me," and in "the Loss of the Eurydice," (lines 109-112), "But...saves.

   In his book, Man and his Symbols, Carl Jung points out that "hero myths have...a universal pattern..." Over and over again one hears a tale describing a hero's miraculous but humble birth, his early proof of superhuman strength, his rapid rise to prominence or power, his triumphant struggle with the forces of evil, his fallibility to the sin of pride (hybris), and his fall through betrayal or a "heroic sacrifice, ending in his death." Jung further suggests that "the essential function of the heroic myth is the development of the individual's ego-consciousness—his awareness of his own strengths and weaknesses—in a manner that will equip him for the arduous tasks with which life confronts him." The general idea of Christ the Redeemer belongs to the world-wide and pre-Christ theme of the hero and rescuer which, being part of the universal hero myth, always refers to a powerful man or god-man who vanquishes evil and who liberates his people from destruction and death.


28 Vann, p. 267.

29 Weyand and Schoder, p. 295.

30 This relation of the Self to all cosmic nature, Dr. Jung in his Man and his Symbols says, probably comes from the fact that the "nuclear atom" of our psyche is somehow woven into the whole world, both
outer and inner. The Self is often symbolized as an animal representing our instinctive nature and its connectedness with one's surroundings.

31 This concept is also observed in stanzas two and three of "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and in the Confessions of St. Augustine: "and in the strength of Thy Radiance upon me my weak vision was smitten back and I trembled WITH LOVE AND WITH FRIGHT (et contremui AMORE ET HORROR).

32 Weyand and Schoder, p. 279.

33 Ibid., p. 279.

34 Ibid., p. 279.

35 Akin to this insistence on a clear central motive is Hopkins' demand for absolutely precise images.


38 John Donne elaborates on this idea when he says: "what matters is not what we feel but what we do; what matters is to get on with the job whatever it may be and see it through to the end: it is that which will make us worthy to be told in the end, "Well done, my good and faithful servant; since thou hast been faithful over little things, I have great things to commit to thy charge; come and share the joy of the Lord."

39 Weyand and Schoder, p. 298.

This thought was elaborated upon by Hopkins himself in the sestet of "The Soldier". Aristotle also promotes the idea that happiness lies in activity, as the crowning bloom of properly ordered function or
the perfection of operation. He proposes that pleasure is nothing else than the natural consequence and reward of due exercise of the faculties on their proper objects.

40


41

This is reflective of St. Ignatius' prayer: "Dearest Lord, teach me to be generous; to serve Thee as Thou dost bequeath, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not ask for reward—save that of knowing that I am doing Thy Will."

42

Weyand and Schoder, p. 301.

This idea is also found in line 78 of "The Loss of the Eurydice": "strung by duty...therefore strained to beauty."

Evelyn Underhill, in her book, Mysticism: A Study in the nature and development of Man's spiritual consciousness, states that "the true mystic, so often taunted with a denial of the world, does but deny the narrow and artificial world of self: and finds in exchange the secrets of that mighty universe which he shares with Nature and with God. Strange contacts, unknown to those who only lead the life of sense, are set up between his being and the being of all other things. In that remaking of his consciousness which follows upon the "mystical awakening" the deep and primal life which he shares with all creation has been roused from its sleep. Hence the barrier between human and non-human life, which makes man a stranger on earth as well as in heaven, is done away. Life now whispers to his life; all things are his intimates, and respond to his fraternal sympathy."

Mircea Eliade further explains in his book, Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism, that "the Christian is, in the final reckoning, required to become the contemporary of the Christ; this implies a contemporaneity with the preaching, the agony and the resurrection of the Christ."

43

Ibid., p. 282.

44

45 Weyand and Schoder, pp. 302-303.

46 Ibid., p. 302.

47 According to Gerald Vann in his book, The Water and the Fire, man must undergo a death in order to be resurrected. A suffering or burden is then gloriously released into spiritual freedom and a conception of one's Self in relation to All.

48 Weyand and Schoder, p. 285.

49 In the book, Man and his Symbols, Carl Jung states that nearly all religious systems on our planet contain images that symbolize the process of individuation, or at least some stages of it. In Christian countries, the Self is projected onto the second Adam: Christ.
CHAPTER II

"PEACE"

The transition of Hopkins from painful suffering to spiritual triumph realized in the patience and action of self-"martyrdom" and total dedication to Christ and Christ's cause in "the Windhover" is further developed in his poem "Peace." The poet, again, reaches a point of submission and transcended understanding of the spiritual mysteries. The analysis of "Peace" thus abets the difficult comprehension of the poem, "The Windhover."

The poem, "Peace," dwells unequivocally upon the theme of a persistent personal unrest. Just as birds build, Hopkins wants to build, to construct for life, to find room in the world for the children of the Christed heart. The rhythm of "The Windhover" caught the glory of the falcon's soaring, ringing on the wimpled wing; the opening rhythm of "Peace" is also imitative, showing the dove's roaming and shifting by rhythmically shifting from falling to rising. Hopkins is frustrated and disheartened at the spasmodic resting of the dove, the symbol of the Holy Ghost. This spasmodic rhythm causes
Hopkins to suffer and bleed as his impatience sorely mounts.

At first, the line, "Your round me roaming end, and under be my boughs?" presents an irritating grammatical tangle; it soon resolves itself into a thought-dramatization of subtle precision. The words "round me roaming" create one complete poetic word and "under be my boughs," on analogy of underlay or lie, carries a sense of passive being. The tree imagery suggests Hopkins' passionate desire for a nestled settling of the dove; perhaps, just as nests are found in the boughs of trees, the nest for the dove is found in Hopkins' heart. Plumeless Patience needs a nest to grow in and the poet's longing for the dove in the opening lines indicates that his heart is the seat of his own life and the life of the spirit. The word "come" in the fourth line suggests the momentary settling on the part of the dove. This idea is carried through with the words "poor piece" and "piecemeal peace." "Allows alarms" signifies the dove's rising. The linguistic stops of "daunting wars" and the "death of it" imply the poet's bitter frustration at the absence of the dove. Robert Boyle, S.J., proposes that the two words "of it," dying away into two significant syllables which end the octet, are spotlighted and therefore are expressive of the ignominious disappearance of Peace, the dove, the Holy Ghost.
The concept of "war" is the precise image which contributes to understanding Hopkins' struggle with a divided heart. His wars are spiritual wars within his heart, intimidated and made more difficult by the "shy wings" of the dove. It is Christ in him and the Spirit sent by Christ who are fighting along with his God-centered will against his self-centered will. Christ gives divine life while the Holy Ghost fosters and broods over this life. The core of the poet's struggle rests in his loss of Peace. Hopkins measured himself in relation to the ideals of St. Ignatius:

This I say: my vocation puts before me a standard so high that a higher can be found nowhere else...I have never wavered in my vocation, but I have not lived up to it.\(^3\)

Hopkins' ideal rests in the absolute identification with Christ Himself which is reflected in the *Imitation of St. Ignatius*:

A priest is especially supposed to devote himself to the spiritual. Thou hast not lightened thy burden, but art now bound by a stricter bond of discipline, and art obliged to greater perfection of sanctity.\(^4\)

Again, Christ's prediction to His followers reveals the necessity, pointed out earlier in "The Windhover," of mystical self-immolation and quasi-martyrdom: "Do not suppose that it is my mission to shed peace upon the earth; it is not my mission to shed peace but to unsheath the sword." "Again, he who will not shoulder
his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me." St. Augustine anticipates Hopkins' thought when he says: "Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts can find no rest except in Thee." Hopkins is aware of a natural magnetism—of the consciousness of mutual desire existing between man's spirit and the Divine Spirit; of the linking of love which knits up reality and draws all things to their home in God.

To Hopkins, it was axiomatic that ends which are right as well as good are seldom attained without a struggle. "For now, after the Fall," he told his parishioners in a sermon, "good in this world is hard, it is surrounded by difficulties, the way to it lies through thorns." According to Pick, Hopkins may have prayed for peace in a scrupulous concern for his own imperfections. "For one who had so resolutely such a lofty concept of spiritual perfection, the path must have been steep. The sensitivity of his own failure to root out every evil and to cultivate every virtue must have given him great anguish." Even though the development of all life involves pain, Hopkins, in this poem, is still able to accept that pain and that grinding struggle under the symbolic activity of the dove and of the fledgling.

In the first stanza, "pure peace" strikes the keynote of an unquiet mind, for Hopkins realizes that, in this life, "pure peace" is not to be his. He, however,
never lost his sense of humour for his letters show with what intellectual vigor he still maintained his interest in the arts. Hopkins turns round upon himself and corrects his first faulty impression. The peace he had desired had been an idle consummation of ease, a gentle cooing of the undisturbed spirit; but the peace he is now prepared to accept, "piecemeal" if God so ordain, must be an active 'will to work'—a readiness to share in the continuous Divine Act of Creation.

The end, then, is peace but before the peace there must be the struggle, the spiritual ascent of the Christian. The second stanza portrays a transition from negative to positive, from deprivation to enrichment, from personal heartcry to the personal surrender. "The soul must protest against its exile from heaven; but the man of faith does not lose his head. He may release emotional steam but as a result, he attains a more even stroke—a poise of emotion and intellect which enables it to expend itself in productive action." Even the opening "p's", "l's" and "r's" add to the quiet, smooth subjective mood. The combination of "exquisite" with "Patience" combines the acute pain of deprivation with a keen satisfaction of self-mastery. Christ, the "he" of the image in line eight is visualized by the poet as a robber, plunderer, bird-snatcher and nest-rifler. Christ has robbed Hopkins's boughs of the wild wooddove, Peace, and carried it off; Hopkins
reflects that Christ should have left him some good since He took the life-giving dove but, at the same time, he reveals his faith in Christ's good will—even after the robbery. The concept of Patience is extremely significant here for it is the gift of God which "plumes to peace thereafter". St. Ignatius treats the virtue of Patience in The Spiritual Exercises (First Week, Rules 6-8):

Let him who is in desolation labour to hold on in patience, such patience as makes against the vexations that harass him; let him consider that soon he shall be consoled, using diligent efforts against desolation...

Patience, according to St. Thomas, is most of all an effect of the Holy Spirit's activity. It preserves the soul in times of struggle from being overwhelmed while, at the same time, it protects the spirit from presumption, despair, giving up of hope and its horrible death. Patience was a virtue that Hopkins needed often; and it was a large factor in his living out his aim of perfect union with Christ his Lord. 15 The metaphorical word "plumes" can denote two opposite ideas: the "fledge" connotes a furnishing or an adorning with plumes, with the added suggestion of winging away to the Reward; however, beneath this and prior to it is the idea of renunciation, to 'strip of feathers'; on the other hand, 'to plume oneself' suggests an achievement, "for it is the proper pride of the justified soul which converts the dubious nestling, Patience, into the full-
fledged dove of Peace." Loss and gain, the opposites in the poem, are therefore reconciled in the various meanings of "plumes." This is a reiteration of the "Buckle" of "The Windhover," a culmination of the action which leads to the ultimate Beauty.

The sweetness and quiet loveliness of this poem express one of the moods with which Hopkins approaches the activity of the divine life within him. In the dove, the symbol of Peace and the Holy Ghost, is the condition of spiritual growth which brings about the development of divine life. The Holy Ghost has "work to do" —to "brood and sit" and with his spasmodic coming brings His warmth and protection for the living nest (Hopkins). It is the Holy Spirit who, during the night of the struggle, operates as Patience within the battling heart and, during the quiet of the brooding daylight, as Peace. Peace and contentment come more readily for Hopkins as he realizes; "The time is precious and will not return again and I know I shall not regret my forbearance." In his "The Contemplation to Obtain Love," Hopkins defines the Holy Ghost as Love:

"...the Holy Ghost is called Love ("Fons vivus, ignis, caritas"); shewn in operibus, the worke of God's finger (" Tigritus paternae dexterae"); consisting in communicione etc., and the Holy Ghost as He is the bond and mutual love of Father and Son, so of God and man, that the Holy Ghost is uncreated grace and the sharing by man of the divine nature and the bestowal of himself by God on man ("Al-
The final image of the Holy Ghost is one of a sitting bird intent on its progenitive function. "... the Holy Ghost... has long been at his work of teaching the Church Christ's meaning and reminding it of Christ's words."

"Christ's position in this image from "Peace" then, is that of the Lord Who, while He gives the deepest and most basic peace to the heart united to His, yet can truly say that He comes to bring not peace but war. But, though His follower has no true and lasting peace with others in this world, yet in enduring the pain, separation, and loss, in being a stranger in this world out of love and loyalty to Christ, he grows in the beauty of patience."

The Holy Ghost, Who begets, fulfills, and transforms, is the Creative Spirit. He is the Paraclete: the One Who cheers, encourages, persuades, exhorts, stirs, and Who calls man on to good. The "brooding dove" exemplifies the concept of life-giver for it represents pentecostal light and fire. The divine activity in the poet's heart is the work of the Holy Ghost; the "fledgling Patience," through the activity of the Holy Ghost, endures in Hopkins' bereaved heart even while the "war" rages. This same Patience sustains life while it develops and grows throughout the struggle; the struggle passed, it is itself peace at home: "And, housing there, it broods..."
and sits, bringing with its warm breast and bright wings an increase of divine life." The dove and the fledgling (Peace and Patience) are both aspects of the Holy Ghost's work in Man; they are the effects of the growth and operation of Christ's divine life in our hearts. Through both Patience and Peace, Man inherits God's kingdom for Peace, an act of divine charity in Man, is an effect of Man's union with Christ; it aims Man's heart at Christ and fills him with tranquility. Peace, in the metamorphosis of patience into peace ("plumes"), is the Word and, along with love and joy, is the fruit of the Spirit.

The poem's stress on fire and bright wings recalls the fire that breaks from the windhover in its moment of supreme combat. Action for God, explicitly portrayed in "The Windhover," develops into patient submission to the Dove of Peace in "Peace". Action, as it leads into "Patience exquisite," culminates in God, "a billion times told lovelier" and "plumes to Peace thereafter."

Gerald Vann, O.P., in The Paradise Tree: On living the Symbols of the Church, implies that man's desire to build or to be creative is mirrored in the Divine Creation. He suggests that the history of God's macrocosm applies to our own individual microcosm. God sets about His creative work: He cuts and cleaves and form emerges from chaos which is disrupted with the Fall but not ultimately. Evil is permitted by God in order that an even greater good may come about through man's creativity: a deeper, richer revelation of the meaning of love. Before plunging into the (baptismal) piscina with the victorious assurance of faith, the candidate must know the agony of the approach to faith. First there must be the ritual death; the candidate must in some way symbolically re-enter the womb and there face his dark shadow. The inner "peace," a gift of God, is something for which we can only pray. The "bond of peace," which should unite the flock of Christ, is something we have to strive to create.

In Patterns in Comparative Religion, Mircea Eliade considers the Holy Ghost the baptism of Christ: "...he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Luke iii, 3). Man dies symbolically with immersion, and is reborn, purified, and renewed...


3 Ibid., p. 115.

4 Pick, Hopkins: Priest and Poet, p. 96.
5 Ibid., p. 96.
6 Boyle, p. 18.
7 Matthew, 10:34- (38).
8 Underhill, p. 130.
10 Pick, Hopkins: Priest and Poet, p. 96.
11 Ibid., p. 96.
13 Ibid., p. 287.
14 Hopkins tells Bridges, in a letter of August 21, 1384, that by the "reaving" of the line that precedes our image he means 'rob, plunder, carry off'.
15 Boyle, p. 117.
18 Boyle, p. 115.
21 This image points back to the Dove of the New Testament and the brooding Holy Ghost of "God's Grandeur".
22


From Hopkins' Sermon, "The Paraclete".

23

Boyle, p. 123.

24

According to Dr. Jung, the bird (dove) is a "guardian Spirit". Man identifies himself with this bird and in doing so (through the union of two "souls") becomes MAN.

25


26

Gerald Vann calls this concept a "perfected silence". He quotes Albertus Magnus: "In the quiet and repose of the humours, the soul attains understanding and prudence."
CHAPTER III

"THE CAGED SKYLARK"

"The Caged Skylark," written a few months after "The Windhover" is, like it and "Peace;" a restatement of Hopkins' revelation of Christ's purpose and glory reflected in Man. The poet's struggle is again predominant; however, his conception of transcended spirituality is confirmed.

W.H. Gardner proposes that the original motif of this poem perhaps refers back to a passage in Webster's "Duchess of Melfi;" Bosola says to the Duchess:

Tidst thou ever see a lark in a cage? 
Such is the soul in the body; this world is like her little turf of grass, 
and the heaven o'er our heads, like her looking-glass, only gives us a miserable knowledge of the small compass of our prison.'

Gardner also suggests that the best introduction to this poem is what Hopkins says in a letter (to Bridges) touching upon the "mysteries" of his religion. Bridges, he says, does not mean by 'mystery' what a Catholic does:

You mean an interesting uncertainty: the uncertainty ceasing, interest ceases also. This happens in some things; to you in religion. But a Catholic by mystery means
an incomprehensible certainty; without certainty, without formulation there is no interest.²

The essential meaning of "The Caged Skylark" is the contrast between Man's soul and body. The mystery, for Hopkins, lies in the "uncumbered" state of man's spirit and the revelation of when that spirit is "found at best".

The bird, to the poet, is a reminder of the flesh which lusteth against the spirit. Initially, the flesh serves as a cage, a prison for the soul, and the spirit is anxious to find freedom from this bondage. According to Gardner, the implications of "beyond the remembering" involve Man's spiritual bondage to the body and to the material world: "for just as the caged skylark seems at most times to have grown accustomed to his bondage, to have forgotten his natural habitat, so that other bird, the spirit of man, is enslaved by the material world, seems to have forfeited its birthright, to be cut off from its natural (that is, supernatural) regions. Rare enough is the artist's "muse of mounting vein"; very much rarer is that power of wing which enables the mystic to hurl the earth off under his feet. St. Ignatius, concerned with asceticism, promotes the superiority of spirituality when he says:

Man, since the fall in the Garden of Eden, has had to practice asceticism, to make sensuality, obey reason and all inferior parts be more subject to the superior.⁴
Hopkins, at first seeming to deny holy joy in the bodily senses, has been convinced of the essential freedom of the spirit; however, he wonders at its worth among so many days and weeks of unremitting and apparently thankless toil: "day-labouring-out life's age."

In the second quatrain, two themes are developed: resignation and frustration. In his Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy in Relation to Poetic Tradition, Gardner states that "the active personality of Hopkins has not been perfectly assimilated by the passive religious character". "Deadly," in line three of the second quatrain, suggests implacability and hints at the damnation of the spirit. The struggle for the poet lies in the impracticability of the transcendence of the spirit harbored within the body and the understanding of the relationship between spirituality and sensualism. The "esthetic Christianity" of Hopkins' achieved poems was a form of applicable Christianity to be placed against the "unsightly accretions" which were to him, as Gardner states, "symbolic of an age which allowed the wholly inverted pyramid of material progress to bear oppressively upon what should be the apex of human life—the spirit of man. To this apex Hopkins himself clung...."

"The Caged Skylark" deals with the nature of man, on the scholastic theory of the substantial union of
the body and the spirit, according to which the body and the senses cannot be rejected but must be disciplined, because "Man's spirit will be flesh-bound when found at best, but uncumbered." Because of man's freedom, he can sin; because he is free, he can refuse to use nature sacramentally; he can refuse the Call of the Cross, he can refuse to follow Christ. Hopkins, however, is concerned with the objective beauty of the world on both a physical and a supernatural level: "Undoubtedly the objective beauty of the physical world is a prime motive in "The Windhover" and "The Caged Skylark," but the higher "supernatural beauty" of Christian belief is no less basic, causal and formative: it is the ontological substrate or soil in which the seed, the immediate physical stimulus, takes root and grows." Man's human nature is constituted by a substantial union of the body and soul. Man's use of his will distinguishes him from the rest of Creation and allows him to mold himself to a perfection in which the body and soul cooperate according to the nature of their union. Man is not man without the body; the body is not a prison meant to hamper the soul: "Man is not to try, in a false sort of spirituality, to throw off the body, the senses." Rather, the life of the senses must be controlled and dedicated. Man himself is a hierarchy of powers, each important, yet to be subordinated one to another. Church dogma
concerning the Incarnation and Resurrection has constantly reasserted the sanctity of the body and the holiness of the senses. The Catholic doctrine of the resurrection of the body, here sensuously epitomized, is best explained in the words of an approved theologian, H.T. Cafferata, in his *The Catechism Simply Explained*:

When we die, the body and soul are separated for a time; the soul goes to be judged by God, and is rewarded or punished according to its works; the body is buried, and in course of time falls away into dust...At the end of the world the body rises and comes to life when the soul enters into it. It will be the same body that we have had on earth, but a spiritualized body like our Lord had after His Resurrection from the dead.

The soul in heaven, Hopkins believed, will be happy but will not know complete Beatitude until it is reunited with its body. Hopkins' analogy between the beatified body and soul and a "rainbow" resting on thistledown is sufficiently delicate and metaphysical. The initial conception of flesh as a cage falls away when the ideal relationship is attained:

Man's spirit will be flesh bound when found at best, But uncumbered; meadow-down is not distressed For a rainbow footing it nor he for his bones risen.

The very precariousness of this analogy, the new relation of man's spirit to his body after the resurrection, expresses the ontological precariousness of the subject—the ineffability of the supernatural. The non-con-
solving inference of the sestet, then, is rectified in the closing tercet when man's totality has been achieved by rehabilitating the human body on the supernatural plane. According to Gardner, the line, "Though aloft on turf or perch or poor low stage" is skillfully made to apply to both the captive bird and the human spirit: the lark's cage is hung "aloft" for safety; "turf" is placed in it for dietetic purposes, and the "perch" (pulpit, rostrum?) and the "poor low stage" (along with "aloft" and "turf") indicate clearly enough those moments of joy or vision which relieve the tedium of cage-bound and earth-bound existence. Man's mounting spirit, characterized by the Christian who strives to over subdue the Self either in works of charity or in a perfect union with the Creator is the source of man's transcendental consciousness and his link with the Being of God. According to St. Thomas, the soul, an integral part of the human composition, is constituted in its full natural perfection only by its union with the body, a sanctified union:

He (Christ) went forward in wisdom and bodily frame and favour with God and men; that is/ he pleased both God and men daily more and more by his growth of mind and body. But he could not have pleased by growth of body unless the body was strong, healthy, and beautiful that grew. But the best proof of all is this, that his body was the special work of the Holy Ghost.

Through bird imagery, once more, Hopkins portrays
struggling man achieving beauty, peace, and fulfillment in God. The poet's revelation of Christ's purpose and cause, seen specifically in "The Windhover" and carried further in "Peacè" culminates in the idea of the Resurrection. Labor, fulfillment of duty, and "Patience exquisite" unfold "a billion times told lovelier". The poet's spiritual transcendence, the Resurrection, is the highest plane of spiritual revelation and triumph.

2 Ibid., p. 251.

3 "Bone-house" is the Old English "bënhūs" and it is the pejorative for "body".


5 Pick, Hopkins: Priest and Poet, p. 69.

6 Perhaps Hopkins intends to recall Milton's "Loth God exact day labour, light denied?"


8 Pick, Hopkins: Priest and Poet, p. 69.

W. H. Gardner reminds us that even St. Augustine, at times, felt acutely the spirit's bondage to the flesh; he viewed the body as "cumbering" the spirit. He also reminds us that Christ said to Nicodemus, "Do not think carnally or you, in effect, "will be flesh; but think symbolically, and then you will be spirit."

Blake, according to Gardner, was the mystic who best understood the modern stuflification of the mystical consciousness. He condemned the growing materialistic scepticism which had locked man up in the prison-house of his five senses.
When that state has been achieved, and not before, Gardner states, the words of Browning's Rabbi will be fulfilled:

"All good things are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

Pick, A Hopkins Reader, p. 271.
CONCLUSION

The spiritual transcendence of the poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, is one of a painful, bitter struggle. Hopkins does, however, complement his struggle with the spirit of his revelation which offers consolation, understanding, and acceptance.

In each of the poems presented in this thesis, Hopkins has visualized his own human nature and spirituality in terms of bird imagery. The agony of frustration and weariness is excellently portrayed in "Peace" and "The Caged Skylark"; the poet's fearful inhibitions give way to the glorious revelation of Christ's purpose and cause in "The Windhover." In all three poems, Hopkins questions the meaning and purpose of the spiritual struggle; the tremendous difficulty of the struggle is an overwhelming strain on the man himself. Hopkins, however, never wavers in pursuing and living out the struggle for he is convinced of the resulting spiritual triumph; he states in "The Windhover":

"AND the fire that breaks from thee then,
   a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!"

He insists in "Peace":

44
"And so he does leave Patience exquisite, 
That plumes to Peace thereafter."

He triumphantly asserts in "The Caged Skylark":

"Man's spirit will be flesh-bound when 
found at best, 
But uncumber'd: meadow-down is not 
distressed
For a rainbow footing it nor he for 
his bones risen."

Hopkins realizes, in the poem, "The Windhover,"
that self-dedication and quasi-martyrdom are essential
in his soul's spiritual transcendence. This self-dedica-
tion, in terms of work, toil, and labour, is mirrored
in Christ's self-immolation on the Cross. The exertion
of the will and the fulfillment of duty, while in
themselves difficult and sometimes drudgingly,
monotonous, echo the consolation and sympathy of Christ
and provide the foundation for spiritual triumph. Im-
patience gives way to the gradual fulfillment of duty,
and "Patience exquisite" takes its place.

Hopkins combined mystical insight with a deep
humanity: the lilies and the thorns of the virtuous
life, the pathos of dissolution and the hope of im-
mortality—these find the highest and most poignant
expression; for this poet, the beauty and the worth
of all things must be seen in and through the love of
God. The spirit of transcendence and Resurrection is
vividly alive in all three poems for Hopkins' hope
and understanding lie in his devout acceptance of God's
love.
Gerard Manley Hopkins' wonder and exultation over "the achieve of, the mastery of the [windhover]" are expressive of his transcending spirituality. W.H. Gardner best sums up the glory of this poet:

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. He is integral to the beauty and storm without as to the beauty and storm within. But it will take a good deal of patience in us before we are integral to his own. Patience, yes— if we want to penetrate the hurdle of shining and resounding words to the very heart of the man, to the 'still center' of his transcendental meaning, to the 'uncreated light' which he sought, glimpsed, and (I believe) eventually found.

Priest, Poet, Mystic,—Hopkins welds these three selves into one God-Seeker. He found the "world charged with the grandeur of God" and the glory of that God shining "like shook foil." In such a God-charged world, is it any wonder that falcons and doves and skylarks are electrified and, whether their wings beat against gales, are furled on nests, or droop in cages, they gloriously carry the poet and the reader straight to God.
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