

A Stylistic Study of "The Windhover" by Gerard Manley Hopkins

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Abstract

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) is the greatest religious poet and Jesuit priest of the Victorian age who was born in London in the rapidly changing time, fundamentals, visions and sights. He wrote many poems such as "The Windhover", "The Wreck of the Deutschland", "God's Grandeur", "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", "I Wake and feel the fell of dark, not day", "Carrion Comfort", "Pied Beauty", "Felix Randal", "Binsey Poplars" and "Thou art indeed just, Lord" but none of them was published in his life. when he decided to become a Jesuit, he burned all his literary works as he felt that they were against the principles of his Catholic religion. His friend, Robert Bridge kept a copy of his poems and published them in 1918. As a Jesuit priest, Hopkins infused his personal religious devotion into his poetry. The Windhover reflects his intense spiritual connection. For him The Windhover is "the best thing I ever wrote". The Windhover is not the love poem which is addressed to any person, (even though "To Christ our Lord"), but to the life itself. The Windhover is the masterpiece of Hopkins style, imagery, in which he fuses the beauty of nature with the divine and religious believes. In order to reach his goal, Hopkins used figures of speech, sprung rhythm and different forms of sound patterning. This study is a stylistic analysis of The Windhover from the graphological, phonological, lexical, structural and semantic points of view. The Windhover stands out for its innovative style, vivid imagery, and seamless integration of nature and faith, a combination that distinguishes it from other religious poems.

Keywords: Gerard Manley Hopkins, Victorian poet, The Windhover, Stylistic Study.

دراسة أسلوبية لقصيدة الصقر لجيرارد مانلي هوبكنز

الملخص

يعتبر جيرارد مانلي هوبكنز (1844-1889) أعظم شاعر ديني وكاهن يسوعي في العصر الفيكتوري، فقد ولد في لندن في عصر سريع التحولات للمبادئ الأساسية والرؤى ووجهات النظر. كتب هوبكنز العديد من القصائد مثل [الصقر] "The Windhover"، [حطام السفينة المانيا] "The Wreck of the Deutschland"، [عظمة الله] "God's Grandeur"، [مكتوبة من أوراق سيبيل] "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves"، [أستيقظ وأشعر بظلام الليل، وليس النهار] "I Wake and feel the fall of dark, not day"، [راحة الجيف] "Carrion Comfort"، [الجمال المرقت] "Pied Beauty"، [فيليكس راندال] "Felix Randal"، [أشجار الحور بينسي] "Binsey Poplars" و [يا الهي، انت عادل حقاً] "Thou are really just, Lord". الا انه لم يتم طباعة أي من قصائده اثناء حياته، لأنه عندما قرر ان يصبح كاهناً يسوعياً أحرق جميع أعماله الأدبية لأنه يعتقد أنها تتعارض مع مبادئ دينه الكاثوليكي. احتفظ صديقه روبرت بريدج بنسخة من قصائده ونشرها في عام 1918. بصفته كاهناً يسوعياً، انعكس تدينه في شعره. تعكس قصيدة الصقر The Windhover ارتباطه الروحي العميق، فهو يعتبرها أفضل ما كتبه على الإطلاق، فهي ليست قصيدة حب موجهة إلى أي شخص (حتى لو كانت "إلى سيدنا المسيح")، بل إلى الحياة نفسها. إن قصيدة الصقر هي تحفة هوبكنز الفنية، ففيها يمتزج فيها جمال الطبيعة مع المعتقدات الإلهية والدينية. استخدم هوبكنز في القصيدة المجازات والإيقاعات المتقطعة وأشكال مختلفة من أنماط الصوت. هذه الدراسة هي تحليل أسلوبية لقصيدة الصقر من حيث الخط والصوت والصرف والتركيب والدلالة، فالقصيدة تتميز بأسلوبها المبتكر وصورها الحية والمزج السلس بين الطبيعة والدين، وهذا ما يميزها عن بقية القصائد الدينية الأخرى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: دراسة أسلوبية - قصيدة الصقر - جيرارد مانلي هوبكنز - شاعر العصر الفيكتوري.

About the Poet

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) is the greatest religious poet of the Victorian age who was born in the rapidly changing time, fundamentals, visions and sights. The Victorian tradition of writing poetry came with the little-known late Victorian poet; G. M. Hopkins, not with famous poets like T. S. Eliot. According to Thakur (2014, P. 400) Hopkins “freed both meter and language from the bonds of convention and paved way for the emergence of modern poetry”. Gerard Manley Hopkins is regarded as the greatest poet of nature, religion, and melancholy of the Victorian era. “His work has thus far been heavily dominated by matters of sound: by the verbal, the rhythmic, the musical, and the aural” (Dunleavy, 2009, P. V). He counts as a Victorian poet simply by virtue of writing during the Victorian era, but his work was unique for its time. Gerard Manley Hopkins is one of the most unique and important Victorian Poets, even though, he did not adhere to the rules and the standards of the Victorian poetry. Hopkins was also deeply influenced by the poetry of John Keats, who wrote beautifully about nature in poems like *Ode to Autumn* and *Ode to a Nightingale*. He was also considered as a precursor of the modernist poetry as he is the bridge between the Romantic and Victorian Era. In his poems, he described nature, love of it and used natural elements in most of his poems. Through the use of sprung rhythm, Hopkins influenced poets such as Dylan Thomas (a Welsh poet) and J. R. R. Tolkien, the author of "The Lord of the Rings", who were influenced by him and used the *sprung rhythm* in their poetry, emphasizing on the stress pattern and departing from the traditional metrical forms. The earlier poetic works of W. H. Auden were also under the influence of Hopkins and his *sprung rhythm*.

About the Poem

The Windhover is one of Gerard Manley Hopkins's most celebrated poems. Though the poem was written in 1877, it was only published posthumously in 1918 in *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Even though Hopkins works was not published during his lifetime, it is now celebrated for its innovative approach to rhythm and deep religious and natural themes. As a Jesuit priest, Gerard Manley Hopkins, in fact burned his poems during his lifetime, feeling that they were against the principles of his Catholic religion; his friend and fellow poet Robert Bridges kept copies and ensured they were published after Hopkins's death.

Hopkins begins his poem, *The Windhover*, with a dedication to Jesus Christ and biblical references. The poet described the kestrel as "kingdom of the daylight's dauphin" (1-2). The poem comes in the form of the first person, speaking about his experience, filled with the joy of the sight of the kestrel ‘*Windhover*’ soaring high through the air in pursuit of prey. Even though the speaker is profoundly impressed by the bird’s aerial skill, competency, the ability to hover in confidence, stillness, swift diving with concentration on its goal. In this case, the kestrel reflects the power, beauty, skillfulness and the grandeur of the divine creation for the nature and its elements. The speaker realizes, "no wonder", that this beauty is not surprising as it is the beautiful, inherently magnificent creation of God. The poem is a sonnet in the Italian or Petrarchan form. The first eight lines of the poem (octave), mainly concentrate on the kestrel, its description and the beauty it represents. The last six lines (sestet) place the bird within a broader spiritual and religious context and describe its symbolic significance. Indeed,

this poem brings out the presence of God and sheds light on how it is through God and his glory that earthly beings attain beauty and grace.

In his poem *The Windhover*, Hopkins believed that poetry's purpose was to capture this inner essence of things, which he called "inscape". He believed that this insight was a special gift from God to the poet, allowing him to see beyond the surface of things to his true nature. Hopkins believed that his theory of inscape could be expressed through a new form of meter, which he called "*Sprung Rhythm*". *Sprung rhythm* loosens the strict rules of traditional meter by focusing only on the stressed syllables in a line of poetry. This allows the poet to create a more natural and dynamic rhythm, avoiding the plodding iambic meter that he felt was too singsong. Hopkins employed the sprung rhythm to infuse poetry with the profound sense of intensity, vitality, and complexity to allow the form to reflect and represent the themes and subjects of his poetry.

Hopkins also believed that the theory of '*inscape*' could be expressed through a new form of meter, called "*Sprung rhythm*". *Sprung rhythm* loosens the strict rules of traditional meter by focusing only on the stressed syllables in a line of poetry. This allows the poet to create a more natural and dynamic rhythm, avoiding the plodding iambic meter that he felt was too singsong. The stress variation and the irregularity of the rhythm create rich tapestry of sound and enrich the poem's sonic texture in order to reflect the fluctuations of emotion or the natural world, add depth and complexity and invite more nuanced language involvement. The sonnet form is chosen because it is associated with love, nature and the romantic traditions. Hopkins created his peculiar form of sonnet by compressing the syllables, violating the followed usual rhyme schemes, and using unusual words. For Hopkins, *The Windhover* is the best

poem he ever wrote. It is rich with complex imagery and intricate language.

Stylistic Analysis of the Poem "The Windhover"

Stylistic Analysis of the poem '*The Windhover*' is held up under different graphological, phonological, lexical and syntactic and semantic levels. These levels made the analysis of the poem, easy and clear. The analysis is carried out by keeping in mind the specific features of these levels. The levels of stylistic analysis are given as follows:

A) Graphological Level

- The poem *The Windhover* is structured as an Italian sonnet, made up of an *octave* and a *sestet*. The first 8 lines, the octave, have the rhyme scheme ABBAABBA. The sestet is split into two tercets, with the rhyme scheme CDC DCD.
- There is usual capitalization as every first letter of every line is capitalized. However, the poet has used some words at the center of the poem that the first letter is capital, for example, 'Falcon' is written in capitals, though it is not found at the beginning of a line.
- The use of punctuation in the poem can clearly be noted: periods, commas, and dashes. The poet used the period only two times in the whole poem, particularly at the seventh line of the *octave* and at the end of the poem. Periods/Full Stops usually show the completion of the poet's mind. Moreover, there is an overuse of commas as they are used in every line of the poem except in three lines: the sixth and seventh lines of the *octave*, and the fourth line of the *sestet*.
- The poet also used untypical word-boundaries as in the word "kingdom". He split the word "king-/-dom" over a line boundary, to make several interpretations of the meaning possible. Normally, this word is written together, i.e. Without the

hyphen. This graphological deviation indicates that we should focus on this word not as a whole. As the morpheme "dom" is a historical word which means doom (judgement). Therefore, the graphological deviation helps us to understand that the poet did not mean by this word 'kingdom' a country ruled by a king but a judgement of the king.

B) Phonological Level

1- Rhyme scheme and types of rhyme

The rhyme scheme of the poem's octave is ABBAABBA followed by a sestet of CDCDCD. Hopkins's *The Windhover* follows sprung rhythm as there are 5 stressed syllables per line, but the number of unstressed syllables varies (hence the variation in lengths). Take the second line of the

poem as an example: "dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding". This line has a total of 16 syllables, 5 stressed and 11 unstressed. Sprung rhythm begins with a stressed syllable, giving it a more abrupt and emphatic start which makes it different from the traditional meters that may begin with an unstressed syllable. Hopkins found the consistent, bouncy, rhythm of iambic pentameter to be too unnatural. He coined *Sprung Rhythm* as a name for his preferred type of meter. However, the first line of the poem; "I caught this morning morning's minion, king", follows the traditional iambic pentameter. The end rhyme is the rhyme which used in *The Windhover*.

The table below shows the rhyme along with the rhyme scheme used in the poem.

<i>The Octave (eight lines)</i>		<i>The Sestet (six lines)</i>	
king	A	here	C
riding	B	billion	D
striding	B	chevalier	C
wing	A	sillion	D
swing	A	dear	C
gliding	B	vermillion	D
hiding	B		
thing	A		

2- Sound devices used in the poem

Poetry is the profound art and what makes it peculiar is the use of the sound and musical devices. These devices are interjected throughout the poem in a marvelous way in order to reflect the poet desire to symbolize the kestrel and nature

in a religious and spiritual context. The use of sound patterns as alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme (end, reverse and pararhyme), oxymoron, repetition give the musical enjoyment and the auditory imagery to the readers of the poem.

Sound devices which are used in *The Windhover* are shown in the following table:

NO.	Sound Devices	Examples
1	Alliteration	The repeated first letter in: " <u>m</u> orning <u>m</u> orning's <u>m</u> inion" / " <u>d</u> aylight's <u>d</u> auphin <u>d</u> apple- <u>d</u> awn- <u>d</u> rawn" / " <u>s</u> teady air, and <u>s</u> triding" / " <u>h</u> igh there <u>h</u> ow" / " <u>w</u> imbling <u>w</u> ing" / " <u>a</u> stake's heel <u>s</u> weeps <u>s</u> mooth" / " <u>B</u> rute <u>b</u> eauty", " <u>p</u> ride <u>p</u> lume", " <u>t</u> he fire <u>t</u> hat breaks from <u>t</u> hee <u>t</u> hen", " <u>g</u> all <u>g</u> ash <u>g</u> old", and " <u>b</u> lue <u>b</u> leak embers".
2	Assonance	The echoing vowel sounds in: " <u>da</u> uphin, <u>d</u> apple- <u>d</u> awn- <u>d</u> rawn" / " <u>w</u> impling <u>w</u> ing" / " <u>r</u> ung upon" / " <u>o</u> ff <u>o</u> ff <u>o</u> ff" / " <u>h</u> eel <u>s</u> weeps" / " <u>p</u> lough <u>d</u> own"
3	Consonance	" <u>S</u> tirred <u>f</u> or a <u>b</u> ird" / " <u>l</u> ovelier, <u>m</u> ore ... <u>c</u> hevalier" / " <u>F</u> all <u>g</u> all"
5	Repetition	The repeated words in the poem are: "morning mornings" / "off off"

6	Rhyme	There is an internal rhyme within a line like "Stirred for a bird" OR the end rhyme patterns of the last two stanzas ("here / dear", "billion / sillion", "chevalier / -vermillion).
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C) Morphological Level

In terms of morphology, Gerard Manley Hopkins demonstrated a skillful use of word forms to create vivid imagery and enhance the richness of his language in *The Windhover*.

One notable morphological feature employed by Hopkins is the use of compound words. Examples such as "dapple-dawn-drawn" and "blue-bleak embers" contribute to the poem's sensory and visual experiences. These compound words evoke specific images and add to the unique linguistic texture of the poem.

Hopkins also employed confusing grammatical structures and sentence order, which added to the complexity of the poem. By blending and confusing adjectives, verbs, and subjects, Hopkins reflected the theme of smooth merging and the inseparability of the bird's self and its actions. This technique emphasizes the bird's perfect immersion in the air and contributes to a sense of intensity and unity within the poem.

The use of the "-ing" ending is significant in the poem's rhyme scheme. This ending appeared in nouns, verbs, and adjectives, to link different parts of the sentences together in a cohesive unity. Hopkins packed a multitude of verbs into a short space of lines, aiming to precisely describe the character of the bird's motion.

Furthermore, Hopkins employed a wide range of figure of speech devices, including metaphors, similes, antithesis, alliteration, assonance, consonance, imagery, personification, and

symbolism. Through these devices, he created repeating patterns of rhythm and rhyme that contributed to the poem's overall aesthetic and evoke a unique sensory experience.

Hopkin's lexical choices created harmony and interest within the poem, while conveying its significant themes and objectives. The careful selection of words adds depth and meaning to the poem, further enhancing its impact on the reader. Overall, Hopkins skillfully used various morphological features such as compound words, confusing grammatical structures, and a wide range of figure of speech devices to create a rich and evocative language in *The Windhover*. These techniques contributed to the poem's imagery, unity, and overall aesthetic appeal.

D) Lexical level

In the lexical level, linguistic deviation is represented by neologism. In *The Windhover*, Hopkins used the means of compounding to create new words. For example, in line 2, while describing the falcon, Hopkins invented the adjective "dapple-dawn-drawn" which is not previously existing. Moreover, Hopkins used neologism as he used the verb "achieve" after "the" and before the preposition "of" as it is a noun in line 8 "the achieve of, the mastery of the thing" which is actually deviant.

Other words used in the poem belong to classes or categories which have appropriate grammatical functions.

Below is a table showing the classes of words from the poem:

Nouns	pronouns	verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs	prepositions	conjunctions	Articles
morning	I	caught	steady	here	of	and	the
Daylight	his	told	rolling	there	down	then	a
wing	him	Makes	high	forth	underneath		
swing	it	shine	dapple- dawn-drawn		upon		

Kingdom	my	striding	brute		off		
Falcon	themselves	rungs	lovelier		on		
dauphin	this	sweep	dangerous		for		
beauty	that	rebuffed			from		
Level		achieve			in		
Embers		hiding					
gall		buckle					
gash		breaks					
reign							
ecstasy							
pride							
plume							

E) Syntactic Level

Indeed, *The Windhover* by Gerard Manley Hopkins exhibits notable syntactic features that contribute to its unique style and impact. One significant syntactic feature present in the poem is the use of frequent enjambments. Enjambment occurs when the syntax of a phrase or sentence runs over from one line to the next without a pause or terminal punctuation. Hopkins utilized enjambment to create a sense of continuity and flow between lines. This technique enhances the poem's movement and energy, reflecting the dynamic nature of the bird's flight.

For example, in the lines "*Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding / High there,*" the enjambment between "*striding*" and "*High*" emphasizes the bird's soaring motion. The lack of a pause or punctuation at the end of the line contributes to the seamless flow of the poem and reinforces the sense of the bird's upward movement.

Another notable syntactic choice is the use of inversions. Hopkins employed inverted word order at various points in the poem, disrupting the expected syntax and adding complexity to the structure. This technique serves to draw attention to certain phrases or concepts, creating emphasis and highlighting the poet's intended meaning.

Additionally, Hopkins employed a unique form of enjambment in the first line of the poem, where he split the word "*kingdom*" at the end of the line. This choice introduces enjambment in a way that allows for a natural pause while maintaining the sense of the phrase. The word "*king*" itself implies the regal authority of the bird, enhancing the imagery and thematic elements of the poem.

Hopkins also deviated from syntactic norm as he used the word 'achieve' in "*the achieve of, the mastery of the thing*", which is a verb in a position which is normally reserved for a nominal category, that is, after the and before of as stated before.

Overall, the complex syntactic structure of *The Windhover*, including enjambments and inversions, contributes to the poem's distinct style and impact. These choices create a sense of movement, emphasize key elements, and add depth to the overall poetic experience.

F) Semantic Level

Indeed, the semantic analysis of *The Windhover* revealed several key themes and semantic features employed by Gerard Manley Hopkins. One prominent theme in the poem is the celebration of the beauty and majesty of nature. *The Windhover* has rich, multi-layered language in order to explore themes of artistic and spiritual transcendence, divine majesty, and the contrast

between the ephemeral and the eternal. *The Windhover*, or falcon, serves as a powerful symbol of grace and power. It reflects both physical prowess and spiritual grace. Hopkins used vivid imagery and descriptive language to capture the bird's magnificence, emphasizing its ability to soar and glide through the air. The poem invited the reader to appreciate and marvel at the wonders of the natural world.

Another theme explored in the poem is the pursuit of mastery. In the line "*the achieve of; the mastery of the thing!*" Hopkins reflected on the idea of achieving excellence and skill in one's pursuits. *The Windhover*, with its precise and controlled movements, represented mastery in flight. This theme suggested a broader message about the pursuit of personal excellence and the dedication required to attain mastery in any field.

Furthermore, Hopkins employed juxtaposition to add depth and complexity to the poem's meaning. The contrasting elements of "*brute beauty*" and "*act, oh, air, pride, plume*" highlight the duality and complexity of the bird's nature. The phrase "*brute beauty*" suggests a raw, instinctive power, while the subsequent words emphasize the bird's intentional actions and its connection to the air, pride, and its distinctive plumage. This juxtaposition captures the multifaceted nature of *The Windhover* and adds layers of meaning to the poem.

The natural image of the falcon "*kingdom of daylight's dauphin*", "*kingdom*" and "*dauphin*" as a divine sovereignty associated with the dawn, symbolizing the light and freshness of the morning "*dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon*" with a sense of control and grace "*How he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing*", gliding with smooth, effortless and elegant flight "*As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend*", maintaining strength and resilience "*Rebuffed the big wind*"

reflects the speaker's emotion "*My heart in hiding / Stirred for a bird*" and the artistic and spiritual achievement "*The achieve of, the mastery of the thing!*", "*Brute beauty and valour and act*" and the transcendence to divine as a hero "*AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion / Times told lovelier, more dangerous*", "*O my chevalier!*". The closing image contrasts the fleeting nature of human toil with the enduring and eternal beauty of the flight "*Shéer plód makes plough down sillion / Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear, / Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold vermilion*". The contrast between "*blue-bleak embers*" which has a sense of decay and "*gold-vermilion*" which suggests a lasting vibrant beauty made nature as the divine beauty of eternity.

The stylistic techniques of parallelism, employed in the poem, helped to fully understand the deep meaning and the subtle connections that reveal the poet's awe, sense of wonder and the elevated status attributed to the kestrel. The poet's awe is accentuated through semantic deviation, when Hopkins personifies "*morning*" and "*daylight*" by adding an apostrophe (s). Morning and daylight are the abstract representations of the nature that are not usually humanized and through personification, Hopkins associated them to the kestrel, to emphasize its importance. By hyphenating the word "*kingdom*", for example, Hopkins diverts the specific meaning of the word and gives a unique name for the kestrel in order not to identify not only what it looks like but its individual personality.

Overall, the semantic features in *The Windhover* showcase Hopkins's exploration of themes such as the beauty of nature, the pursuit of mastery, and the juxtaposition of contrasting elements. Through these semantic choices, Hopkins invited readers to contemplate the profound significance

of the natural world and the pursuit of excellence in one's endeavors.

1) Themes

The poem revolves around several themes such as beauty and power of nature, human experience, courage and strength, passion and inspiration, but the major theme that Hopkins explored in *The Windhover* is The Manifestation of God in Nature. Hopkins used poetry to express his religious devotion. He drew his images from the natural world and found nature inspiring. He developed his theories of inscape and instress to explore the manifestation of God in every living thing.

These theories suggest that recognizing the unique identity of an object, as given by God, draws us nearer to Christ. Likewise, appreciating the beauty of nature enhances our worship of God. Many poems, like *Hurrahing in Harvest* and *The Windhover*, begin by celebrating nature, which then leads to reflections on God or Christ. For example, in *The Starlight Night*, the speaker invites readers to admire the night sky, likening it to a structure that holds Christ, his mother, and the saints, thereby enhancing the stars' beauty through their Christian connection.

2) Symbols

In *The Windhover*, several symbols are employed to convey deeper meanings within the poem. Here are the main symbols and their significance:

1. The Windhover (Kestrel): The windhover, or kestrel, symbolizes God's mastery and creative power. The bird's refined and graceful movements in flight reflect the divine qualities bestowed upon it by God. The windhover serves as a representation of God's majesty and skill in creating the world. It symbolizes not only its own majesty but also the entirety of God's creation.

2. Soil: The freshly upturned soil, referred to as "sillion," symbolizes the presence of God's fire of creation in all things. The speaker highlights how

even the seemingly mundane and ordinary aspects of the world, like the glimmering soil, contain the divine essence. The act of plowing the soil becomes symbolic of the laborious and repetitive nature of spiritual work, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging God's wonder and beauty in all forms of existence.

3. Fire: Fire represents the glory and majesty of God. In the poem, the "fire that breaks" from Christ, to whom the poem is dedicated, is described as far lovelier and more dangerous than any other fire. This fire symbolizes the divine presence and power emanating from Christ. Additionally, the embers mentioned in the final lines of the poem symbolize the hidden beauty and intensity of God's creation. Just as embers can appear cool on the surface while still radiating fierce heat and light, the poem suggests that beneath the surface of appearances, the world is aglow with God's majesty.

The use of these symbols enriches the poem's exploration of the beauty of nature and the majesty of God, emphasizing their interconnectedness and the inherent divine qualities present in all aspects of creation.

3) Imagery

In "The Windhover" by Gerard Manley Hopkins, the poet employed vivid imagery to engage the reader's senses and create visual and tactile impressions. Here is an analysis of the imagery used in the poem:

1. Falcon in Flight: Hopkins vividly described the falcon's flight, appealing to the reader's visual and tactile senses. The imagery evokes the early morning light shining on the bird, the wind supporting its flight, and its graceful descent. The reader can imagine the dappled patterns on the bird's feathers and feel the constant movement and power of its flight.

2. Fire and Embers: The imagery of fire and embers represents the divine glory and power of God. The fire breaking from Christ signifies a radiant and beautiful energy, while the embers symbolize the hidden intensity and beauty present in all aspects of creation, waiting to be discovered.

3. Plowing Soil: The image of freshly upturned soil, or sillion, reflects the idea of laborious and repetitive spiritual work. It symbolizes the importance of recognizing the inherent wonder and beauty in all aspects of the world, even in tasks that may seem mundane or challenging.

4. Blood and Wounds: The imagery of blood and wounds alludes to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The wounds represent Christ's sacrifice for humanity's salvation, emphasizing his grace, power, and descent to earth and even hell to redeem mankind from sin.

5. Military and Chivalric Imagery: Hopkins employed the eighteenth-century image of the Christ as a knight and refer to him as "O my chevalier!". He incorporates imagery related to military and chivalric themes, using words like "rein," "riding," "kingdom," "dauphin," "achieve," "mastery," "chevalier," "plume," and "buckle." This imagery adds a sense of heroism and nobility to the poem, connecting the falcon's majestic qualities to concepts of valor and achievement.

Through these rich and varied images, Hopkins created a sensory experience for the reader and enhanced the themes of nature's beauty, the divine presence, and spiritual devotion. The imagery also underscores the contrast between the greatness of nature and the smallness of humankind in the face of God's glory.

Reflection of the Writer's Views, Age, and other Factors

Indeed, *The Windhover* reflects Gerard Manley Hopkins's religious beliefs and his deep connection to nature. As a Jesuit priest, Hopkins

found spiritual inspiration in the natural world and often sought to convey his religious convictions through his poetry. The poem showcases his reverence for God's creation and his belief in the divine presence permeating all aspects of existence.

Moreover, Hopkins's unique metrical innovation, sprung rhythm, is evident in *The Windhover*. This rhythmic structure, characterized by irregular stresses and a pulsating energy, adds a distinct musicality to the poem. It reflects Hopkins's desire to capture the vitality and dynamism of the natural world and his own passionate response to it.

Considering that Hopkins wrote this poem in his late twenties, it is possible to discern a youthful energy and enthusiasm in the language and imagery employed. The poem displays a sense of wonder and awe, which aligns with the exuberance often associated with youth. Hopkins's youthful perspective may have contributed to his ability to perceive the beauty and significance in even the most ordinary aspects of nature.

Overall, *The Windhover* provides a glimpse into Hopkins's religious worldview, his poetic experimentation, and his youthful appreciation for the wonders of the natural world.

Conclusion

It is difficult to understand *The Whindhover* without understanding Hopkins' concepts, unconventional vocabulary, background and his life. The poem includes several Anglo-Saxons words such as *rung* which is the past of *ring*, *minion*, *dauphin*, *chevalier* (knight or prince), etc. The unusual combinations such as "*dapple-dawn-drawn*", to depict the bird. Additionally, there are unusual word combinations like "dapple-dawn-drawn," which depict a bird. The last stanza "*gash gold-vermilion*" related the Christ and his sacrifice. The unconventional grammar and

structure of the poem deviates from traditional forms of the sonnet, even though it has some characteristics of the traditional sonnet such as rhyme, rhythm and poetic music.

The poem is a religious poem which serves as a form of thanksgiving to Christ. There is a close connection between the beautiful bird 'The Windhover' and the Christ as seeing the bird reminds him with the Christ so it deserves his thanks, appreciation and gratitude. Even though the poem is of religious theme, it is considered as a romantic poem because of its form. It is a symbolic poem because it uses the bird as a symbol for the Christ and whenever the bird is mentioned it refers to the Christ and praising the bird means praising the Christ. Thus, the poem's central theme is more about the poet's admiration of Christ than about the bird itself

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Appendix

The Windhover

To Christ our Lord

*I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom 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:
shéer plód makes plough down sillion Shine, and
blue-bleak embers, ah my dear, Fall, gall
themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.*