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Technique as Revelation of Mystical Experience: A Study of the Poems of George Herbert and Gerard Manley Hopkins

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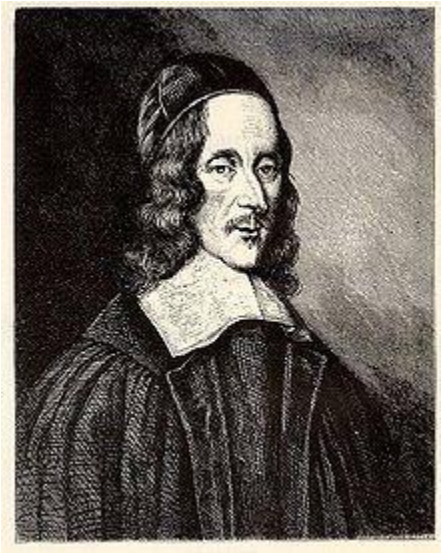

George Herbert
Courtesy: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Herbert
Portrait by Robert White in 1674 (National Portrait Gallery)

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Gerard Manley Hopkins

Courtesy: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerard_Manley_Hopkins

PREFACE

'Technique as a revelation of mystical Experience**:** A study of the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins and George Herbert' is an intensive study of the Christian life and mystical experiences of the poets which serve as the fundamental back ground to their poetry, so much so that they seem to play an important role, a connecting nexus of the design and format, the material and substance, the finale and achievement of their works.

The introductory chapter defines mysticism and explains the attributes of mystics. Mysticism of different religions is analyzed. Specifically characteristics peculiar to Christian mysticism with reference to the great mystics of the world, and in particular, great Christian mystics of England and their views are dealt with.

The chapter deals with mysticism in Christian literature with special reference to George Herbert and Gerard Manley Hopkins as mystics. It explains how as Christian mystics their experiences involve the perfect consummation of the love of God and highlights the art of establishing their conscious relation with the absolute. Above all union with Him is the ultimate object of their existence. The chapter further deals with the methodology and structure of the dissertation.

The subject matter of chapter II entitled, 'Self to Surrender', is intimately concerned with the

genesis, growth and development of the mystic life of George Herbert. It is a close and dispassionate study of his life, educational career, ecclesiastical service, spiritual conflicts, progress and mystic union with Christ.

The various stages of spiritual journey can be traced in his life history. The first one involving his redemption from bondage of sin, while the second stage brings forth his preoccupation with self. Being delivered from the self-life, he is gradually led to the perfection of Christian life of complete surrender and submission to the will of his Saviour. This is unfolded in the third phase of his spiritual life. It also focuses on his very valuable and authentic records of his mystical experiences expressed in the form of poetry entitled, 'The Temple'.

The chapter III 'Technique, the shape of the psyche', explains the poetic techniques used by Herbert, that describes his mystic pilgrimage under two divisions; techniques which exhibit his conflicts and those which reveal his spiritual progress and mystic union with Christ in the course of his spiritual life.

Herbert's Christian mystical experiences serve as a source of inspiration for his poetic verses. His constant effort is therefore to write poetry as a genuine part of his Christian mystical experiences. The technique illustrates the emotional pattern of the poet. The very form of the poems expose Herbert's spiritual conflict, progress and union with Jesus Christ.

They are clearly brought out in his titles, moods, tones, metrical rhyme schemes and stanza patterns. Thereby his technique is shaped by his psyche. This chapter proves that technique is indeed an expression of the blending of Herbert's art and religion.

'Conflict to Conquest', is the fourth chapter. This introduces the life of Hopkins, which is marked out by a series of spiritual struggles and mystic experiences, which result in the mystic union with God. His personal experiences is translated into poetry. It deals with the formative period of his life, the educational career and his conversion to Catholicism, which results in many religious controversies, with his friend and family.

The chapter further explores the contributory causes for the mystical experiences and traces the successive stages of the dark night of the soul during the poet's spiritual crisis as seen in the terrible sonnets. The period of the dark night of the soul is ultimately followed by a dawn of spiritual consolation, patience and joy leading him to a mystical union with God. Hopkins ultimately enters into eternal companionship with Christ.

The succeeding chapter entitled 'Psyche and artistic creation', explains how the technique adapted by Hopkins is the revelation of the Psyche. Among the three phases of his spiritual career, the poems of the first phase express the conflict between basic sensuousness and intense

religious faith. It shows a constant conflict between aestheticism and asceticism, sensuousness and spiritualism.

The use of counter point rhythm, sprung rhythm, alliteration, assonance, repetition of consonant sounds, and internal rhyme scheme give the poems a shape and a design, a form and structure and the inscape which is a distinct individuality of style. The subject referred to in these poems is the Instress.

The poems of the last two phases of his mystical experiences are noted for his wit, extensive use of imagery, economy of language, terseness of style, blend of passion and intellect and startling phraseology. The elements of mysticism in the poems are enhanced through these various literary devices.

The last chapter which is the Conclusion, recapitulates the findings of the earlier chapters. The various literary devices which Herbert and Hopkins use effectively bring out the significance of their mystical experiences. It reminds us of the various stages of their mystical experiences, the spiritual conflicts, the spiritual progress and the mystical union, which take the real position of a pilgrimage, making them personal and universal. The chapter also highlights the relevance of the spiritual experiences of the poets to the modern world. It proves that as Christian mystic poets George Herbert and Gerard Manley Hopkins hold a memorable place in the realm of literature.

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Mysticism is a spiritual quest for supreme and perfect knowledge of God, which enables the individual to have direct intercourse with God, and to become the partaker of the divine nature of God. This experience is birthed with man's effort to grasp the divine essence, which leads him to the actual communion with God.

Dr. Randolph Stone defines mysticism as, "the pathway of the soul to God realisation". The spiritual quest which maintains the possibility of a direct intercourse with God, becomes an experience for the individual, the "partaker of the divine nature of God". Richard Kirby in his preface to the Mission of Mysticism defines mysticism as, "an affirmation of the perfectability of man. It is the apostle of perfection and love, and its mission to individual men and to the human race is to awaken them to the ideal expression of those virtues" (xiii).

Mysticism, wrote Coventory Patmore, 'is the science of ultimates. It is a science in an absolute sense, being the passionate and all consuming quest for supreme and perfect knowledge of the Ultimate Reality which philosophy calls Truth and theology acknowledges as "God" (Cox 17). W.R. Inge expresses it as the "Communion with God" (Cox 19), who is conceived as the supreme

and ultimate reality. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica Mysticism "appears in connection with the endeavour of the human mind to grasp the divine essence or the ultimate reality of things, and to enjoy the blessedness of actual communion with the Highest" (50). Thus in mysticism, the consciousness of a Reality beyond time and space is an attempt deliberately made to bring the eternal in relationship with the temporal.

A mystic begins his quest for God, within the framework of spiritual perception, kinship with the divine nature, holiness and love. Richard Kirby in The Mission of Mysticism highlights the attributes of a mystic.

> 'The mystic is the man with the perfected mind. He alone has the passion and perfection of the poet, the patience of the saint, the perseverance of the scientist, the razor sharpness of the mathematician, the penetration of the philosopher, the intelligence of the logician and he combines these with the calmness and peace born of long years of meditation and creativity that follows the Holy Spirit in all of thinking men, and he is the master of every branch of thought, while being mastered by none. He has every style and technique of thought in his

> repoitre, and his is the style of no styles as he responds with perfect fluidity to reach cognitive situation according to the response it merits.... Indeed, this is hardly surprising, since the perfected person, one who has trodden every inch of the way to Calvary with Christ and reaped the corresponding reward' (16).

Mysticism is international and common to all religions. Sufism, which emanated from Arabia, is the mystical aspect of Islam. This is said to have been developed from the Koran. Importance is given to mystical love, besides feeling that 'nothing really exists besides His overwhelming presence' (Katz 131). Taoism focuses upon man's union with the infinite through contemplation of nature. Confucianism centres on man's relationship with the universe, 'both human and natural reaching for the transcendent through the immanent, the divine through the human' (Katz 232), according to 'The Encyclopaedia Americana' Buddhism is based on the 'enlightment experience of the Mandukya Upanishad' (698).

Christian mysticism asserts the existence of a divine ground, and the inherent kinship with God. It is the 'tendency as the name implies, the ascent towards union with the Triune God which is undertaken principally through the person of the Son : Christ is literally and figuratively the

Door through which the divine nature of the Father can be apprehended' (Cox 34). Mysticism puts God at the centre and makes the little self follow his command (Kirby 30).

Among the characteristics peculiar to Christian mysticism, incarnation is an important doctrine. It highlights the love of God which sanctifies the world. From the starting point of Christian mysticism, one discovers that the life of contemplation ultimately embraces a sense of community with others. The mystic's approach to God is not as an individual in isolation but as an individual member of the body of Christ.

'Christian love is the love of Christ which unites us to Him, and through Him to one another and so Christian theology, and in particular Christian Mystical theology, it is the fruit of participation in the mystery of Christ, which is inseparable from the mystery of the Church' (Louth 199-200).

Grace is an important issue of mysticism since mysticism is man's response to God's condescension. 'Grace is not just the soul's awareness that it is experiencing something beyond it's own powers, it is God's love for man which underlines the very possibility of man's response in love' (Louth 197). Hence, grace establishes the suitable ground for communion with God. It asserts that 'God is not unconscious

of the soul's quest for Him, but is actively engaged on the soul's behalf in her quest' (Louth 195).

Some of the great mystics during the partristic age like Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. Augustine, Dionysius of the Areopagite and St. John of the cross expressed their views on the inner apprehension of the Divine presence and union with God. Among the medieval mystics, St. Bernard, St. Francis and Thomas Aquinas and among the others, Ekchart, Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton and Julian of Norwich are important.

Clement of Alexandria asserts 'the Mystical belief that God, the unknown, can be apprehended, is the synthesis of knowledge and faith. Faith is the foundation on which the ladder of knowledge is reared; through knowledge the soul ascends to the contemplation of God and the final recovery of the divine likeness in man' (Cox 62). Mystical knowledge according to him cannot be achieved without effort and it cannot be achieved without God's help.

Origen succeeded Clement. His mystical doctrine is based on the fact that the soul's beauty is being created in the image of God. His starting point for a knowledge of the secret and hidden things of God is the result of his patient and humble search of the scripture. St. Augustine as a mystic combines great intellectual strength with powerful intuition.

> For Augustine, the spiritual life is a perpetual movement towards the eternal object of love towards the unchanging, all loving Absolute: "What then do I love, when I love Thee? ... I love a certain light, and a certain voice, a certain fragrance, a certain food, a certain embrace, when I love my God : a light, voice, fragrance, food , embrace of the inner man. Where that shines upon my soul which space cannot contain that sounds which time cannot sweep away, that is fragrant which is scattered not by breeze, that tastes sweet which when fed upon is not diminished, that clings close which no satiety disparts. This it is that I love, when I love my God" (Cox 72).

According to St. John of the cross, "Life begins with feelings of joy and devotion, but if a man is to progress in it he must be purified by what Walter Hilton calls the Dark Night" (Graef 209). Describing the act of God in preparing souls for the dark night St. John of the cross remarks that "He divests the faculties, affections and senses, both spiritual and sensory, interior and exterior. He leaves the intellect in darkness, the will in aridity, the memory in emptiness" (Gish 75). "The greater the height to which God intends to lead the mystic, the longer and the more painful this purification, which lasts for several years

normally. But all its sufferings will be forgotten when God finally leads the soul to the joys of mystical union" (Graef 247).

Among the medieval mystics St. Bernard is one of the great mystics of the Christian tradition. The others are St. Francis and St. Thomas Aquinas. St. Bernard 'was an example of what Eve`lyn Underhill called a creative mystic' (Cox 79). He translated his mystical experience into concrete pastoral acts. For St. Bernard, Christ is the bridegroom. He is not only the bridegroom of the church but also of the soul.

St. Francis of Assisi is a supreme example of how mystical life expresses itself completely through a spontaneous and effective love for God's creation. He illustrates the interplay of the human and the divine will. St. Thomas Aquinas is one of the great Christian mystics who lays stress on combining of the fruits of the contemplative life, with action in the world of men.

In England the Christian mystical tradition produced principal figures such as Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton and Julian of Norwich who were a company of contemplatives and the term contemplation in the fullest sense signifies the highest union with God, that was possible for the earthbound soul. The attainment of this state of contemplation was the motive for the writings of all the major English mystics. To them, the lives of Martha and Mary provided full justification

to the detachment necessary for the complete realization of the contemplative life. Housewifery is Martha's part, Mary's quietness and exemption from all the disturbances of the world, so that nothing may prevent her from hearing God's voice (Cox 128).

Richard Rolle is the earliest of the great English fourteenth century mystics. According to him contemplation is a gift from God. Contemplative life is composed of reading prayer and meditation, taught Rolle. Throughout his writings Rolle exhibits a passionate devotion to Christ. His mysticism avoids all abstractions and is rooted in the humanity of Christ, based on the mystery of the World being made flesh. He gives a sophisticated account of the Trinity. The God whom he seeks to know is not a nameless Absolute but the Triune God defined by the theologians.

The Cloud of Unknowing is without doubt one of the great books of the Middle Ages and one of the greatest devotional classicism in English. Here the author's advice focuses on the complete concentration of God, to the exclusion of all else, he propounds a mysticism of darkness. The human mind cannot possibly comprehend God, and yet union with Him is the ultimate object of one's existence. Such an union is beyond the ability of the intellect but there is another way of knowing God that is 'through what Eckhart called

the spark of the soul and Gallus termed the higher will' (Cox 137).

For Walter Hilton, the contemplative life is a continuation and development of the normal life of grace begun at baptism. The foundation for both, the spiritual life in general and the contemplative, life in particular is what he calls the reforming of God's image in the soul. The soul cannot be conformed to God until the virtues are transformed into affection. According to him man's soul is a 'created trinity' - 'recollection' 'reason' and 'will' (Cox 142). It is made perfect in its mind and vision and love by the Blessed Trinity, who is the Lord God.

Julian of Norwich's mysticism combines holiness and simplicity with a true sense of the transcendent. She is the most approachable of the medieval English mystics, and she demonstrates clearly how an individual relationship with God is sustained and nurtured by the collective environment of the Church (Cox 148 - 149). She focuses on the sufferings of Christ and His Love.

Mystical wisdom has recurred throughout history and in all parts of the world as expressed in the various literature. In English literature the varieties of mystical experiences find expression in the works of the poets like George Herbert, Francis Thompson, William Blake, William Wordsworth and Gerard Manley Hopkins.

The fundamental basis of Wordsworth's mysticism is grounded in his belief that there is an essential unity, in all the objects of nature and human nature created by God. The divine spirit permeates through all the objects of creation and unites them in an indissoluble bond of Spiritual affinity. He believes confidentially that all things in the visible world are but forms and manifestations of the divine life. He believes that human beings can have a vision of the Divine Being, not through the physical perception, but by the inner eyes of the soul.

Wordsworth's intuitive experience of this Spiritual unity and its realisation often throws him into a trance. The transcendental feeling of ecstasy and cosmic consciousness, comes to him at intervals and in such moments he becomes "a living soul, forgetting all about his external existence". Therefore his poetry is not simply a joyous record of happy objects of nature viewed by him in moments of ecstasy and joy, but also a full account of his mystical experience as expressed in his 'Tintern Abbey'.

William Blake is a mystic and a visionary idealist who creates a world which is spiritualistic, infinite, unlimitable and everlasting rather than temporal, finite, limitable and momentary. His world is the world of thoughts, ideas and visions. Like all mystics, Blake emphasizes the momentariness of the body. Body he considers

but a cloud and a set of chains that covers, cleaves and hides the soul. He regards the world as dark prison and the physical senses as narrow windows, darkening the infinite soul of man excluding the wisdom and joy of eternity.

In Tagore's poetry, more particularly, in the 'Gitanjali' the poet explores the relationship of God and the human soul and God is seen to be an all pervasive concrete presence throughout. The entire work is suffused with divine presence, and the divine is shown yearning for union with the human as much as the human yearns for union with the divine. The essential unity of man, God and Nature is again and again stressed.

George Herbert and Gerard Manley Hopkins are fine examples of those who confine themselves to the composition of religious poetry. Mysticism in George Herbert and Gerard Manley Hopkins is essentially a rich and vivid consciousness of God, rising to a perfect experience of union with God in mind and heart and will. It is a personal exhibition of the Divine in the human. They aspire to see Christ and they actively work towards a greater understanding of Jesus Christ.

There is every justification for ranking and rating George Herbert and Gerard Manley Hopkins as mystics, as their poems reveal how they have been all along making very brave and persistent efforts to have union and communion

with God. The mystical experiences of the poets assert the existence of the divine and the inherent Kinship with God. It is an yearning, a burning, a thirst for complete knowledge, especially the knowledge of God.

By and large the chief aspiration of these poets are directed in finding out and growing up to a high standard of spiritual life and maturity in the course of life's pilgrimage towards mystic union with God. In the course of their spiritual quests they are obliged to sail across the stormy sea of trials, afflictions and conflicts which are reflected in their poems. Both love God without any reservation. Nothing is dear and near to their hearts than to please and serve God in every way possible. They have dedicated and placed at the altar of God all their poetic and intellectual genius at the cost of all their worldly prospects.

The supreme and elevated place George Herbert and Gerald Manley Hopkins, occupy in the sphere of Literature is due to their literary and poetic excellence as well spiritual and mystical experiences resulting from their extraordinary inner struggles for close communion and union. The mystical experiences of Herbert and Hopkins are of universal value and therefore they do not fit into any tradition or community or religious beliefs and practices.

Going through the poems of Herbert, and Hopkins readers are overwhelmed with a moral

and spiritual overtone that runs through and vibrates in all their poetic writings. In particular, the collection of their poems is nothing but a collection of soul stirring thoughts and pious meditations on the Christian doctrine of salvation and spiritual progress. The very godly and inspiring thoughts they convey to the reader on such Christian tenets as sin and repentance, redemption and faith, self-denial, self-sacrifice God's redeeming love, sanctification and devotion indeed inspire deep contemplation.

The lives of Herbert and Hopkins prove that perfection is achieved when there is an absolute divestation of the self, which is surrendered to God as an instrument of God's will. Their experiences as Christian mystics fall in line with the description of mystical experience as expounded by Evelyn Underhill and Rebecca Beard.

Evelyn Underhill rightly says that mysticism which is an enigma to an ordinary man is the usual and common experience of every pious and godly person. It is difficult to compare the following definition of this unique spiritual virtue which comprehends the subject in all its dimensions. She says, 'Mysticism then is not an opinion; it is not a philosophy; it has nothing in common with the pursuit of occult knowledge. It is the name of that organic force which involves the perfect consumation of the love of God: The

achievement of here and now of the immortal heritage of man... It is the art of establishing his conscious relation with the Absolute' (p. 91).

The self-same sentiment has been aptly and pithily expressed by Rebecca Beard in the following words, 'Mysticism is in essence the consciousness of oneness with God' (Beard Rebecca, p. 92). Commenting on Herbert's poetry Cox remarks, 'The poems are intimate colloquies with no apparent awareness of an audience; they are overheard self communings with God ..... The puritan divine Richard Baxter in the Preface to his Poetical Fragments (1681) said that he speaks to God like one that believeth a God and whose business in the world is most with God. Heart work and Heaven work make up his books' (Cox 188 - 189).

Writing about Hopkins' mystical experience Lahey remarks, 'That it has sprung from causes which have their origin in true mysticism. Hopkins smiling and joyful with his friends was at the same time on the bleak heights of spiritual night with his God. All writers on mysticism have told us that this severe trial is the greatest and most cherished gift from One who has accepted literally, His servant's oblation' (Gerard Manley Hopkins, p. 143).

Geraldine Colligan more explicitly identifies Hopkins with mysticism in the following words, 'He is a poet most deserving of the name

in its true meaning. Mysticism, in the Catholic tradition, means a union, during this life, of the soul with God in sublime contemplation; so intimate that the soul well-neigh loses itself in its transformation into God.... From his poems, it appears that Hopkins experiences these tests and so was admitted to this close, contemplative union with God' (p. 581, 591).

It is gratifying to note that both the poets are able to realise the fundamental aim of life's pilgrimage and prove themselves as a powerful witnesses to Christian mysticism, which is according to Sir Norman Anderson, 'To know Christ, to experience the power of his resurrection, to share his sufferings in growing confirmity with his death'. (Anderson p. 24) To sum up he also quotes the experience of St. Paul when he says, ' I have been crucified with Christ; Nevertheless I live; and yet not I, but Christ who liveth in me', and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith, of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me (The Galations, 2:20).

The subject matter of this dissertation is intimately concerned with the genesis, growth and development of the spiritual lives of Herbert and Hopkins. The accomplishment of such a literary project involves a close and dispassionate study of their lives, educational career, ecclesiastical service, spiritual struggle and final

triumph of which all, they have left behind very valuable and authentic records in the form of poetry.

The introductory chapter defines mysticism and explains the attributes of mystics. Mysticism of different religions is analysed. Specifically characteristics peculiar to Christian mysticism with reference to the great mystics of the world and in particular great Christian mystics of England and their views are dealt with.

Finally the chapter deals with mysticism in Christian literature with special reference to George Herbert and Gerald Manley Hopkins as mystics. Their Mysticism implies the ascent towards the union with the Triune God as undertaken principally through the person of Jesus Christ. Their spiritual life is a perpetual movement towards the eternal object of Love.

The subject matter of chapter II entitled, 'Self to Surrender', is intimately concerned with the genesis, growth and development of the spiritual mystic life of George Herbert. It is a close and dispassionate study of his life, educational career, ecclesiastical service, spiritual conflicts, progress and mystic union with Christ.

The various stages of spiritual journey can be traced in his life history. The first one involving his redemption from bondage of sin, while the second stage brings forth his preoccupation with

self. Being delivered from the self-life, he is gradually led to the perfection of Christian life of complete surrender and submission to the will of his Saviour. This is unfolded in the third phase of his spiritual life.

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Herbert's Christian mystical experiences serve as a source of inspiration for his poetic verses. His constant effort is therefore to write poetry as a genuine part of his Christian mystical experiences. The technique illustrates the emotional pattern of the poet. The very form of the poem exposes Herbert's spiritual conflict, progress and union with Jesus Christ.

'Conflict to Conquest', is the fourth chapter. This introduces the life of Hopkins, which is marked out by a series of spiritual struggles and mystic experiences, which result in the mystic union with God.

It deals with the formative period of his life, the educational career and his conversion to Catholicism, which results in many religious controversies, with his friends and family. His

nine years training for the priesthood under the society of Jesus, the influence of the writings of Duns Scotus, the spiritual exercises of St.Ignatius Loyola and his ordination, as moulding factors of his character are highlighted.

The succeeding chapter entitled 'Psyche and artistic creation', explains how the technique adapted by Hopkins is the revelation of the Psyche. Among the three phases of his spiritual career, the poems of the first phase express the conflict between basic sensuousness and intense religious faith. It shows a constant conflict between aestheticism and asceticism, sensuousness and spiritualism.

The last chapter, which is the conclusion, recapitulates the findings of the earlier chapters. Their mystical apprehensions enable them to establish a relationship with the infinite. Their mystical experiences begin with their quest for God. As Christian mystics the quest for perfect and supreme knowledge, personal relationship with God and intense communion and union with God prove them to be Christian mystics.

A close study of the biography of George Herbert prove that his life is marked out by a series of spiritual struggles and triumphs which are dealt with in detail in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER - II

SELF TO SURRENDER

The history of George Herbert is the history of a most excitable mind and is worth reading by one and all. A close and purposeful study of Herbert through 'The Temple' offers a very successful way of overcoming several problems. 'The Temple' leads us into new regions and opens up new avenues in Herbert's spiritual experiences. It represents one great type of Christian life which gradually moves on to the highest pedestal of real freedom, peace and happiness. This can be said as a final goal of every soul in pilgrimage.

George Herbert was born in 1593 into one of the most aristocratic families of the Welsh Border Country. He was the fifth son of Magdalene Herbert. Edward Herbert, the father of George Herbert, who was distinguished for his noble and aristocratic ancestry, passed away while Herbert was three years old. It fell to the lot of his widowed mother to look after him and his brothers and his sisters. Great care was taken by her to educate her children and impart to them a very sound and spiritual training as she was an orthodox Christian.

George Herbert was educated at Westminister School and graduated in the Trinity College at Cambridge and took his M.A Degree with great distinction in studies. He was appointed to his first University office as the

Reader in Rhetoric in 1628. It was his long cherished ambition to rise to the position of an orator in course of time, as this latter position was of very great importance in as much as it gave it's possessor the opportunity to come into contact with the great men of the day and slowly get into the covetous career of the Secretary of the State.

Herbert's reputation began to grow both in Cambridge and in Court Circles of London. He became known as a poet and intellectually as a lecturer and a wit and he was good looking graced with attractive manners. His high birth, fine behaviour and his brilliance of mind combined in him and contributed to his advancement in the world. But he began, even so early, to suffer from ill-health and consequent period of despondency.

Youthful ambitions of Herbert knew no bounds and he was not satisfied with the prestigious position of a top rank officer in the educational department. He was sitting very close to Cambridge concentrating his attention on securing and joining the court and the public service. The academic distinctions he attained gave rise to an ambitious plan to achieve an office higher than that of an University Orator. He hoped that like his predecessors he might attain to the place of a Secretary of State. With this primary objective in view he devoted himself to mastering various languages such as Italian, Spanish and French.

Such ambitions were natural and sequential because for generations the Herberts had been the people of character and ability and patriotic servants of their country. Even though such an ambition for the life of a courtier was in line with his paternal traditions it was not in harmony with the wishes of his mother nor with his own previous plans. His attitude towards holding his office in the Government was equated with the attitude towards the position of an University Orator.

Very often he resorted to the Court Circles more assidiously delegating his oratory duties to a deputy whenever the King happened to visit the neighbourhood of Cambridge on hunting expeditions and thus tried to improve his opportunities for promotion. Soon he won the esteem and the affection of the most eminent and powerful section of the court nobility. It is thus that the external glory and the glamour of the world took the upper hand in his mind and dimmed his spiritual vision and aspiration for sometime. They worked to such an extent that he was persuaded to set aside the purpose of taking sacred orders in the Church.

Herbert was in the habit of taking such pride in his descendency from a set of old and distinguished family of soldiers and public men. In his poem entitled ‘Affliction I’ he made a passing reference to this pedigree when he says,

Whereas my birth and spirit rather took
The way that takes the town (P. 47).

It also developed in him an extra-ordinary taste for fine clothes which were attracting the attention of the fashionable world.

The advice of his departed mother to take Holy Orders was looming large in his mind, acting more or less as a clog in the wheel of his educational progress and worldly advancement. While trying for the Oratorship, the conflict was agitating his heart and mind. It was like a thorn in his flesh. He was always absorbed with the parting advice of his mother. He was haunted with a dilemma whether to continue his educational career or to take the Holy Orders. It is impossible for anyone to describe the inner and incessant struggle he went through to arrive finally at a decision and at least the definitely made up his mind to stick on to the ecclesiastical career.

Herbert's elegance of 'Speech and Writing, ready wit and superior Learning', (Weaver, 25) and the influence of his friends and relatives stood him in good stead and helped him to win the election easily. Quite in line with his aspirations he was duly elected by the Senate and promoted to the Orator's Office and receive the official gown and book and lamp in 1620, which he held for a period of eight years. He made up his mind to take up to the study of Divinity with a view to taking an active part in the Church Service. Some of his contemporaries were labouring under the false impression that his enthusiam for the oratorship would distract

him from theological studies as the former post involved him in too many worldly connections.

All his great and high ambitions fell to the ground by sudden and unexpected circumstances. It was regrettable that two of his most influential friends in the court, the Duke of Richmond and the Marquis of Hamilton breathed their last and also King James who was favourably disposed to him. Such calamitous events and ill-health made a thorough change in his life and made him leave the town and retreat to a country home of a friend. He was in a fix as to whether to continue his political and oratorical achievements or to take Holy orders.

This dilemma played a very vital part in the composition of 'The Temple'. What Grierson says in this regard is veritably true. He says,

> It was not, indeed, altogether without a struggle that Herbert bowed his neck to the collar, abandon the ambitions and the varieties of youth to become the pious rector of Bermerton. He knew, like Donne, in what light and ministry was regarded by the young courtiers whose days were spent in dressing, mistressing and compliment'. When he resolved, after the death of 'his most obliging and powerful friends' with his resolution, who persuaded him to alter it, as it is too mean an employment, and too much below his birth and the excellent abilities and endowments of

> his mind. All this is clearly enough reflected in Herbert's poems, that I have endeavoured in my selection to emphasize the note of conflict, of personal experience, which troubles and gives life to his poetry that might otherwise be entirely doctrinal and didactic (p.147).

At the country home Herbert was passing through a deep moral struggle, and he came to the end of the tether to choose his future course. 'One reason for his leaving the fenny district of Cambridge, according to Walton, was that he had a body apt to a consumption and to fever and other infirmities which he judg'd were increased by his studies' (Hutchinson, 32). To make matters worse, his mother passed away and her sudden demise began to exercise its influence over his entire life and profession. He resigned the office of oratorship in the University of Cambridge.

A very revolutionary change took place in the life of Herbert. He came to feel that God was disciplining him for a better and nobler purpose through all adverse circumstances. The following quotation from Herbert has a bearing on his sufferings and the Divine hand in them,

> My heart did heave, and there came forth,
> O God!
> By that I knew that thou wast in the grief,
> To guide and govern it to my relief,
> Making a scepter of the rod;
> Hadst thou not had thy part,

Sure the unruly sign had broke my heart. ('Affliction III', p.73).

Now it was his conviction that so many untoward circumstances had come on his way with no other purpose than to change his career. Perhaps his conscience was at vigorous work and the conviction stole on him that God had given him high positions for the sake of his brethren, which his mother had taught him long ago. He was but a poor struggler and it was God's grace that strengthened him to conquer the struggle.

Herbert went to London with the definite purpose of entering the Holy Orders, despite his friends dissuading him. He was ordained as deacon of a church in the diocese of Lincoln in 1626. He accepted the ecclesiastical job with a conviction that it was a divine call for him and that he must take it up renouncing all worldly ambitions and possessions. He was fully aware that this new step meant breaking up with his high courtly life as he had no doubt about his great prospects.

The royal patronage and the high office in the Government circle were all the objective forces that tried to dissuade him from his religious pursuits. But he stuck on to his decisions. This fact is testified by F.E. Hutchinson, though Herbert's ordination on or before 1626 did not commit him to paradoxical life, it debarred him from civil employment. He had counted the cost. Barnabas Oley said that he had 'Heard sober men ensure him as a man that did not manage his

brave parts to his best advantage and preferment, but lost himself in an humble way: that was the phrase, I well remember it (Hutchinson, 32).

Herbert's resignation from the Offices of the University and Government left a deep void in their establishment, since he was really in possession of adequate gifts of a courtier and a scholar and could have possibly attained very high positions as dictated by his ancestral traditions. But the result of his spiritual conflict, anguish and agony, was the conquest over his traditional pride and high self-esteem and he acquired true humility and a sense of unworthiness which helped him to enlist the love and admiration of his fellowmen.

Though he was not quite sure of his competence, he thought it absolutely necessary to prepare himself to respond to the Divine call and hence he fasted, prayed and meditated for a month before he accepted it. Herbert was very firm in his decision and was all along feeling that it was his duty to consecrate all his learning and abilities for the glory of God as well as for making the job of a clergyman honourable and respectful.

'Herbert married Jane Danvers in 1629; he was thirty six years old and in failing health. It was childless though, we are told, a happy marriage'. (Bennett, P. 52) A year after his marriage, 'He was inducted at Bermerton Church, a little more than a mile from Salisbury, into the rectory of Fulston or Fuggleston St. Peter with Bemerton St. Andrew'. (Hutchinson, 35)

Joan Bennett asserts that, 'Marriage was a carefully considered step in his consecration to God's service and this is affirmed in his prose treatise called, The Country Parson'. (Bennett, 53).

Now definitely and conclusively, he chose the ecclesiastical career and entered the sacred orders, which was also in accordance with the parting advice of his beloved mother. One is struck by the very serious steps he took in abandoning his worldly pursuits and setting his heart upon things which are godly, permanent and eternal. Leaving aside all his desires and opportunities which he had for the worldly preferment and advancement, it was really most praiseworthy on his part to take himself to the church and the temple of God, making a right choice to serve God at his altar.

Herbert rejoiced for having obtained what he had been so long anxiously and latently thirsting for. He was now moved to look upon the court with a different point of view and came to the conclusion that it was a place of deceit, a scramble for title, flattery and other worldly, empty and transient pleasures which could not impart real satisfaction to man. But none could adequately describe the eternal joy and happiness that he derived from the divine faith and service.

Transcending all former aspirations he now took a solemn resolution to lead a very holy and humble life as a minister. It was his favourite

tenet that every clergyman must be a written epistle for persuading the people to aspire for a pious and godly life. Worldly title and honour, Herbert felt, were all nothing in comparison with the sacred title of a priest and servant of the Lord. His pious and humble life served as an example to all people and he followed very closely in the foot steps of Lord Jesus Christ. It is also noteworthy that he was inspired with a strong conviction that he ought to bring his dependents and relatives to the knowledge, belief and the love of God.

Thus dedicating all temporal advantages for the cause of Christ, he served truly and whole-heartedly as a simple and ordinary parson of a village and live honestly as a man of God. He had now sacrificed all to follow God. He concentrated his attention in the first instance on renovating the old church and engaged himself in serving the poor and downtrodden in several ways. He guided them to a more zealous and reverential manner of public worship.

Not only literary critics like T.S. Eliot but also other great historians have cherished nothing but praise and admiration for Herbert as testified by the following quotation. 'The anglican party included among it members in the Seventeenth Century some singularly attractive characters such as George Herbert the poet, and Lancelot of Andrews, the Bishop of Winchester , and one of those chiefly responsible for the authorised version of the English church for preserving its continuity from the early church, and he did

much to improve the order in beauty of the Church services throughout England' (Martin, 418).

A word or two may be said here on his personal life and devotion to God. He was deeply earnest and sincere in his devotion to God. Herbert was bewildered at life's bitter experiences for 'so many joyes' he 'writ down' for his 'part'. Once again the following quotation from the poem 'Affliction I', echoes the same point.

> What pleasures could I want, whose King I served,
> Where joyes my fellows were?
> Thus argu'd into hopes, my thoughts reserved
> No place for grief or fear. (P. 46)

Herbert had severe trials and went through deep waters as expressed in the following lines:

> But with my yeares sorrow did twist and grow,
> And made a partie unawares for wo
> My flesh began unto my soul in pain
> Sickness as cleave my bones;
> Consuming agues dwell in ev'ry vain,
> And tune my breath to grone.
> Sorrow was all my soul; I scarce believed,
> Till grief did tell me roundly, that I lived.
>
> (Affliction I,p. 47)

He was earnestly striving to understand the real attitude of God towards him. He was in a

dilemma as to understand what the purposes of God were in reality. Inspite of all his sufferings and ill-health he acknowledged the fact that God's purposes were always good and beneficient. It is a truism to say that all these difficulties served as the basis of all his poetic speculations entitled 'The Temple'.

F.E. Hutchinson had his own praise for his poetic excellence and exemplary life. According to him, the letters which Herbert wrote from Bemerton show how far he has travelled since his Cambridge days; they manifest an achieved character of humility, tenderness, moral sensitiveness, and personal consecration which he was very far from having attained or even envisaged when he was dazzled by the attraction of the great world (Hutchinson, 34).

Such a pious, God-fearing and exemplary Christian was called to Higher service. Not only had he left behind a very rare and unique example of a Christian evolved from extraordinary consecration and fervent piety, but also his exquisite poetry picturing his many spiritual conflicts through which he had passed before he subjected himself to Jesus Christ, his Master. 'His reputation extends even to our days chiefly because of his work as a writer of 'sacred poetry' (Weaver, 19).

Herbert's aristocratic birth, the conferment of worldly honour and distinctions, his brilliant University career and his wealthy influential friendship. Some of the factors that have dictated

the inner conflicts so amply displayed in his poems where humility alternates with pride, submission with rebelliousness and love of God with a desire to shine and to seek honour. As for example, the following lines from 'Affliction I' are:

> Yet though thou troublest me, I must be meek;
> In weakness must be stout.
> Well, I will change the service, and go seek
> Some other master out.
> Ah, my dear God! Though I am clean forgot
> Let me not love thee, if I love thee not.
> (p.48)

It is noteworthy that Herbert becomes a priest not only to a Church actually and finally but also to 'The Temple' which is a collection of his poems detailing his spiritual experience in all dimensions. The aim of Herbert can be easily understood if we take the case of a penitent soul that desires to know God as such journeys towards Eternity. The poems deal with the poet's mystical relationship, communion and union with God. Many are the lines that echo the personal outcries of the poet. The poems are the expressions emanating from different moods ranging from despondency to triumph.

Herbert is able to depict with undying force the terrible struggle with which his vigorous state of mind had been shaken and torn. The secret of his success as of all true success, is that he deals with realities. He had experiences so intense, so protracted, and so tremendous. Thus he found

in his own history abundant material, and to give it shape became an imperious desire and task. The creative instinct awoke in him and the result was 'The Temple'. He put the essence of his own life into poetic form.

The whole 'Temple' is the memory of the state of restlessness now securely overcome and retrospectively viewed as dangers overpassed. It represents a highly personal experience translated into poetry and earnest preaching to the reader with nothing imaginative about it. It delineates the various and varied stages of spiritual conflicts and through which the poet passed in different periods of his life. It is nothing more than an honest statement of his different experiences in his spiritual life and growth.

'The Temple' is not only great in its mystical aspects alone, it is a masterpiece of art. The work is saturated with mystical gleanings. What makes it so telling is a mystical awareness it creates in a reader and the supernatural power which inspired Herbert. It progressively and strikingly unfolds itself as a most comprehensive treatise on mysticism and Herbert's mystical experiences.

Indeed 'The Temple' is proof positive of the great achievement that Herbert has won in the sphere of Religion. 'It is an autobiography of the soul' graphically portraying his mystical experiences. It is a plain straightforward collection of poems that explains how a person who is honestly seeking God can find Him.

CHAPTER - III

TECHNIQUE AS THE SHAPE OF THE PSYCHE

It is simple truth that Herbert appeals to the readers more as a Christian mystic than as a simple poet. His Christian mystical experiences serve as a source of inspiration for his poetic verses. He seeks no other basis for reality. His constant effort is therefore to write poetry as a genuine part of his Christian mystical experiences and not merely a theoretical record of it.

Herbert's temple consists of three parts. The first two entitled, 'The Church' and ' The Church Porch' are of special significance recounting the pilgrimage of every individual Christian. The third part, 'The Church Militant' deals with the perspective and prospect of the Church which is the large body of Christians moving over the same ground that Herbert has earlier covered.

'The Temple' provides a comprehensive view of the Christian life which is three dimensional and expresses clearly the vital perspective of the individual as well as the corporate progress of the pilgrimage. 'The Church Porch' and 'The Church' of 'The Temple' signify the life long journey of every pilgrim concerned as it is with the individual being.

Most of the poems of George Herbert are autobiographical. They depict the spiritual

conflict that the poet actually experiences after having given up his ambitious and prestigious career at the royal court to become a priest in the Service of God. The theme of his poems are always serious and sometimes weighty, but he handles them with skilful grace without difficulty. The lyrics in 'The Temple' are well shaped, vigorous and apt. He is a master of economy; where one word will do he does not use more.

This chapter explains how technique of Herbert's poems serves as a spiritual revelation of his mystical experiences. The very form of the poem exposes Herbert's spiritual conflict, progress and Union with Jesus Christ. Dualism is one of the fundamental virtues of Herbert's poem which reflects his spiritual conflicts and spiritual progress. The spiritual conflicts and progress are embodied in the dualism in the themes, thoughts and feelings, titles, ideas, moods and tones, variations in the rhyme scheme, metre and stanza patterns, hieroglyphic form, plaintive questions which are further expositions of his mystical experiences. Every word is resonant with his voice. Every line seems to bear the stamp of his peculiar personality.

The dual aspects of the themes such as obedience and disobedience, world and God, false, liberty and true, tension between love and sin, are manifested in the very many poems of 'The Temple'. "Herbert's main themes are the Incarnation, the passion and the Redemption. Against this debt is placed man's behaviour both

the unseemliness of his disobedience and of the inadequacy of his obedience' (Boris Ford, p. 140). As David Daiches comments, 'The struggle in his poetry is between the world and complete surrender to God, and even then it is often an exemplary struggle rather than a simple autobiographical confession' (David Daiches, p. 371).

According to Earl Miner, 'The central theme of Herbert's poetry concerns the resolution of antagonisms, to the world, to God and sometimes to himself, in such a way that will yield to peace with God. The rebelliousness, the antagonism now towards God and towards the world provide Herbert's poetry with much of its force, and the contrary lyricism, much of its sweet beauty' (Earl Miner, p. 163).

'The Temple' is the record of genuine struggle between religion and the world, between false liberty and true-liberty. The Poem 'Vantie II' argues against the assigning of much worth to the things of the world.

> Poore Silly soul, whose hope and head lies low;
> Whose falt delights on earth do creep and grow;
> To whom the starres shine not so fair, as eyes;
> Nor solid work, as false embryderies;
> Heark and beware, last what you now do measure
> And write for sweet, prove a most sowre

displeasure.
O heare betimes, last they relenting
May come too late !
To purchase heaven for repenting
Is no hard rate.
Of soul be made of earthly modl,
Let them love gold;
If born on high,
Let them unto their kindred flie:
For they an never be at rest,
Till they regain their ancient nest.
Then silly soul take heed; for earthly joy
Is but a bubble, and makes thee a boy
(p. 111).

Here are revealed the very motion and condition of his soul as he once knew them in his inward self. The poet realises that he should not conform any longer to the pattern of this world. An oft repeated theme of Herbert's 'Temple' is the tension between love and sin. As Douglas Bush remarks, 'Herbert's main themes are those, 'two vast, spacious things sin and love' and both are realities within himself' (Douglas Bush, p.144). The poem, 'The Agonie' can be quoted as an example in this context. In his very contemplative poem 'Love I', Herbert brings out clearly how man plays a dual part in recognizing as well as adoring God. The following stanza quoted from the sonnet, 'Love (1)' brings out such duality in other respects as well.

Wit francles beautie, beautie raiseth wit:
The world is theirs; they two play out the game,
Thou standing by: and though thy glorious name
Wrought our deliverance from th' infernall pit
Who sings thy praise..... (p. 54)

It is worthwhile to note Herbert's contrast of the loving invitation of God with the harsh reception of man towards the child at Bethlehem.

O Thou, whose glorious, yet contracted light,
Wrap in nights mantle, stole into a manger;
Since my dark soul and brutish is thy right,
To man of all beasts be not thou a stranger:
(Christmas, p. 81)

Dualism is best illustrated by the combination of thought and feeling as a fundamental pattern of his poetic writings. "In Herbert, feeling seems in control of thought", observed T.S. Eliot (T.S. Eliot, p. 25). The substance of Herbert's each poem is emotional but the emotion is rooted in thought. As the reader observes the poem, he becomes aware of the fusion between thought and feeling which constitute the poet's belief.

The ambition of making a figure in secular life and worldly name and fame is playing the role of a strong adversary. No one can underestimate the power of this temptation and struggle that it has cost Herbert to conquer it.

The poems entitled 'Affliction I' and 'Collar' epitomize the inner struggle and God's efforts to break his pride and draw him nearer to himself. 'No human love competed with the love of God for Herbert, but the fuller life of wordly intercourse and the sweets of ambition allured him' (Grierson P.35). He complains in 'Affliction I'.

> Whereas my birth and spirit rather took
> the way
> The way that takes the town;
> Thou didst betray me to a lingering book,
> And wrap me in a gown.
> "Charles Cotton speaks of him as
> He whose education
> Manners and parts, by high applauses
> blown,
> Was deeply tainted by Ambition,
> And fitted for a court, **. . .**

Which is in keeping with Herbert's confession in 'Affliction (I)' that:

Thou often dist with Academick praise/ Melt and dissolve my rage.

and in The Country Parson he describes ambition as one of the commonest and most insidious temptations with which men of his calling can be afflicted "Ambition, or untimely desire of``promotion higher state or place, under colour of accommodation or necessary provision, is a common temptation to men of any eminency..."

"This is the temptation that Herbert resisted, though not without rebellion and remonstrance" (Joan Bennett, P. 54 – 55).

Herbert repents of his sinful preoccupation with the visible things. The world has been too much with him. He wants to be good and desires to grow in grace. The impression that the poet is rolling up his sleeves, clenching his fists, ready to bend and break every circumstance to fulfill his heart's desire. He seems to feel he must move out in the field of conquest and strive for victory.

He ejaculates,
Lord I confess my sinne is great;
Great is my sinne...
(Repentence, p. 48)
A strong compunction seizes on him when he cries:
Lord, how I am all ague, When I seek
What I have treasur'd in my memorie!
Since, if my soul make even with the week,
Each Seventh note by right is due to thee.
I finde there quarries of pil'd evanities,
But shreds of holiness, that dare not venture
To shreds of holiness, that dare not venture
There the circumference earth is, heav'n the centre
In so much dregs the quintessence is small:
The spirit and good extract of my heart
Comes to about the many hundred part.

Yet Lord restore thine image, heare my call:

And though my hard heart scarce to thee can grone,

Remember that thou once didst wite in stone ('The Sinner', p. 38).

This experience of new birth makes it possible for Herbert to enter a new world to develop his intimacy, with God and reach a high standard of spiritual life.

In the new path he has chosen, the poet is inspired with great joyful expectations., A careful study of his biography shows how he has forsaken the world and the flesh to follow Christ. He is all along labouring under a very strong conviction that once he has become a free follower of Christ he will be endowed with all heavenly joy and bliss as mirrored in his poem 'Affliction I'.

When first thou didst entice to thee my heart,
I thought the service brave:
So many joyes I writ down for my part,
Besides what I might have
Out of my stock of natural delights
Augmented with thy gracious benefits.
I looked on thy furniture so fine,
And made it fine to me:
Thy glorious household-stuffe did me entwine,
And 'tice me unto thee.
Such starres I counted mine: both heav'n

and earth
Payd me my wages in a world of mirth.
What pleasures could I want, whose King I served,
Where joyes my fellow were?
Thus argu'd into hopes, my thoughts reserved.
No place for grief or fear.
Therefore my sudden soul caught at the place.
And made her youth and fiercenesse seek thy face (p. 46).

Life has been so different from what he had hoped, so full of thwarting circumstances and frustrations. He voices forth his idea from the depth of his heart as some of the poems in 'The Temple' express, moods of anguish and sense of defeat and failure. Often times he wonders why God has forgotten him or forsaken him. He is thus pulled down very much by the feelings of depression. One is able to observe from his writings his sense of destitution and desperation.

Life with its innumerable cares and disappointments, sorrows and penetrating pains, cause it to be a hard drudgery of a slave as indicated by the following poetic lines:

I travell'd on, seeing the hill where lay
My expectation.
A long it was and weary way.

The gloomy cave of Desperation……('The Pilgrimage', p. 141).

The experience of failing and his voice crying out of the deep, are being reflected in the poems 'Repentance' 'Affliction II' and 'Mattens'.

The poems, 'Affliction I' and 'The Church-Musick' portray the fall and rise of Herbert's thoughts and feelings. To quote,

Now I in you without a bodie move,

Rising and falling with your wings.....(Church-Musick, p. 65).

A dilemmatic problem that God is always loving and merciful and yet there is seen no indication of his beneficence is always torturing his vision. Similarly even though he is desirous to reason his case with God as a judge, he feels his inability to argue his case. He looks to the brazen vault of heaven for an answer. He has his own misgivings about the justice, the government and the wisdom of God. So he questions God saying:

Art thou all justice, Lord?
Shows not they word
More attributes? Am I all throat or eye,
To weep or crie?

Have I no parts but those of grief? ('Complaining' p. 143).

There are times when he sings songs of victory and dance in ecstasy as reflected in the poem, 'Antiphon I'.

Chro. Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing
My God and King.
Vers. The heav'ns are not too high,
His praise may thither flie:
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.
Cho: Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
My God and King.
Vers: The church with psalms must shout,
No doors can keep them out:
But above all, the heart
Must bear the longest part.
Cho. Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing
My God and King.

Almost all his poems have evolved from his own personal experience in different capacities. Proud self is what he emphasizes as he goes back over the days of his splendour and wealth as revealed in, 'The Quip', 'Vanity II', and 'The Pearl'. The unconquered ego is asserting itself making him rebel against his own spiritual resolutions. We find him to make efforts to subdue his 'rebel-flesh' (The H. Communion) to the divine will (p. 52).

According to T.S. Eliot, "Herbert was haughty and proud of his descent and social position; and like others of his family, of a quick temper. In his poems we can find ample evidence of his spiritual struggles of self examination and

self-criticism and of the cost at which he acquired godliness" (Eliot, P. 15).

It is the poet's constant feeling that he is defeated by circumstances. He is possessed of some ideas of the divine desertion and he is overhwhelmed and blocked on everyside by a power he neither knows or understands. He feels like an animal, trapped in a corner with nowhere to flee. He himself exclaims in the following poetic lines from 'The Bunch of Grapes".

I did towards Canaan draw; but now I am

Brought back to the Red sea, the sea of shame (p.128).

Herbert's feeling and thought merge together and there is total harmony between them and the technique takes shape in his artistic consciousness and at the same time reflects the complexity of his experience. The technique echoes and interprets his spiritual struggle and progress which account for his mystical experienes. Herbert's strong feelings of alienation and his confidence of the reconciliation with God are echoed in poems like 'Reprisal'.

In the poems, 'The Altar', 'The Sacrifice' and the 'Redemption', he deals with the beginning of his mystical journey and career. Christ Jesus has a specific beginning a specific working out in man's life and a specific conclusion - a goal, 'a mark' towards which man is pressing (Thompson P.6). The main theme of the poem entitled

'Redemption' consists in discovering man's need for grace which is freely and bountifully given by Jesus Christ. Grace establishes the suitable ground for mystical union with God. Indeed it is an important aspect of mysticism which underlines man's response to God's condescension.

The poet is weaned from the world. The following poem called 'The

World' describes in detail the various stages of his spiritual growth in which Grace of God helps and inspires him to overcome several temptations:

> Love built a stately house; where Fortune came,
> And spinning phansios, she was heard to say,
> That her fine cobwebs did support the frame,
> Whereas they were supported by the same:
> But Wisdom quickly swept them all away.
> With faith, with hope, with charitie
> That I may runne, rise, rest withu thee (p. 68).
> Then Pleasure came, who, liking not the fashion
> Began to make Balcones, Terraces,
> Till she had weakned all by alteration:
> But rev'rend laws, and many a proclamation
> Reformed all at length with menaces.
> Then enter'd Sinne, amd with that

Sycomore,
Whose leaves first sholtered man from drought and dew,
Working and winding slily evermore,
The inward walls and sommore cleft and tore:
But Grace shor'd these, and cut that as it grew.
Then Sinne combin'd with Death in a firm band
To raze the building to the very floors:
Which they effected, none could them withstand.
But Love and Grace took Glorie by the hand,
And built a braver Place then before (p. 84).

He turns now from the world and sin and turns to God with incessant contemplation upon His counsel and commandments. The temporal and temporary things mean nothing to him. He is in quest of nothing but God and constrains himself to despise and hate the world which is in his opinion full of wretchedness, malice, persecution, wrath and lust, as expressed in the following lines:

True earnest sorrows, rooted miseries,
Anguish in grain, vexations ripe and blown,
Sure-footed griefs, solid calamities,
Plsin drmonstrations, evident and cleare,
Fetching their proofs ev'm from the very

bone;
These are the sorrows here (‘Dotage’, P. 167).

The dissatisfaction of the poet’s past life drives him earnestly and persistently to seek a new lease of life of Redemption. “In 14 lines Herbert traces a soul’s journey from ignorance to knowledge, from sin to Redemption from spiritual death to life” (A.E. Dyson and Love Julian, P. 29). This is explicit in his poem entitled ‘Redemption’ as quoted below.

“Having been tenant long to a rich Lord,
Not thriving, I resolved to be bold,
And make a suit into him, to afford
A new small-rented lease, and cancell th’ old
In heaven at his monor I him sought:
They told me there, that he was lately gone
Amount some land, which he had dearly bought
Long since on earth, to take possession.
I straight return’d and knowing his great birth
Sought him accordingly in great resorts:
In cities, theatres, gardens, parks and courts:
At length I head ragged noice and mirth
Of theeves and murderers: there I him espied,
Who straight, your suit is granted, said, and died” (p. 40).

His thoughts are reinforced with a conviction highly suggestive, comprehensive and multi-meaningful.

On certain occasions the figurative and witty titles of certain poems of 'The Temple' bring out very clearly the dualistic thoughts and feelings. It is through these experiences overhung by darkness, resounding with lamentation and passing amidst quagmires, and pit-falls that the poet travels. At one time indeed an encouraging and sweet voice seems to rush in and command a great calm in his soul as exemplified in 'The Collar'.

> But I rav'd and grow more fierce and wilde
> At every word,
> Me thoughts I heard one calling, Child!
> And I reply'd, My Lord (P. 153-154).

At another time a word of comfort is spoken aloud to him by God. But these intervals of ease and joy are sought as mentioned in his poem, 'Temper II'.

> It cannot be, Where is that mightie joy,
> Which just now took up all my heart?
> Lord, if thou must needs use any dart,
> Serve that, and me; or sin for both destroy.

In this connection the views of George Parfitt is recollected. He remarks that "the full title of Herbert's collection is significant. The very term 'The Temple' suggest a blending of the private with a communal while the main title represents

both the idea, individual human is a microcosmic temple of God and that the poems which make up the collections are themselves a Church" (George Parfitt, P. 44).

The poems entitled 'Bitter Sweet', 'Collar', 'Pulley', 'Love Joy' can be cited as examples. The poem 'Bitter Sweet' illustrates the poet's conviction of his sin and contrition as he goes in for complete repentance which means his entire agreement with God is everything.

"Ah my dears angrie Lord
Since thou dost love, yet strike:
Cast down, yet help afford:
Sure I will do the like"
(Bitter Sweet, 11 1-4).

Herbert's particular combination of affirmation and antagonism is best represented by the title and a few verses from the poem 'Bitter Sweet'.

I will complain yet praise:
I will bewail approve,
And all my sowre sweet days
I will lament, and love
(Bitter Sweet 11. 5-8).

The poet confesses after being convicted of his sin of disobedience and after contrition he turns towards God and goes in for complete repentance, which means his entire agreement with God in everything as reflected in the following poem.

Sorrie I am, My God, Sorrie I am.
That my offences course it in a ring.
My thoughts are working like a busie flame,
Untill their cockatrice they hatch and bring:
And when they once have perfected their draughts,
My words take fire form my inflamed thoughts.
My words take fire from my inflamed thoughts,
Which spit it forth like the Sicilian Hill.
They went the wares, and passe them with their faults,
And by their breathing ventilate the ill.
But words suffice not, where are lewd intentions:
My hands to joyn to finish the inventions:
My hands do joyn to finish the inventions:
And so my sinnes ascend three stories high,
As Bable grew, before there were dissensions.
Yet ill deeds loyter not: for they supplie
New thoughts of sinning: wherefore, to my shame
Sorrie I am, my God, sorrie I am (P. 122).

Now and then Herbert is thus involved in severe self-criticism and cheerful readiness to make amends for mistakes and lives in a state of perpetual penitence, seeking God with his whole heart. For the poet each step evokes more

opposition than the previous steps. He now recalls the dark and horrible wilderness of self-life and self-gratification, wherein he has wandered once striving to make his way into a happy region of light.

As revealed in the poem 'The Collar' he is led to a very angry and sorrowful reflection, of his religious career.

The huge sacrifice he has made by giving up his worldly benefits and achievements have not paid him the due dividend in his opinion. His unwillingness to subject himself to God, his helplessness, his doubt, fear, despair and guilt yield to deep exasperation and disappointment.

In the poem entitled 'Pulley', weariness of man's need for rest and peace tosses and pulls him to God's breast. Here again the title plays a significant part. It is titles like 'Pulley' and 'The Collar' that hold a direct bearing on the metaphysics. 'The Pulley' is Gods device to pull the weary men of world up to him for rest and 'The Collar', the yoke of God from which the poet cannot free himself.

Dualism is well exemplified through various moods. Psychologically speaking, Herbert's temper and temperament contributed a great deal in assuming different moods on different occassions. "Herbert's central theme is the psychology of his religious experiences. He transferred to religious poetry the subtler analysis and records of moods (Grierson, Herbert P. 48).

Some of the poems in the 'The Temple' express moods of anguish and sense of defeat and failure, since life has been so different from what he has hoped, so full of thwarting circumstances and frustrations.

Herbert confesses, that he is not able to cope with the divine invitation even though he sacrifices the pleasure of life. His sin looms large in his vision and goes to the extent of condemning his self-sacrifice. Nevertheless the poet takes courage and assures himself that he can overcome the shortcomings and failings, incident to all men and derive the benefit of God's supreme love as expressed in his poem entitled, 'Reprisal' where he exhibits his strong feelings of alienation and his confidence of the reconciliation with God.

The difficulties and obstacles in his mystical journey prove to be blessings in disguise. His faith in God as his only Saviour and Redeemer is strengthened and the separation from the world is best conducive to his close association with God. Any kind of human help and strategy would be of no avail for him in this direction. The poet finds no earthly springs which have the power to meet his spiritual thirst and hunger. As soliloquised by the poet in his poem he is free from doubt and disbelief.

When my devotions could not pierce
Thy silent eares;

Then was my heart broken, as was my
verse:
And disorder: (Deniall, P. 79).

The antithesis of the spiritual conflict is very well explained by his anxiety and hope, worry and joyfulness, agitation and quietude, frustration and contentment which are all effectively brought out in many of his poems. Very often Herbert appears to be free and enslaved, responding and reaching, expanding and withdrawing, victor and victim.

'The Collar', 'Affiliction', 'Miserie', 'Thanksgiving' are some of the poems which end with a sudden and most dramatic change of mood. The movement effectively presents both rebellious mood and the way it subsides. The following lines from 'The Collar' are proof positive of the changing moods of Herbert:

'I stuck the board, and cry'd, no more.
I will abroad,
What ? Shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free: free as rode,
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let be bloud, and not restore
What I have lost with cordiall fruit?
Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did dire it: there was corn
Before my tears did drown it
Is the years only lost to me?
Have I no base to cron it?
No flowers, no garlands gay? All blasted?

All water?' ('The Collar', 11 1-16).
Suddenly the poem moves from this despondent mood to a sense of triumph.
'But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde
At every word,
Me thought I heard one calling, child:
And I reply'd My Lord' ('The Collar', 11 33-36).

The poems are the expressions emanating from different moods ranging from despondency to triumph.

Since his moods vary, his tone in various poems also become different. The poems, 'The Search', 'The Pilgrimage', 'Affliction I', 'The Bunch of Grapes', 'The Glimpse' come in as examples for the variation of the tone. His tone is gentle and moderate and the manner of his expression is relaxed when his attempt to reach God proves successful. The poem 'Storm' testifies that whenever he meets with failure he becomes restless and harsh in tones.

'If as the windes and waters here below
Do flie and flow,
My sighs and tears as busie were above:
Sure they would move
And much affect thee, as tempestous times
Amaze poore mortals and object their crimes.
Starres have their storms, ev'n in a high degree.
As well as we.

A throbbing conscience spurred by
remorse
Hath a strange force:
It quite the earth, and mounting more and
more
Dares to assault thee, and besiege thy
doore.
There it stands knocking, to thy musicks
wrong,
And drowns the song.
Glorie and honour are set by, till it
An anser get
Poets have wrong'd poore storms: such
dayes are best:

They purge the aire without, within the breast' ('Storm' 11 1-17).

These modulations in tone and manner both of which are also evident in 'Collar' testify that Herbert's sense of divinity participates more than the subject of poetry itself.

The bantering tone of the backsliding is quite obvious in the dictates of his conscience. There is a change in the mood in 'Redemption' with its gentle and astonished voice. Herbert's greatest gift as a lyric poet is the intensity by which he abandons himself to the exploration of a particular mood or the experience or a theme. The poem, 'Virtue' serves as an example. In 'Virtue' Herbert speaks of his own verse as music.

'If he is addressing his conscience, or unruly thought of his recalcitrant heart, he will vary his

tone, sometimes upbraiding, sometimes challenging' (William R. Keast, P. 244). As echoed in the following quotation:

> 'Now foolish thought go on,
> Spin out thy thread, and make thereof a coat
> To hide thy shame: for thou hast cast a bone
> Which bounds on thee, and will not down thy throat:
> What for it self love once began,
> Now love and truth will end in man'
> ('Storm', 11. 36-42).

In the poem, 'Vanity I' the first three stanzas are ironic in tone. The poem, 'Love-unknown' indicates a tone of triumph while the poem 'Odour' vibrates with a tone of ecstasy.

Herbert's conscientious expressions are very powerful. A word spoken casually or a little sentence dropped here and there is very effective. A passionate plainness in his work poems convey to the reader a deliberate clarity and irrestible force. Now and then he modulates his tone so as to express his personal, spiritual and mystical experience with ease and power. He has recourse to a sensible idiom, and cadance of a popular speech. It is really true that his spiritual experiences, conflicts and progress, and religious theme demand for their vehicle this kind of versification.

The following quotation of Margaret Bottrall shows Herbert's use of popular and common methods of his eloquence.

> Herbert chose to cast many of his poems in the form of colloquies, either with God or with his own heart. Herbert naturally employed with speech. The remarkable thing is that he managed to combine these colloquial rhythms with such elegant stanza forms and rhyme- than any of the Elizabethan age song writers, lyrics, for it is constantly enlivened with questions, exclamations and admonitions. Occasionally, as in 'Love Unknown', Herbert writes dialogue. This particular poem with its many parenthesis its slowly developing narrative and the comments interjected by the second speaker, suggests what he could have turned his hand to dramatic verse if he had cared to do so. In the poems as in 'The Quip' or 'Peace' (Bottrrall, p. 107).

Herbert's favourite form is sometimes changed into a one-sided conversation. In the poem, 'Conscience' the troublesome conscience is personified as a dramatic character quite distinct from a speaker.

Peace pratler, do not lower:
Not a afair look, but thou dost call it foul:
Not a sweet dish, but thou dost call. It sowre:
Music to thee dot howl.
By listening to thy chatting fears
I have both lost mine eyes and eares.
Pratler no more, I say:
My thoughts must work, but like a noiseless sphere;
Harmonious peace must rock them all the day:
No room for pratlers there.
If thou persistest, I will tell thee,
That I have phyqiue to expell thee ('Conscience', P. 105).

A perusal of the different poems of Herbert bring home to the readers how the various types of questions expose his inner and moral struggle. The third stanza of the poem, 'The Size' is a good example of Herbert's fondness of proverbs and for a battery of questions. The first two verses of Jordan (I) are unbroken series of questions. The discharge opens with two stanzas of a question, followed by four of admonition; then come three of general reflection and the last two are again, admonitary. Some twenty poems in 'The Temple' begin with a question, and there are few in which Herbert does not use the interrogatives.

The opening of 'The Glimpse' illustrates his skill in conveying the very cadences of the speaking voice; a reiteration of plaintive questions

is followed by two reflective, half-humorous lines, as though he had added them in an undertone (Bottrall, P. 108).

> Whither away delight?
> Thou cam'st but now; wilt thou so soon depart
> And gives me up to night?
> For many weeks of lingring pain and smart
> But one half houre of comfort to my heart?

It is pity that more often man goes astray. However, God ultimately prevails on him. Though the impulse to pursue God originates with Him, the working out of that impulse in the study and reflection of 'The Temple'.

Often Herbert is struggling for faith because he feels lonely and abandoned. The record of man's spiritual life reveals that there have been many who have passed through the dark night of the soul. Herbert's experience is something of the same nature when he sighs like Job who said, 'Oh that I knew where I might find Him' (John P. 23). The poet emphasizes this attitude by saying:

> Where is my God? What hidden place
> Conceals thee still?
> What covert dare eclipse thy face?
> Is it thy will? ('The Search', P. 163).

Sometimes instead of taking God's love for government of life, Herbert begins to think of himself and the grievances. Perhaps the weary

and monotonous wanderings have their impact on the soul when he is brought to face the long drawn out testings, troubles of all kinds, confusions, rebuffs on every land, misunderstandings, rejections, unbelief, problems, dryness, barrenness, afflictions and conceptions that he is tempted to believe that God has been infuriated and has withdrawn beyond the galaxies, as exemplified in the following lines:

> Yet can I mark how starres above
> Simper and shine,
> As having keyes unto thy love,
> While poore I pine.
> I sent a sigh to seek thee out,
> Deep drawn in pain,
> Wing'd like an arrow: but my scout
> Returns in vain.
> I tun'd another (having store)
> Into a grone;
> Because the search was dumbe before:
> But all was one.
> Lord dost thou some new fabrick mould,
> Which favour winnes,
> And keeps thee present, leaving the' old
> Unto their sinnes? ('The Search', P. 162).

As a mature and experienced individual it is impossible for him to take everything at the face value. He asks questions to enlarge this understanding of the faith without affecting his basic commitments.

Though doubt is a painful and distressing experience, as expressed in his poem, 'Grief', he faces it in the best way possible. Secure in the grace and mercy of God, he being in doubt keeps certain things in abeyance and holds himself in tension, but with faith, and still functions as a Christian. But he attacks his uncertainty free from guilt and confident of success. His profound faith never issues from a relaxed attitude toward truth.

Leaving the entire structure of faith intact, the poet agonises over the question of his own place in that structure. He does not raise the question of God's existence but the question of divine grace. The struggle is not with nothingness but with attitude to God. He wonders why God plays hide and seek. His agony arises from the apparent absence or silence of God as expressed in the following lines:

> My bent thoughts, like a brittle bow,
> Did file asunder:
> Each took his way; some would no pleasures go,
> Some to the Warres and thunder
> Of alarms.
> As good go any where, they say,
> As to benumme
> Both knees and heart, in crying night and day,
> Come, come, my God, O come,
> But no hearing.
> O that thou shouldst give dust a tongue

To crie to thee,
And then not heare it crying! All day long
My heart was in my knee,
But no hearing
('Deniall', P. 80).
And again,
O what a damp and shade
Doth me invade!
No stormie night
Can so afflict or so aftright,
As thy eclipsed light ('A Parodie', P. 183).

Herbert appears a dejected traveller in life's journey. Professor Knight speaks of Herbert's, 'feeling of usefulness and self-distrust' and suggests that 'behind the more obvious temptation of 'success' was one more deeply rooted a dejection of spirit that tended to make him regard his own life worthless and unprofitable (Ford, P. 140).

Herbert resembles Hopkins in the fact that both are influenced by the recurring attitudes of dejection. There is a feeling of personal worthlessness, uncertainty and meanness of all human aim and doubt of all human goodness, which unfixes his soul from all its moorings and leave it drifting over the vast infinitude with the awful sense of solitariness.

The desperate circumstances of life make him feel the need for and dependence on God in a simple and direct way. His anguish arises from the sense of his own unworthiness. His soul seems to be empty and he is not conscious of

the presence of God at this very moment. One serious and often distressing problems for him to rejoice in the Lord when he is suffering from a sense of remoteness. It is trying to have a warm summer without the sun. This experience is very well brought out in the following lines:

> Whither, O whither art thou fled,
> My lord, my Love?
> My searches are my daily bread;
> Set never prove.
> My knees pierce th' earth, mine eies the skie;
> And yet the sphere
> And centre both to me denie
> That thou art there.
> Yet can I mark how herbs belows
> Grow green and gay,
> As if to meet these they did know,
> While I decay ('The Search', P. 162).

Before reaching his goal the poet soars to the height, and the next moment sinks in the depths of despair. He waxes bold for one moment among philosophers of this world and he eloquently tells about the riches of God's grace and in the next moment he is found in weakness, in fear and trembling.

Herbert is found in the depth of despair and suffering. His heart is sorely broken. He breaks forth in the strain which he no longer can restrain, as brave and strong as a human spirit is under suffering. There are times when strength seems to faint when his inner struggle reaches a

climax of pain and anguish. As Joan Bennett observes that the poem 'Longing' for instance, reflects the moment of exhaustion after stress.

> Look on my sorrows round!
> Mark well my furnace! O what flames
> What heats abound!
> What griefs, what shames!
> Consider, Lord; Lord, how thine ears,
> And hears.

It is no rare experience to meet the man who has enjoyed health, riches and honour, but in the course of life has lost all three and longs for death. He desires for death and wonders why he couldn't have passed at once into the shade. He cannot understand why he is kept alive and longs for death which attitude is emphatically brought out in the poem of Herbert entitled, 'Home'.

> Oh loose this frame, this knot of man untie!
> That my free soul may use her wing.
> Which now is pinon'd with mortalitie,
> As an entangled, hamper'd thing.
> O show thy, & C
> What have I left, that I should stay and grone?
> My thoughts and joyes are all packed up and gone
> And for their old acquaintance plead.
> O show, thy & C (P.

Herbert feels the hurt and the need and wants churning within his breast until they swell into a bursting pain which results from a heart pounding ache within his chest. He screams silently, prays frustrated prayers and argues with God. He thrashes himself mentally, wrestling with poignant longings and desires which penetrate unto the core of his being.

Thereby there is anguish, fear, conflict and turmoil. He feels numb. The poet appears helpless and disabled. In this desperate hour his way is hidden. He seems to have no future. He is desirous of doing God's bidding but there are no directions. To the best of his ability he is willing to do his part whole-heartedly and conscientiously. Though in no direction does he find the success or any sign of God's guidance, he does not give up.

At long last the real truth dawns upon his mind that his walk is by faith and not by feeling. Amidst his spiritual weariness, sorrow, sin discouragement and failure he turns to God's love, mercy and forgiveness. The supreme impact of the divine love and grace is very well portrayed in his poem 'The World'. He turns to God incessantly thinking upon himself, His Council and His commandments.

Herbert reacts in rebellion against God. Sometimes his questioning takes the tone of a rebel. As revealed in the poem 'The Collar', he is led to a very angry and sorrowful reflection of his religious career. The poems such as 'Grief', 'Love

unknown' reverberate with the tone of self pity, which is an important feature of spiritual life which in the long run leads to spiritual desolation.

Boris Ford remarks, ' An effect of wit is achieved through the control of tone in the dialogue as in "Love bade me welcome" (Boris Ford, P. 47). It bears aesthetic and dramatic impact on the reader. It can be noticed to be narrative in character, but expressive of the feelings of welcome, protest, reply and argument and ultimately mystical union with Christ. The dialogue and the sequence of argument gives rise to the dramatic conflict. Between Christ and the poet develops an interior monologue.

In the poem 'Deniall' Herbert invents a metre and rhyme scheme to reflect the broken relationship between God and soul. The opening stanzas of 'Deniall' for example, picture the disorder which results when the individual feels that God denies his requests:

'When my devotions could not pierce
Thy silent eares:
Then was my heart broken as was my verse
My breast was full of fears
And disorder' ('Deniall', 1-5).

The final stanza, with its establishment of the normal pattern of cadence and rhyme, is the symbol of reconstruction of order of the manner

in which men function when God grants the requested.

The final stanza which had been the symbol of the flying asunder of a "brittle-bow" has become a symbol for the achievement of order. The form of the final prayer indicates that his request has already been answered. The individual and the poem have moved from fear through open rebellion and 'unstrung' discontent. 'Deniall' is overcome through renewal of prayer: the ordered prayer provides the evidence. The variations of the rhyme schemes in 'Grief' and 'Home' reflect the conflict.

David Daiches, emphasizes this, by saying "Herbert produces poetry which arrests attention by its opening statement of its theme and maintains interest and excitement by the unexpected way it used traditional Christian material in working the theme out" (David Daiches, P. 370).

Herbert's openings are equally well contrived. The attention is immediately caught by such lines as

> 'Busie enquiring heart, wouldst thou know?
> Meeting with the time or slack thing, said I
> Kill me not everyday.

The combination of shock and repose in Herbert's poetry is something difficult to parallel in English literature. There is conflict in the poetry, yet there is calm trust: disturbed

speculation yet simple faith, ingenious language, “Love enchanting Language, Sugarcane” and the gently simplicity of a compassionate preacher.

One of the special and extraordinary features of Herbert’s poetry lies in the use of hieroglyphic form. “A hieroglyph is a figure, device, or sign, having some hidden meaning: a sacred, enigmatical symbol; an emblem” (Summers, P. 123).The pertinent saying of Joseph H. Summers is worth deep attention in this context. “Herbert frequently used a hieroglyph to crystallize, explain or resolve the central conflict in a poem (Summers, P.128). Further the movement of the words and the lines, of the clauses and the sentences, conveys even without analysis a meaning which makes us recognize the inadequacy of any much prose summary (Summers, P.132).

Such poems as ‘The Altar’, ‘Easter Wings’, ‘The Church’, ‘The Bunch of Grapes’, ‘Joseph’s Coat’, prove that “the hieroglyph represented to Herbert a fusion of the spiritual and material, of the rational and sensuous, in the essential terms of formal relationships (Ibid, P. 145). Above all, the title ‘The Temple’ is an hieroglyph for the body of Christ which is the Church.

Herbert is a master of form. He uses a remarkable variety of stanza forms constantly creating a new one to meet the needs of his subject. The shapes of his stanzas often visually give support to the meaning process. There are the obvious picture - stanzas, ‘The Altar’ in the

shape of a classical altar and ‘Easter Wings’ in the shape of wings which can be cited as examples for hieroglyphs.

Lord, who created St man in wealth and store,

Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most poor:
With thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously
And sing this day thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

Herbert explores many ways of rendering in the shape and texture of a poem the theme which is its subject : Not only does he occasionally use ‘pattern poetry’, as in ‘Easter wings’ where the stanzas are in the shape of wings. The sense expanding and contracting as the line lengthens and shortens, but the ebb and flow of the emotion and in the run of the rhymes, the varying line - lengths, and the shift in the tempo of the verse.

As Joseph H. Summers remarks, ‘the Pattern is successful not merely because we ‘see’ the wings, but because we see how they are made : the process of impoverishment and enrichment of thinking’ and expansion which makes ‘flight’ possible. By the perception and by the rhythmical falling and rising which the shaped lines helped

to form, we are lead to respond to the active image and to the poem' (Keast R. William, P. 216).

'Easter Wings' that calls for deep consideration in the present context which repeats the progress of the soul from sin to salvation and from spiritual sickness to health. The form adopted by the poet is not a mere accident but an integral part of the poem and it is as inevitable as the matter or the substance. The complexity in the form is not only expressive of the poet's intensity of feeling but also enhances the value of the poems.

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store
Though foolishly foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more
Till he became
Most poore
With these
O let me rise
As larks, harmopniously,
And sing this day thy victories;
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.
My tender age is sorrow did beginee;
And still with sicknensses and shame
Thou didst to punish sinne,
That I became
Most thinne
With thee
Let me combine
And feel this day thy victorie:

For, if I in my wing
Affliction shall advance the flight in me'.
(Easter Wings 11. 1-20)

The finest hieroglyph of all is Church monuments. The American critic, Yvor Winters, has described it as Herbert's greatest poem Here it is, set out on the page as it is sent out in Herbert's manuscripts.

While that my soul repairs to her devotion,
Here I intomb my flesh, that it betimes
May take acquaintance of this heap of dust
To which the beast of Death's incessant motion,
Fed with the exhalation of our crimes,
Drives all at last. Therefore I gladly trust
My body to this school, and find his birth
Written in dusty heraldry and lines;
Which dissolution sure doth best discern,
Comparing dust with dust, and earth with earth.
These laugh as jet and marble, put for signs
To sever the good fellowship of dust,
And spoil the meeting: what shall point out them
To kiss those heaps which now they have in trust?
Dear flesh, while I do pray, learn here they stem
And true descent, that, when thou shalt grow fat,
And wanton in thy cravings, thou mayst

know
That flesh is but the glass which holds the dust
That measures all our time; which also shall
Be crumpled into dust. Mark here below
How tame these ashes are, how free from lust,
That thou mayst thyself against thy fall.

The Church-monuments are tombs, slabs or effigies all or which strive to commemorate people now dead. They can be seen in almost any church. Herbert is kneeling to pray. His idea is to kneel in front of the church-monuments, so that while his soul is at 'her devotion', the body may learn from the tombs the lesson 'of mortality'.

Even the monuments themselves, says Herbert, will eventually crumble and 'fall down flat'. Here the flesh will learn from its 'stem', the origin and 'true descent' which is spun ancestry and eventual downfall so that, it tempted by earthly cravings, will be reminded that everything the flesh, the glass and time itself-will finally be dust.

For all its complexity, Church-Monuments is predominantly monosyllabic, and the vocabulary simple. The finest 'cleverness' of Herbert's work is the simplicity with which he writes, and the way his technical feats are camouflaged. Humility is instinctive and essential to him; and in the well-known Jordan poems, two in number, he writes his poetic manifesto.

This can be summed up by a line from another poem, The Forerunner:

And if I please Him, I write fine and witty.

Whatever he says, however, Herbert is not really content to offer God mere sincere feeling as the previous pages have indicated. The opposition of the two worlds furnish much of Herbert's finest poetry. Of those quoted above, 'Easter Wings' and 'The Collar' are both on the subject of backsliding, the second particularly suggesting the richness of Herbert's former life. Much more explicit, however, is the first of five poems entitled 'Affliction'.

Here Herbert is using no particular 'device' the poem is a direct and gripping narrative in a straight-forward stanza-form. Its statements are startlingly bold. 'When first thou didst entice to me thy heart…….' The implication of 'entice' have an impudence which reminds one of Donne addressing a mistress, not a clergyman addressing God.

Again the last line, in its uncompromising paradox, is one of the boldest in all Metaphysical poetry. One interpretation is: 'Let me not be a protest of all, if I can't sincerely like it. The poet repents, and knowing how deep a pleasure and fulfillment he gets from loving God - says: I don't deserve to love you, if I don't know to love you in spite of all my affliction' (Gardner, P. 38).

This difficulty is not unusual in Herbert, and makes the poem seem as indeed its subject-matter also suggests a particularly personal one and a private communication with God. Its fierceness and honesty, with the puzzling conclusion make it nevertheless a most disturbing poem for any reader.

'The Pearl', although a sober and calm poem, has again a particularly personal ring; significantly, it is again on the subject of the fine things Herbert has renounced. One of the splendid qualities of Herbert's humility is its freedom from false modesty; and this poem is an impressive and manly claim of Honour..... of pleasure' - a claim which makes the more pointed the renunciation of them at the end:

> I know all these, and have them in my hand:
> Therefore not seeled, but with open eyes
> I fly to Thee, and fully understand
> Both the main sale and the commodities
> .....

Helen Gardner goes a step further and emphasizes the fusion of thought and feeling in Herbert's poetry in the following quotation, feelings and thoughts have been refined and controlled by the effort to give them their aptest expression.... But feeling and thought had been refined, strengthened and purified of extravagance before they received the discipline of poetic expression, by being brought to the test

of their conformity with the truth by which Herbert lived. (Vendler, P. 6)

It is extraordinary that the emotions also serve as the basis for the evolution of new rhythmic form and patterns in Herbert's poetry as observed by Tucker Brooke and Mathias A. Shaeber. His 169 poems are something like 140 different stanzaic patterns of which 116 are employed but once. The pictorial 'Easter Wings' and 'Altar', and the poem on Trinity Sunday' are in three stanzas of three lines each and are gross examples of this poet's facility in devising special rhythmic form for every motion. The adjustment is sometimes infinitely delicate, observable only after frequent reading; and with this go a balance and unity of thought content in which few lyric poets have equalled Herbert. (Shaabaer, P. 643)

Quotations from the following poetic pieces go very far to substantiate that his poems are endowed with emotional intensity.

> When boyes go first to bed,
> They step into their voluntarie graves,
> Sleep bindes them fast; only their breath
> Makes them not dead:
> Successive nights, like rolling waves,
> Covey them quickly, who are bound for
> death (Mortification, P. 98).

> For sure when Adam did not know
> To sinne, or sinne to smother;
> He might to heav'n from Paradise go,
> As from one room to 'another ('The Holy

Communion', P 52).
Sweet day, so cool, so clam, so bright,
The bridall of the earth and skie:
The dew shall weep thy fall to night;
For thou must die ('Virtue', P. 87).

The poem entitled, 'Artillerie' gives proof of the extraordinary ability of Herbert in handling serious and complex matters in a simple and intelligible way. The dialogue he has resorted to is very remarkable in which he is conversing and arguing with God. It is most interesting to note that the mystic confrontation resolves it itself into a dramatic situation.

In 'Deniall' the second and fifth lines of each stanza remain unrhymed while the poet is describing the separation from God, but in anticipating his reconciliation the rhyme is 'mended'.

"Therefore my soul out of sight,
untuned unsrung:
My feeble spirit, unable to look right,
Like a nipt blossom, hung
Discontented
O cheer and tune my heartless breast
Dear no time:
That so thy favours granting my request
They and my mind may chime,
And mend my rhyme"
(Deniall 11. 21-30).

In the process of spiritual restoration to the divine image, and mystical union Herbert often

prays to God to endow him with feelings of gratitude for the sacrifice he has made at the Cross. It is quite evident that such grateful prayers go very far to purify and sanctify his heart.

It is noticeable that virtually all of Herbert's poems indicate that he turns to God at the time of extreme anguish and agony. He looks up to him as his source of comfort and help. Though he cannot see further than the next step he realizes that God is faithful to lead him, step by step. He is brought to the end of himself, self-righteousnes, self vindication, self pity, self love, self pride, self everything so that Christ becomes all in all for him.

The vicarious death of Christ on the cross wields such a powerful and dynamic force that the whole arguement is totally destroyed and the mystic union of Herbert with God is restored. Prophet Isaiah has said that Christ would give those whom he has liberated beauty, to replace the ashes. Ashes are a most appropriate symbol of the self-centred life picturing its ugliness and uselessness. Christ has offered the poet the beauty of His own life to replace the ashes.

Being delivered from the self-life he is gradually led to the perfection of Christian life of complete surrender and submission to the will of the Saviour which is exemplified in the third stage of his journey. Self knowledge is a touchstone of a full vibrant fulfilling life. As far as Herbert is concerned, first of all he is overwhelmed with a sense of his own failings. It

appears utterly incredible to him that God should manifest kindness to such a sinner as he is and this introspection is coupled with the sense of personal unworthiness and a profound conviction of the mercy of God. He struggles for expression.

The poet begins to discover himself and acknowledges that he has nothing more to say, which act may be called a spiritual advancement as far as Herbert's spiritual condition is concerned. A new spiritual understanding of himself dawns upon him which makes him humble himself as revealed in the poem 'H. Baptism II', O let me still / Write thee great God, and me a childe / Let me be soft and supple to thy will, / Small to my self, to other milde, / Behither ill.(P.44)

The whole poem, 'Love III' is vibrant with spirituality. The poem can be quoted as the theme of 'The Temple' in a nut shell. God's love for unworthy man, his invitation, man's acceptance are all epitomised in this poem. At first Herbert rejects the invitation of love as he is conscious of his unworthiness and when he feels being "guilty" of dust and sinne". But repeatedly Love urges him to come and dine with him.

'Love bade me welcome' illustrates the emotional pattern of the poet, starting with a conviction of guilt of 'dust and sinne' reaching the climax in the middle with a sense of unworthiness and self-disgust and gradually relaxing to the ultimate point of reconciliation and union with Christ.

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drow back

Quiltic of dust and sinne.
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in
Draw nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lack'd any thing.
A guest, I answer'd worthy to be here:
Love said You shall be he.
I the unkinde, ungrateful? Ah my deare,
I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?
Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not sayes Love, who bore the blame?
My deare, then I will serve.
You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat:
So I did sit and eat ('Love III', P. 188).

At the very beginning of the poem of 'Superliminare' of the temple, it is pointed out that the soul is invited to approach and taste 'the Church mystical repast'. Christ as the host of the feast, and the soul that is always slack and turdy as indicated in the poem, 'Sacrifice'. The same theme is exemplified in 'Love bade me welcome'.

"You must sit down, says Love; and taste my meat; So I did sit and eat". His will is 'Love's and with this perfect conformity the poem ends. He neither passes by the divine call without due response nor does he recognise a deep hunger for real fellowship with God, which makes him willing to cry to God for all His revealing light. He feels that only companionship and fellowship with God can complete life.

The poet is conscious of God's loving and urgent call to have fellowship with Him and to partake of it in order to get full satisfaction and abundant life, because He has promised, "whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life (St. John, 6:56).

The invitation extended by Christ to all weary travellers is very well illustrated in the poem 'Christmas'.

All after pleasures as I rid one day,
My horse and I, both tir'd, bodie and mine,
With full crie of affections, quite astry,
I took up in the next sinne I could finde.
There when I came, whom found I but my dears,
My dearest Lord, expecting till the grief
Of pleasures brought me to him, readie there
To be all passengers most sweet relief ?
(P. 80-81).

Quite in line with Herbert's spiritual experience his poems exhibit a fusion of emotion

and intellect as pronounced by George Macdonald who observes “With a conscience tender as a woman’s, his intellect is nonetheless powerful. Its movements are as the sword-play of an alert, poised, well-knit and strong wristed fencer with the rapier, in which the skill impresses once more than the force while without the force the skill would be valueless even hurtful to its possesser. There is a graceful humour with it occasionally, even in his most serious poems, adding much to their charm (Hammond P. 71).

The victory over Herbert’s struggles and temptations is conducive to his general spiritual tone and strengthens him by the joy, it brings. He very rightly and empirically ends the revelation by the great joy and exaltation. In the poem, ‘Heaven’ he remarks,

> “Who will show me those delights on high?
> Echo.
> Thou Echo thou art mortall, all men knew
> Echo. No.
> Wert thou not born among the trees and leaves?
> Echo. Leaves.
> And are there any leaves, that sill abid?
> Echo. Bide.
> What leaves are they? Impart the matter wholly.
> Echo Holy.
> Are holy leaves the Echo then of blisse?
> Echo Yes
> Then tell me, what is that supreme

delight?
Echo.
Light to the minde: What shall the will enjoy?
Echo. Enjoy
But are thee cares and business with the pleasure?
Echo. Leisure
Light, joy, and leisure : but shall they perrserver?
Echo. Ever"
(Heaven 11. 1 - 20).

Herbert repudiates his own will and presents it as the willing sacrifice to

God. With fear, wonder yearning and awe he loves God and this at times leads

him to breathless silence as ejaculated in the poem, 'A true hymne' quoted in parts.

My joy, my life, my crown!
My heart was meaning all the day,
Somewhat it fain would say:
And still it runneth muttyring up and down
With onely this, My Joy, my life, my crown.
Whereas of th' heart be moved,
Although the verse be somewhat scant,
God doth supplie the want.
As when the 'heart says (sighing to be approved)

O, could I love! & stop: God written, Loved
(A true hymne, P. 168).

As a true mystic he becomes so intimately acquainted with God and thankfully resigns himself to his loving administration. The total resignation of the poet and dependence on God mark out an important stage of his mystical experience.

The following lines of Herbert echo the same sentiments.

Yet take thy way; for sure thy way is best;
Stretch or contract me, thy poore denter:
This is but tuning of my breast,
To make the musick better
('Tempter 1', P. 55).

The conscious submission of the poet to Lord Jesus, makes God's will the most important guiding principle in his life as a mystic. He expresses himself in the following lines.

Wherefore unto my gift I stand;
I will no more advise:
Only do thou lend me a hand,
Since thou hast both mine eyes
(Submission P. 95).

While yielding his entire being to God, absolutely surrendering and consecrating himself unconditionally and abandoning his own will his entire life is enveloped in and saturated with the love of Christ.Herbert's love of Christ amounts to a personal passion and he feels within him a

melodious harmony which lifts him to the highest degree of the love of God since a path of self surrender, contemplation and solitude is chosen by him.

What marks him out as an exemplary mystic is his single mindedness to exalt Christ. In him, feelings and thought unite together and dictate, making him arrive at an irrevocable decision, to live according to the demands of faith. His love for Christ is inseparable from his devotion to Him and it cannot be extinguished by any other desire. The following lines underline the same sentiments.

Souls Joy, when thou art gone,
And I alone,
Which cannot be,
Because thou dost abide with me,
And I depend on thee:
(A Paradie, P. 183).

The fact is this that he casts off all the hindrances, overcome all the temptations, fleshly desires and sufferings. He becomes a man of one thought which is to glorify God. All that Herbert desires is to walk watchfully and peacefully thinking of the interest of Lord-Jesus, having nothing to himself, nothing to gain and nothing to loose. So his path becomes a path of peace and a path of testimony.

Not only is Herbert assured of Christ's grace in saving him but he has found Him so necessary and indispensable that he cannot live

without Him. He is united with an absolute solace and divine restfulness. As a fervent mystic walking in obedience to His word, he depends on Him, as revealed in the following poetic lines:

> O let thy sacred will
> All thy delight in me fulfill!
> Let me not thing an action mine own way,
> But as thy love shall sway,
> Resigning up the rudder to thy skill
> (Obedience, P. 104).

There is a new pattern of joy full of serenity and communion with God compensating all his disappointments and trials. It is this mystic union which is the most significant feature of God's bliss, with the result that great and revolutionary changes have taken place in the spiritual life of Herbert. Thus he displays great spiritual power with the realization of the fact that it is worth a world to have an intimate fellowship with Christ.

Here is a man who has doggedly pursued the pathway or God's purpose right up to his last day, despite countless inducements to give up and turn aside all the time. Inspite of various trials and tribulations all the time the mystic poet has stuck on faithfully to his course, with his eyes fixed on the goal. He is now able to see and justify God in all the chastening judgements, that he has brought upon him. Throughout all his mystical journey he continually recalls the moment when God has been training him towards the goal.

As the poet looks back over the years of a dedicated life, he realizes that God has been leading him and hence his life has become a purposeful and beautiful career. But it has involved a long, painful waiting through unavoidable weariness of toil and bitterness of conflict, painful nights of despair and gruesome nights of darkness and distress. But in spite of his complaining and rebellious attitude, none can overlook his entire consecration for the godly obedience and reverence and the firm determination to reach the goal.

As a mystic Herbert begins to view life through God and not God through life. By waiting for the divine guidance he receives the communication of the divine love and power. Since his mystical vision is enlarged and his spiritual life is quickened, he is able to view things from the divine standpoint. In the past his vision has been restricted by what takes place around him, but now he is able to see everything in the right and correct perspective.

He leads me to the tender grasse,
Whore I both feed and rest;
Then to the streams that gently passe:
In both I have the best.
Or if I stray, he doth convert
And bring my mind in frame:
And all this not for my desert,
But for his holy name.
Yea, in deaths shadie black abode
Well may I walk, not fear:

For thou art with me; and thy road
To guide, thy staffe to bear.
Nay, thou dost make me sit and dine,
Ev'n in my enemies sight:
My head with oyl, my cup with wine
Runnes over day and night.
Surely the sweet and wondrous love
Small measure all my dayes;
And as it never shall remove,
So neither shall my praise
(The 23rd Psalms, P. 172).

This is a poem of perfect beauty instilling the deepest spiritual insight and the highest adoration. It is the unaffected expression of a godly heart which sings in praise of God, because the mystic poet has now learnt to exercise his faith and trust in with utmost confidence. It is an eloquent evidence of divine inspiration, sense of security, contentment and happiness because of God's grace, love, goodness and strength. It is the knowledge of Christ that nurtures and matures his soul. It is now that he is able to feel the length and breadth of His supreme love as manifested on the Cross.

It is a complete deliverance of soul in bondage to see that although the wages of sin is death, death is the doorway to life. Death is not more moving to a man than the final vision of his native land which he is leaving for ever and his own people. To Herbert's life beyond the grave is not anything strange or new but a continuation of the life of joy experienced in the presence of

the Lord while on the earth. He remains a pilgrim of eternity to the end. His poems are an amazing revelation of the depth of the spiritual aspirations of a mystic. They help one perceive the depth and nobility of his Inner-life as exemplified in his poem 'Death': Death, thou wast once an uncouth hideous thing, Nothing but bones,

> The sad effect of sadder grones:
> Thy mouth was open, but thou couldst not sing
> .....
> But since our Saviours death did put some bloud
> Into thy face;
> Thou art grown fair and full of grace,
> Much in request, much sought for as a good **. . . .** ('Death', P. 186).

The poet thinks of different ways and means of repaying the boundless love of God. As expressed in the poem, 'The thanksgiving' he asks how he might deal with Christ's 'mighty passion'.

Herbert's mystical love of God amounts to personal passion. He sees Christ as a pale sufferer at Calvary, crowned with thorns, bleeding,forsaken with his eyes full of love and sorrow as he gazes through the act of crucifixion. The poem, 'Sacrifice' illustrates this point very exhaustively. Christ's exclamation was ever grief like mine?(p.26) echoes His intense affliction. The doctrine of atonement is so precious to Herbert, and his fervent hope of salvation is pinned only

on the cross.Earlier Herbert was blinded by ignorance as revealed in poem 'The Size' (p.137).But he has the double earnestness and hope to continue to plead for those who still have missed the glorious revelation.

The poem 'Trinitie Sunday' gives a clear idea of this spiritual progress of

Herbert:
Lord, who has form'd me out of mud,
And sactifi'd me to do good;
Purge all my sinnes done heretofere:
For I confosse my heavie score,
And I will strive to sinne no more.
Enrich my heart, mouth, hands in me.

The metrical scheme differs when the poem is an expression of the poet's reconciliation and union with God, for which poems like, 'The Elixer', and the '23rd psalms' can be cited as examples.

The following poem gives an idea of how his thoughts and expressions combine to achieve a great intensity of love. The very briskness of the rhythm gives force and goes very far to impress on the reader how his mystical experiences and relationship have led to a mystical union with Christ.

Lord thou art mine, and I am thine,
If mine I am: and thine much more.
Then I or sought, or can be mine
Yet to be thine, doth me restore:

So that again I now am mine,
And with adantage mine the more,
Since this being mine, brigs with it thine,
If I without thee would be mine,
I neither should be mine nor thine.
Lord, I am thine, and thou art mine:
So mine thou art, that something more
I may presume thee mine, than thine,
For thou didst suffer to restore
And with advantage mine thee more,
Since thou in death wast none of thine,
Yet then as mine didst me restore.
O be mine still make me thine,
O rather make ke Thine and Mine"
(11 1-20).

Herbert's mystic union with Christ is expounded in such poems as 'My Life Hid in Christ in God'.

"My words and thoughts so both expresse this notion.
That Life hath with the sun a double motion.
The First Is straight, and our diurnall friend.
The other Hid and both obliquely bend.
One life is wrat In flesh, and tends to earth
The other winds towards Him,
whose happie birth
Taught me to live here so, That still one eye
Sould aim and shoot at that which is one high:

Quitting with daily labour all my pleasure
To gain at harvest on eternal Treasure".
(My Life is Hid in Christ in God, 11. 1-10)

The whole poem breathes out the spirit of union with the sacred personality of Christ. It is most remarkable how the several words, My life, Is Hid, In, Him, My Pleasure, Treasure go very far, to form and formulate the very ideas of his mystic union with Christ.

As denoted in the poem quoted above the dominant emotion dictates the rhythmic form. 'Jesu" and 'clasping of Hands' are two other examples with special techniques which reveal the poet's mystic union with God. The alphabetical arrangement of words such as J, ES, U conveying profound implications come in as a very rare and extraordinary feature of the poetic genius of Herbert.

"Jesus is my heart, his sacret name
Is deeply carved there: but th' other meek
A great afflication broke the little frames
Ev'n all to pieces which I went to seek:
And first I found the corner, where was I
After, where ES, and next where U, was graved,
When I had got theses parcels instantily
I sat me down to speel them and perceived
That to my broken heart he was I ease you.
And to my whole is JESU"
(Jesu, 11. 1-10).

As regards the great variety of stanza forms used by Herbert his editor G.W.Palmer remarks that of the hundred and sixty nine poems in The Temple hundred and sixteen are written in metres that are not repeated, for Herbert 'invents for each lyrical situation exactly the rhythmic setting that befits it. As David Daiches remarks, "no religious poet in English has so effectively combined and strongly indivedual with the general and both to sensibility at work and to the theme being presented that one is tempted to see the blending of art and religion" (David Daiches, P. 371).

It is most fitting to conclude with the views of T.S. Eliot who observes, "the exquisite variations of form in the poem of 'The Temple' show a resourcefulness of invention which seems inexhaustable and for which I know parallel in English poetry" (T.S. Eliot, P. 33).

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CONFLICT TO CONQUEST

Hopkins's life throws out a challenge to the modern age wherein man is exposed to a whirlpool of difficulties, both moral and spiritual, from which he is unable to extricate himself. Born on 28th July 1844 in a quietly religious and cultivated Anglican family, early in life he showed an unusual strength of will and a keen power of observation. Hopkins showed an unusual interest in study and excelled in English. At the Grammar school, the influence of poets like Spenser and Keats was predominant. When he was sixteen he won the Poetry Prize for his poem "The Escorial." The second poetry prize was won by him two years later, when he was eighteen.

In 1862 Hopkins won a scholarship to Balliol College at Oxford. In the same year he wrote a poem "A Vision of the Mermaids". He entered Oxford in October 1863 and for the next four years he remained an avid reader of the classics. Here he came under the influence of Jowett, the religious professor at Oxford. The friendships he made at Oxford lasted all through his life and the reference must especially be made to Robert Bridges, who was later to become the literary executors of Hopkins. Among his more intimate friends, besides Bridges, were A.W.M. Baillie, and D.M.Dolben.

In the words of Bridges, “Hopkins was so punctilious about the text, and so enjoyed loitering over the difficulties, that I foresaw we should never get through.” This fascination for the difficult reminded a life-long infatuation with Hopkins’. His diaries provide a fairly accurate and very scrupulous account of his youthful misdemeanours. In 1866, during Lent, he wrote: “No puddings on Sunday. No tea except to keep one awake, and then without sugar…Not to sit in armchairs except I can work in no other way. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday bread and water” (Geoffrey Grigson, P.11).

Hopkins was influenced by Ruskin is evident from the many references that Hopkins makes to the latter. His technique is dynamic word-painting on applying Ruskin’s poetry. He emerged as a master landscape painter in words. While Ruskin educated Hopkins to develop a painter’s point of view, which in the end, led the latter to formulate his ideas of inscape, Pater influenced the emotional aspect of his poetic sensibility that would eventually lead him to evolve his concept of instress.

Hopkins entered Oxford University at a time when it was vibrant with many religious controversies. Eighteen years earlier, Cardinal Newman had entered the Roman Catholic Church and the repercussions of his conversion to Catholicism were still felt at Oxford. Edward B. Pusey, who after Newman became the leader of

the Oxford Movement was still at the University. And so was Benjamin Jowett, who represented the more rational and intellectual conceptions of Christianity. Hopkins was influenced by all these three church leaders. Largely under the influence of Cardinal Newman he embraced Roman Catholicism in 1867. When he wanted to leave the University, Cardinal advised him to complete his degree. He was graduated the same year with First class in Classics.

Hopkins' conversion to Roman Catholicism had far reaching effects. His letters record how deeply his conversion affected his whole being. He offended his family by this conversion. His conversion, which he justified to his father with a firmness of will which almost resembled hardness of heart, caused a partial estrangement from his family.

In a letter, his father wrote stating in an impassioned style about 'adoring the five blessed wounds ' ..... and speaks with perfect coldness of any possible estrangement from those who have loved him with an unchanging love. His mother's heart is almost broken by this'..... (McChesney, P. 6). His anguish and depth of distress can be gauged from a letter he wrote to Newman, "I have been up at Oxford long enough to have heard from my father and mother in return for my letter announcing my conversion. Their replies are terrible. I cannot read them

twice. If you will pray for them and me just now I shall be deeply grateful" (P.20).

The conversion also caused complications in his relation with Robert Bridges. He was isolated from many Oxford personalities with whom he was on the best of terms. In the midst of tragic isolation from the world he had known for so long, that the poet's only possibility of consolation lay in a strenuous, fervid and consuming loyalty to the new-found faith. This isolation was compensated by the intensity of his faith. After graduation Hopkins left Oxford and entered the Society of Jesus in 1868 subordinating himself passionately to its discipline.

His religious character of Hopkins was moulded by the almost military discipline of the society of Jesus which was based on The Spiritual Exercises, written by its founder, St. Ignatius Loyola. Many of his poems contain poetic interpretations or embodiments of the Ignatian teaching. Sworn to chastity, poverty and obedience, the Jesuit devoted his intellect and will to the service of Christ which was a sacrifice of personal ambition.

According to the Jesuit principles the basic assumption was, that all and only good means should be used to promote the greater glory of God and they are to be chosen only to the extent that they promote such a divine cause. In his view, each mortal thing expresses its own being

but on the moral plane, man, and especially the Jesuit, must orientate his life towards his highest spiritual good. The full force of the impact of the Ignatian discipline, on Hopkins with its supreme ideal of sacrifice, is brought out in 'The Windhover', 'The Soldier' and 'In Honour of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez'.

Hopkins' fear was probably based on the general apprehension that certain poets of a decadent tendency, were no models of moral integrity of manliness and the love of beauty had misled many a promising poet. Moreover poetic fame, the necessary stimulant to artistic endeavour, seemed to him to go against the directive of St. Ignatius, that a Jesuit following in the footsteps of the humiliated Christ, should not seek the mirage of fame.

Entering the Society of Jesus, he gave up poetry, as he thought, for the sake of God. A.Devasahayam S.J. rightly says, "Hopkins considered the poetic vocation unprofessional in view of his priestly calling. But poetry then could be his additional vocation though unprofessional. At first he feared that there might be some incompatibility between the two vocations. This led to his ' massacre of the innocents' as he called the burning of his early poems around 1868 when he decided to enter the Society of Jesus" (P. 24).

The two years of his novitiate was doubtless a period of a great religious experience. An

incident he speaks about in his journal reveals his capacity for detached self-analysis. It concerns an occasion when, listening to a book on Christ's passion being read in the refractory, he was moved to weep uncontrollably. Analysing this later, he notes, 'as a sharp knife does not cut for being pressed as long as it is pressed without any shaking of the hand but there is always one touch, something striking sideways and unlooked for, which in both cases undoes resistance and pierces and this may be so delicate that the pathos seems to have gone directly to the body and cleared the understanding in its passage' (McChesney, P.6).

On leaving Oxford he first went to Birmingham where he served at the Oratory school. Here Cardinal Newman initiated the new convert to the Catholic ways. The main field of his study remained philosophy. Commenting on the hardness of this life he wrote to A.W.M.Baillie: "The life here, though it is hard, is God's will for me as, I most intimately know, which is more than violets kneedeep" (McChesney, P.9).

In 1872, studying mediaeval philosophy as part of his nine years training for the priesthood, he came across the writings of Duns Scotus. His views of God and the inscapes of nature became strongly coloured by the teachings of the medieval philosopher Duns Scotus. Having gone through the spiritual exercise in all sincerity, he did not fail to draw the obvious conclusion that

poetry too could serve such a noble purpose when undertaken with precaution. Again he realised that fame would not hurt him if it came posthumously. He seemed to have carefully weighed how far his poetic talent could materialise into actual work for the glory of God.

Hopkins' subsequent practice shows that he spent a considerable amount of time and labour to compose a variety of poems of exceptional merit. From his life pattern he chose religious themes almost exclusively for his poetic creation. Nothing could be more natural that he should unite the two vocations of the priest and the poet. A remark by Hopkins, however born of his delicate sense of duty as a priest, had started an unfortunate belief that there was a conflict between the priest and the poet in him.

Enthusiasm for Scotus probably cost him the chance of a professorship in the faculty of theology in the Society of Jesus, but it did immense good to his soul. It clarified and deepened his vision of life. For in Scotus he found the 'rarest-veined unraveller of reality'. This had obvious relevance to his religious experience too, since his attitude towards reality defined his attitude to God. Reality, in the last analysis, pointed particularly to God.

Scotus had a special attraction for Hopkins as one who could provide the philosophic framework for his own intuitively grasped

notions of Inscape and Instress. He asserted that an intellect can know the infinite by actual experience, and intuition. Such a theory apparently fostered an attitude of reverence towards all creatures, whether animate or not. The religious and poetic tendency in Hopkins felt an immediate attraction for such a theory, sensing there are luminous vistas opening out towards reality. This explains how Hopkins could address even inanimate objects as if they were persons. They act from such a clear center of individualized nature that they deserve to be regarded with wonder and reverence.

According to Scotus each individual creature has the precise grade of being to which it is destined by the Will of God. But by the words, the Esse Volitum, he echoed the sentiment of resignation attributed to Christ, when he entered the world to save it by His death on the cross in obedience to His Father's will. It is thus indirectly suggested that all creatures, even inanimate ones,obey God with a certain amount of self-determination. Thus with respect to nature Hopkins entertained a view which is more than a mere case of pathetic fallacy. For him, then, the destruction of an inscape, say of a poplar or a bluebell, is in some respects akin to the death of man or child (A.Devasahayam S.J. P.42).

It is surely significant that, four months before the close of his philosophical studies at Stonyhurst on August 27, 1873, he wrote, "the

ashtree rowing in the corner of the garden was felled. It was lopped first: I heard the sound and looking out and seeing it maimed, there came at that moment a great pang and I wished to die and not to see the inscapes of the world destroyed any more." (A. Devasahayam S.J,P.43). In his view, Nature was truly full of 'selves' deserving to be treated with respect and love, This was a matter of experience and more than mere theory.

This approach had an air of religious awareness rather than one of intellectual sophistication. When, therefore in the poem 'Ribblesdale' he speaks of the earth's wearing 'brows of such care, care and dear concern because, while it does the will of God, man fails to do so. Without entertaining any pantheistic notions he saw deep into the nature of things and saw even in inanimate beings a reality that ordinary people fail to notice. It is precisely because he saw a new reality that he baptized it with a new name the Inscape. According to him, Inscape is a living reality. Its soul he called, the Instress, which again, is not merely a material force but a sensitive reality which, on meeting, strikes him with the impact of a personal encounter.

Scotus undoubtedly opened new vistas during the three years that Hopkins studied philosophy at Stonyhurst. But it was during the next stage of theological studies, from 1874 to 1878, at St, Beuno's College in North Wales, that

his expanding spiritual vision merged with his sharpening poetic vision and resulted in a religious poetry of unmatched beauty and power This influence on Hopkins was ever on the increase.

During the year 1874 when he was Professor at St. Beuno's college, North Wales he read Theology, and Welsh, ostensibly to convert the inhabitants, but virtually as it turned out, to study the beauty of consonant chime and internal rhyme in the richly 'inscaped' texture of classical Welsh poetry. At the same time his character was being moulded by the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola founder of the Society of Jesus and by the almost military discipline of his order.

Wales, an individualistic unit of the United Kingdom, where the music of the bards mingled with the song of birds and the grandeur of the mountains matched the freshness of the deep valleys, was an ideal place to impress the poetic temperament of one, in whose sacramental view of Nature, God ever offered Himself to man as a love-gift. It is not by accident that his characteristically sacramental view of Nature found expression in the poems like 'God's Grandeur', 'the Starlight Night', and others of a similar type.

"I have always looked on myself as half Welsh and so I am warm to them. The Welsh landscape

has a great charm and when I see Snow down the mountains in its neighbourhood, as I can now , with the clouds lifting , it gives me a rise of the heart" remarked Hopkins. He considered himself half Welsh probably because he noted that 'Hopkins' was a common surname in Wales. (A.Devasahayam S.J, P.44).

Then he began to learn Welsh and music . Soon he began to doubt the purity of his motives and scrupulously examined his conscience . In passing he made this revealing remark: " ... and at that time I was very bitterly feeling the weariness of life and shed many tears not wholly into the breast of God, but with some unmanliness in them too, and sighed and panted to Him" (Hopkins, P.273).

In the words of Devasahayam, "During all the years he spent in Wales , the inner landscape of Hopkins' soul paralleled the outer, and religious fervour kept pace with poetic upsurge. Indeed , sight and insight , inscape and instress , religious pining and creative impulse , all intertwined , acting and reacting upon each other. This is interestingly brought into focus in an entry made in Hopkins' journal at this time : ' All along the length of the valley, the skyline of hill, was flowingly written all along upon the sky. A blue bloom , a sort of meal, seemed to have spread upon the distant south, enclosed by a basin of hills. Looking all around but most in

looking far up the valley I felt an instress and charm of Wales" (P.45).

The three years before his ordination, were a period of great fervour as well as anxiety for the good Jesuit. The great goal of being intimately united with Christ and working for the salvation of the souls, excited his enthusiasm. The thought , however , of his unworthiness and inadequate preparation depressed him. The depression , he detected , is the result of too great a self–reliance and want of sufficient trust in God .

At Stonyhurst College where he spent three years studying philosophy he felt darkness and despair. When he went to the Jesuit Novitiate in Roehampton, to teach, he felt his heart had never been so burdened and cast down. He felt weak and could do little. Even at St. Beuno's College in Wales the weakness and the melancholy which to make his inward life a torture and crucifixion, were present from time to time.

A reconciliation had been made between Hopkins and his family but the wound left a deep mark upon him. Later during his stay in Ireland his sufferings were increased because he knew that they did not completely understand or sympathize with him.By the time he had carried out his normal academic and social duties, he had no surplus energy with which to write the books, such as a treatise on Sacrifice and a study of Greek metres. "I am a eunuch', he wrote to

Bridges, 'but it is for the kingdom of heaven's sake'. He could still, at times, turn to poetry; but as he said 'I have made writing so difficult' - and inspiration seldom came (Gardner, P.35).

When his poems 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' and 'The Loss of the Eurydice' were not accepted by the Jesuit journal The Month, he felt disappointed and depressed. But he did not want to publish them privately for in his society everything that was to be published had to be censored first. Nevertheless he felt that frustrations and humiliations embittered the heart and made an aching in the very bones. He hoped that as there was a time for everything, the time for his verses would come.

Later in his life he also began to lose his inspiration to write poetry. This is alluded in the sonnet "To R.B.", To quote,

> Sweet fire the sire of muse, my Soul needs this:
> I want the one rapture of an Inspiration.
> O then if in my lagging lines Miss
> The roll the rise, the carol: the Creation
> (P.76 ll 9-12).

In 1877, the year of his Ordination, Hopkins produced his most joyous sonnets on the instress of God in nature and the instressing of both God and nature in man. Anticipating some of the great sonnets which sprung from a far

deeper level of experiences in 1885, Hopkins wrote that prayer was ‘A warfare of my lips, in truth battling with God (Hopkins, P.25).

After his ordination Hopkins served for varying periods as select preacher, missionary, parish priest, and teacher of Classics in Jesuit establishments up and down the country, from London and Oxford to Liverpool, Glasgow, Chesterfield, and Stonyhurst. Though devout and conscientious he achieved no marked distinction in his Society; yet he was probably more successful than he claimed to be. He was by nature contemplative rather than active. As an artist passionately devoted to writing poetry or music, he could not easily maintain that degree of concentration on practical matters which was so necessary for his profession.

Being extremely sensitive to environment, he was horrified when he saw the squalor of England’s great industrial towns and the social conditions which oppressed the working classes. In Liverpool and Chesterfield, according to him, his muse turned ‘sullen’. He was in Oxford, after his assignment of assisting the parish priest for nearly a year, though mostly in the poorer fringes of the town and at the barracks. Later to his surprise, he found himself in stimulating parish work at Bedford Leigh, near Manchester, a town blackened by foundries, coal pits and steel mills, but with a cheerful and responsive catholic congregation.

This happy spell was immediately followed by exhausting parish work in the Liverpool slums which severally taxed his stamina. On quite a few Sundays he preached eloquently in the huge church of St. Francis Xavier's. However, he composed a few poems in twenty months, though these include 'Felix Randal' and the haunting lyric, Spring and Fall'. In 1881 he was given a change of scene if not of work, among Glasgow slums. In 1884 Hopkins was made Professor of Greek Literature at University College, Dublin, in which had been incorporated the remains of Newman's Catholic University. Peace had struck the keynote of an unquiet mind.

In the background is a sense of loneliness which has been depicted in the sonnets. The poet who used to complain that his friends or family forgot to write to him or reply to his letters, must have been at least subconsciously afraid that he himself might fade from the minds of those who no longer had him in sight. The height of his physical tiredness and weakness was reached in Ireland. There his fits of sadness resembled madness.

The desolation recorded in the sonnets were in some perceptible measure due to an entanglement of personal and professional problems. In one set of retreat notes he was found to be worried about the part played by some of the Irish clergy in support of Irish nationalism, and these qualms of an English patriot were

immediately followed by doubts about his own fitness for the position he held , and his personal responsibility for the right use of his talents.

In Ireland he felt that he was ‘at a third remove’, being separated from his Irish colleagues by national and political allegiances, as he was now severed from his family and English friends by distance and religion. Inspite of frequent holidays, his old physical weakness troubled him more and more. He complained that he always felt ‘jaded’.

A letter to his mother affirms this view: “In March, the grief of mind I go through over politics, over what I read and hear and see in Ireland and about England is such that I can neither express it nor bear to speak of it” (Bergonzi 134). Hopkins’s letter written to Bridges in 1887 states: ‘But out of Ireland I should no better, rather worse probably. I only need one thing a working health, a working strength with that any employment is tolerable pleasant, enough for human nature without it, things are liable to go very hard with it’ (Watt 69).

The temporary loss of joy and hope which mark the recoil from a rigorous discipline express the feeling of total separation from God. To some readers the aridity and sense of deprivation expressed so poignantly in the sonnet ‘I wake and feel the fell of dark’ has suggested the

'purgative way' or the 'dark night of the soul', as experienced by certain mystics.

From 1884 to 1889 he spent in Ireland, as Professor of Greek and Latin Literature at University College, Dublin. He taught Latin and Greek to small classes, but shared responsibility as Fellow in Classics in the Royal University of Ireland for examining the scripts of candidates from other colleges at all levels. It was an honour, but it also caused him his health.

The melancholy from which he suffered all his life, became constant and crippling. He wrote about this agony in the sonnets of Desolation. More than the uncongenial environment, of his dreary unfulfilled work, it is his sense of identity that oppressed him. During this period there were many things that had worried him. His duty, as a professor seemed to be a crushing burden to him, for he had to mark several batches of examination paper, upto five hundred a time, which were sent from colleges of Royal Universities.

An account written long after his death claims that, "As an examiner he caused chaos by indecision in deciding single marks out of possibly thousands. He marked each sentence down to halfs and quarters with unerring taste, but his mathematical powers were unfortunately not always equal to adding upon the fractions. While the Examining Board were crying for his

return, he would be found with a wet towel round his head agonizing over the delicacy of one mark" (Bergonzi, P.127).

The drudgery of having dissatisfied the society, in being a classical examiner in Dublin and political dishonesty which he was forced to witness, 'made his sensitive spirit to be tortured and he fell into a melancholic state, which is vividly pictured in his last sonnets' (Roberts 62). Hopkins lamented his loss of poetic capacity finding himself unable to go on with anything and the lack of success which as a poet he rightly deserved.

Catholic support for Irish nationalism, heavy examination duties and doubts as to the usefulness or moral value of the work he was doing, aggravated his bodily weakness. His constitutional melancholia began to show itself in an acute form which bordered, as he said on madness, though his judgement was never impaired. These moods, and the deep spiritual unrest which underlies them, are reflected in 'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves' and the six 'terrible' sonnets which begin with Carrion Comfort'.

Suffering throughout his life from a certain nervous debility, he was dogged by a sense of failure. Hopkins had a frail constitution and was continually running out of energy. He felt that these inadequacies of his body imposed unwelcome limitations on his spirit. Every day

the distracting body brought recurrent temptations to the spiritual man and further demands for care and support. Although Hopkins loved the Welsh countryside, his allusion to his human environment in terms of a marshy fog in 'The Lantern out of Doors' indicate a feeling of mental stagnation at St. Beuno's. There was no one to share his interests. The loss of vitality is said to be one of the other reasons for the depression in Hopkins.

> He has been destructively ruthless with himself even from early days. The desperate emotions in the Dark Sonnets are mirrored in his letters from Ireland. His words in his letter to Baillie reveal that 'there were the constant fatigue, the weakness, the sense of premature age, the melancholy, which he had all his life been subject to but which had become "rather more distributed constant and crippling", its lightest from a "daily anxiety about work to be done . . ." (Kenyon Critics 12).

Among the many causes attributed to the experiences of Hopkins, one is the poet-priest conflict. Though a gifted preacher, he is unable to make a mark due to certain eccentricities. As a scholar his inability to produce any majorwork, as an unrecognized poet with variety of talents with no opportunities for employment have lead

him to intense emotional blackness filled with gloominess.

Another cause of his suffering and humiliation within the order was the lack of success in his practical life. As a scholar his inability to produce any major work, as an unrecognised poet with variety of talents with no opportunities for employment had led him to intense emotional blackness filled with gloominess. For some years he had been too hard on himself: My own heart let me more have pity on; let / Me live to my sad self hereafter kind …….. (P.69)

More causes of his nervous depression can be identified even though they do not account for the acuteness of his misery. All these certainly warred against his bodily mental and spiritual health. “He was isolated in a way peculiarly calculated to promote starvation of impulse, the over-developed and overgrown idiosyncrasy, and the sterile deadlock lasping into stagnation” (Kenyon Critics 130).

The partial inhibition of strong creative instincts was no doubt one of the immediate causes of his neurosis. Though he declared that the want of fame as a poet was not one of the many mortifications to which the life he led was exposed, he admitted that fame was a spur very hard to find a substitute for, or to do without. He was willing to allow his poems to be disposed of

by obedience to be published, perhaps by someone in authority after his death.

Whatever the causes, whatever the ultimate gains, the effect was frustration. 'Unhappily I cannot produce anything at all', he wrote in 1888, not only the luxuries like poetry, but the duties almost of my position..... I am a eunuch - but it is for the kingdom of heaven's sake'. As these words attest he accepted his cross; he never lost his faith or consciously regretted his choice of profession: ' I have never wavered in my vocation, but I have not lived up to it'. The last admission has to be measured against the height of his standards(McChesney, P.13).

"The inner conflict primarily appears psychological. The conflict is in his eagerness to reach spiritual fulfillment, in his refusal in surrendering to God, is described by mystics as an advanced phase in the progress of the soul towards the ineffable peace of union with God. To be 'busied only with God', was Hopkins' fervent wish. There is, from the Deutschland to the last sonnet, more of heroic acceptance than self-pity. Underneath the despair and complaint the note of willing self surrender to the higher necessity is always implicit" (Stowell, P.59).

Hopkins' poetry as a whole gives the impression of strength which is often refined to delicacy. Even in the poems of desolation the note of heroic resistance, or stoic acceptance, or willing

surrender to the higher necessity, is marked more as tone of weak self-pity.

The deep underlying faith of the mystic poet, from which he drew his powers of spiritual recovery, are reflected in many of his poems like, Carrion Comfort, 'Patience hard thing', and 'My own heart let me more have pity on'. In the bitter experiences of the later 'terrible' sonnets we may miss' the roll, the rise the carol, the creation of some of the earlier poems; but in their austere concentration, their clear, incisive intensity, the sonnets of 1885-1889 are in many ways Hopkins' crowning achievement.

They are the work of man who, while putting the whole of his 'sad self' into a poem could still preserve the sensitivity and control of the artist, and who must have found in the making, a deep sense of relief and fulfillment. Between gruelling sessions of examining, he visited Connemava, forgot the oppressiveness of his work among kind friends, and even paid brief holiday visits to England Scotland and Wales. 'That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire' written in July 1888, shows Hopkins' capacity to surmount physical debility and melancholia.

To the end he kept up his double vocation of priest and poet. His voluntary effort, centered on his priestly duty, subconsciously provided the 'neap', the condensed, coiled power of his poetry. The third phase of his poetic career explains how

the spiritual torment and his spiritual crisis ultimately lead him to spiritual revelation and recovery. In this phase he was able to win through, to overcome and to experience patience, surrender, acceptance and submission to God. He was also comforted by the fact that God loved him. This transformed him so thoroughly so as to enable him to say when he was dying , that he was very happy.

The contemplation on God leads the poet to serve purgations of the soul. His great union with God is preceeded by trials and suffering. He lives in anguish due to his own wretchedness that he has been forsaken by God. His sufferings ultimately lead him to the joys of mystical union with God. His great spiritual crisis ultimately ends with a renewal of faith after the humble resignation, submission and surrender. He finds his answer for all his suffering from the Cross. The soul's experiences of the Dark Night is ultimately followed by the dawn of spiritual consolation and joy.

The technique of the poems of Hopkins reveal the mystical experience of his psyche. He is a genius of originality and a master of pliable technique. He invents new words, and transposes the order of his words to good effect. In the words of John Garret, his verse constitutes "a new vitality into the form of poetry and a revival of immediacy in the relationship between man and God not heard since Herbert's day" (170).

Hopkins sees the world filled with the glory of God. His ultimate purpose is the glorification of the Creator.Even a short country walk provided him several occasion to glorify the Creator who has devised everything. In his commentary on his spiritual exercises the opening passage revealed that “he valued the human personality as the direct link between man and his Creator, a relationship which is made up of all creatures, animate and inanimate, with “Christ as their summit” (Gardner xxv).

In the words of J.F.Cotter the sonnets of desolation are “unequalled in the language for their personal expression of spiritual distress” (214). The dark sonnets according to Schmidt are ‘his finest work, for here the ruptured syntax, and the inversions and the sound patterning answer a violence of spiritual experience as any in English poetry (403). The amazing hitting power of his writing “resides in the impression of artlessness of utter sincerity, which the peculiarities of syntax and repetition, as though he was too exhausted to seek out petty alternatives subconsciously confirm” (Bottrall 231).

Malcolm Cowley, a literary editor of the New Republic remarks “If Hopkins is to be regarded as a poet, it is chiefly because of a fierce conviction and emotion which struggle for expression in everything he writes” (qtd. By Roberts 214). In the terrible sonnets which are recordings of

spiritual crisis “he often achieves an effect to be envied by other artists: that of a man stuttering from the intensity of his feeling again in the same poem, he attains a Miltonic majesty without forsaking his own style”(Roberts, P.214).

“The profound depressions in the terrible sonnets seems to operate as painful but inevitable stages on the spiritual journey, ultimately serving to recast, and reinforce, the relationship between the individual and his God” (Garret 173). According to him “Christ is the only star by which an unerring course may be steered through the rock strewn seas of an affluent and sheltered life” (Gardner 353). His whole conception of poetry included the contact with God which reaches beyond the senses which only mystics know.

To Hopkins man’s preoccupation with his earthly selfhood works on the dull dough of his material self and prepares it for the struggle, to achieve unity with God. His poetry is the outcome of a tension between the creativity of the artist and the dedication of the priest. He wrote to serve and praise God. He gave his poetry depth and spiritual power.

He is said to be the greatest religious poet after John Milton. In the words of W.H. Gardner “No one can really know him without acquiring a higher standard of poetic beauty, a sharper vision of the world and a deeper sense of the underlying spiritual reality” (XXXVI).

Evelyn Underhill remarks, “True mystical achievement is the most complete and most difficult expression of life, which is as yet possible to man. It is at once an act of love, an act of surrender and an act of supreme perception; a trinity of experiences which meets and satisfies the self” (Evelyn Underhill, p.119). It is noteworthy that Gerard Hopkins, life and works subscribe to this standard of mysticism.

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PSYCHE AND ARTISTIC CREATION

"F..R.Leavis rightly considers Hopkins a major poet and the greatest of the victorian era. I.A. Richards and William Empson project him as the best example of modern poets. His vigour and freshness, his modern sensibility and challenging originality, his uncompromising commitment to moral values, his religious priority, his relentless pursuit of technical perfection in poetic expression and his fearless innovations, all make him a fascinating subject for study" (A.Devasahayam S.J., P.17).

The permanent worth of Hopkins as writer is threefold. Firstly he is one of the most powerful and profound of our religious poets and is also one of the most satisfying 'nature poets' in English. Secondly, he is one of the acknowledged masters of original style, one of the few strikingly successful innovators in poetic language and rhythm; thirdly, the publication of much of his prose-note books, journals, letters, sermons, has given us a body of autobiographical and critical writing which,apart from its broader human interest, throws much light on the development of a unique artistic personality" (W.H. Gardner, P.25).

In seeking God he goes through the various phases of spiritual experiences. Through a path of difficulty he reaches the throne of grace. Denying self, he forsakes all, choosing the way

of the cross, the way of seperation from the world, and the way of loneliness and suffering. His spiritual life can be divided into three phases. The first phase of spiritual life deals with the conflict between basic sensuousness and intense religious faith.

In the second phase he enters into the dark night of the soul, a period of desolation, in which he endures a feeling of alienation from God, experiencing a sense of loneliness, frustration and despair. This period of the Dark Night is ultimately followed by a dawn of spiritual consolation, patience and joy leading him to a mystical union with God. This third phase highlights Hopkins' triumph over his problems and finds remedy for his failure, disappointment and suffering in the path of the cross.

The main themes of Hopkins' poetry are inward exploration, human suffering, quest of the soul for God, incarnation with special reference to Christianity, the glory of human and divine life, nature and God. His first phase of spiritual life deals with the conflict between basic sensuousness and intense faith. His poetry, especially the poetry of the earlier phases, shows a constant conflict between aestheticism and asceticism, sensuousness and spiritualism.

Many facets of his spiritual life, with his vision of reality, focused mostly upon the operation of Christ's life, stemming from the

center of Trinity are presented. He also contemplates on the simple objects, flowers, trees, streams and landscapes. This outward and sole beauty is to him the reflection of the invisible beauty of God. In this sense all nature is sacramental to him which indeed is the visible of an invisible, intelligent and creative energy.

What is distinctive of Hopkins is his keen perception of the divine in nature, in man and in all human endeavors coming under the spell of Christ's grace. To use his own terminology, he saw not only inscape of nature and felt the accompanying instress but clearly experienced and expressed the simultaneously mounted inscape an imploding intress of grace in nature and in his inner self. No doubt, "there lives the dearest freshness ,deep down things", but the reason is ' because the Holy Ghost over the bent world broods with warm breast'(A Devasahayam S.J., P.25).

Morton Dauwen Zabel asserts "Hopkins' poetry is, first of all, a created poetry. His originality is organic.His fascination for originality is based on a new vision of life.Originally in all its manifestations instinctively drew his attention. He admired everything that was rare and everything seemed rare to him, as if every being had a distinctive personality of its own. In seeking the original in everything he reached back to the origin of all things- the Absolute, the Arch-original, a blue-bell in bloom could transport him

to the Lord that makes the universe bloom" (P.177).

A.Devasahayam S.J., rightly remarks, "The second striking element in Hopkins' poems is the aura of religious grace that seems mounted on what is naturally alive with springtime freshness. Hopkins' poems evoke the vision of a permanently renewed world basking in celestial warmth and grace. What Hopkins does is more like the unveiling of an objective landscape than the projecting of his subjective mindscape" (P. 31).

Hopkins is one of the acknowledged masters of an original style in poetry. His is the voice of new poetry and he has freed both metre and verse from the bondages of conventions and in his hands poetry comes alive again.Technique is part of his artistic nature from the beginning.

'For no modern poet in English has undertaken with equal conviction the three modes of experiment-symbolic, prosodic, and verbal, which have marked the progress of poetry during the last seventy years", opines Zabel (P.177).

Poetry for Hopkins is a process of setting up a construction of rhythmic word-patterns that captures and reproduces an experience and an awareness that touches the nerve–centre of human nature. Of his own poems Hopkins said,

"My verse is less to be read than heard...." It is oratorical that is, the rhythm is so Hopkins being a master of rhetoric, rhythm and sound of words had a special appeal for him. (Letter to R.B., 21 August 1879)

A. Devasahayam S.J. opines that, "In a living work of art, form and content mutually act on each other. What the form imparts to content-here the aesthetically appreciated religious theme-will not be more of the content but the crystalline splendour of the form; what the content contributes to the form will not be more of the form but a certain colour that permetes the pellucid form. The essential quality of a work of art is primarily determined by its 'form' (A. Devasahayam, P.28).

His was the voice of the new poetry, and he freed both metre and language from the bond of convention. It was he who paved the way for the emergence of modern poetry. The note of exuberant intelligence, the disregard for conventional rhythm, the curious rhyme, the delight in the surface of language, the exploration of the exact nature of both the detail and the word to fit it, the meticulous difficult of the inner relationship of the parts his mixing of thought and emotion his love of eccentricity and oddness, his search for a new medium, his high seriousness of purpose are all modern characteristics of poetry.

Works of art of course like words utter the idea and in representing real things convey the prepossession with more or less success. The further in anything, as a work of art, the organization is carried out, the deeper the form penetrates, the prepossession flushes the matter, the more effort will be required in apprehension the more power of comparison, the more capacity for receiving that synthesis of impression of which gives as the unity with the prepossession conveyed by it. (J,126). The poet creates out of unity to a diversity of techniques images, words.

Originality, technical perfection ,innovations, external stanzaic pattern, repetitive rhythmic pattern, the central structure of thought and mood, rhythm, symbols, alliteration, assonance, repetition of consonant sounds, inscape, instress, compounds, Imagery, diction and the very form of the poem, sprung rhythm, counter pointed rhythms, the starting pauses, the harmonic word fusion and many other interesting poetic semantic and linguistic devices. Words and phrases ,and the ecstatic lift and roll of its rhythms, terseness of style , blend of passion and intellect startling phraseology are the technical devices which reveals his mysticism.

Herbert Read clearly explains, ... We might say that Hopkins is eager to use every device the language can hold to increase the force of his rhythm and the richness of his phrasing. Point, counterpoint, rests, running-over rhythms,

hangers or outrides, slurs: end-rhymes, internal rhymes, assonance and alliteration- all are used to make the verse sparkle like rich irregular crystals in the gleaming flow of the poet': limpid thought".(P.43)

Accumulations of epithets, nouns, and verbs are used by Hopkins in the building up of a powerful cumulative rhythm, a form of poetic rhythm of which he is, undoubtedly, the greatest master in English. Of his cumulative rhythm 'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves' is, probably the most splendid example.

Inscape according to Hopkins, is the individuality distinctive of a thing of a situation, image or form . It is the shape and design of a thing or object. Inscape means a pattern, design, form and structure as well as language of poetry. It is the poet's individual distinction of style and vision. Its main virtues are originality, freshness and queerness.

McChesney says, "He always looks for the law or principle which gives to any object or grouping of objects its delicate and surprising uniqueness. Very often this is for Hopkins, the fundamental beauty which is the active principle of all true being, the source of all true knowledge and delight- even of religious ecstasy. Speaking of a bluebell he says, "I know the beauty of our Lord by it". He calls this law or principle 'inscape' and to that energy or stress of being which holds

the “inscape” together he has given the name “instress” (Modern painters, loc. Cit.P.51). These two phrases coined by Hopkins are primarily intended by Hopkins to describe his awareness of a divine pattern and power at work in Nature. “Al l the world is full of inscape”, wrote G.M. Hopkins in his journal at the age of 29" (P. 202).

Nature is a dominant theme , not only because of its grandeur, its many splendours and wonders, its superb beauty ,its infinite variety, its tremendous power and force ,but because of it mirrors God and reveals Him to us in all its manifestations.

Commenting on his use of imagery, E.Albert says that “His imagery is remarkable for its richness. His appreciation of nature, his reading of the great English poets, particularly Shakespeare, and of the Bible, are all evident. Often he shows that blend of the emotional and intellectual which distinguishes the poetry of the 17th metaphysicals. But whatever their sources of affinities, the images of Hopkins’ poetry are distinctively his own, always precise and vitally illuminating, usually briefly expressed, and often suggesting more than one possible interpretation” (p.23).

His images are living, fresh and original, are extensive and frequent and abundant, and above all, are functional and suggestive. They have some

quality of wit very dear and near to the metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century.

Herbert Read says, “The poems are doing what all poems do, it is just that they do it in an unusual and distinctive way. The images of Hopkins poetry are distinctively his own-always precise and vitally illuminating, usually briefly expressed ,and often suggesting more than one possible interpretation. Often combines emotional and intellectual figures. He does not accept images as something ornamental or superfluous looks upon imagery as something imposed upon the poetry. To him they were inseparable from true poetic experience. Every image in a poem was a vital part of the poem” (P. 258).

As stated by Helen Gardner, “the best part of the work consists of carefully written observation of natural phenomena on colour, organic form, movement, in fact the intrinsic quality of any object which was capable of striking through the senses and into the mind with a feeling of novelty and discovery .... With a searching vision” (p. 27).

The young Hopkins, however, beheld not only the sensuous richness of the world but also its spiritual emptiness. A remarkable poem, ‘Nondum,’ written at Oxford, contains a vision of a universe from which spirit has been banished. We see the glories of the earth / But not the

hand that wrought them all. It is significant that he combines in his interesting poems, a depth of humanity with a height of mystical insight, with a whole spectrum of emotions and attitudes fused.

It is from the kind of tension which always prevails from the striking together of two unyielding flints, that of the poet and the religious man, that the glory and passionate depth of his poetry proceeds. The very fact that he had burnt all the poetry he had written before he became a priest, is evidence of the struggle between the poet and the priest.

So he expresses himself into poetry using all his pent-up emotions on God's grace manifest every where on the earth. The dedication to his calling as a priest limit his subject-matter to God's presence everywhere and in everything. The priest in him, makes his poetry pure and honest.

The inner questioning and struggle, obviously, is not a permanent feature. Moments of rapture alternate with it. In fact, the poems of this period reveal the rapture that was in the mindscape of his soul as well as the rapture of outer nature. The depth to which his religious experience colours his vision of nature sets him apart as a nature poet.

Geoffery Grigson, remarks that, "The poetry of G.M. Hopkins might be called a ' passionate

science ‘like other poets and like painters of his era . With the greatest delicacy, strength and intelligence he possessed his environment, making it the intimate vehicle for the passionate praises of his belief” (Grigson, p. 143). Hopkins’ aptitude for drawing and music, has resulted in a type of poetry that combines the clarity of a pictorial composition with the harmony of music. His dynamic word paintings makes him master of landscape painter in words.

‘Pied Beauty’, ‘The Starlight Night’, ‘The Windhover’, ‘Inversnaid’, ‘The Sea and the Skylark’, ‘Ribblesdale’, ‘ Spring’, ‘God’s Grandeur’, ‘The Wreck of the Deutschland’, ‘Penmaen pool’, ‘Hurrahing in Harvest’ are the some of the poems of the first phase which derive their force from the poets’ awareness of the objective beauty of the world.

Poems of the first phase expresses a vision which embraces all creation. God is here seen as both immanent and transcendent, and Hopkins makes quite clear his belief that God can be found in natural things; his is the way of the affirmation of images.

It is impossible to discuss for long the distinctive qualities of Hopkins’ poetry, writes F.R. Leavis, “without coming to his religion.” as F.R. Leavis has asserted. Even during times of great spiritual conflicts he never fails to see the handiwork of God behind all outward

mainfestations of nature. The struggle of the priest should be well-understood to understand the poetry of the man. The outcome of his spiritual struggle, a kind of spiritual purgation is the creation of his real poetry

Dr. Peter Feeney asserts “The frequency with which Hopkins celebrates nature itself directly reflects his intense religious beliefs; in conveying his response to the beauty observed in nature, Hopkins is revealing his attitude of reverence for the creative power sustained physical nature” (P.117). A. Devasahayam S.J., remarks, “To state briefly what would need elaborate analysis, a poem is a concrete work of art which a masterly wordsmith creates out of a spiritual aesthetic experience.” (p. 27)

For Hopkins the freshness of nature is a symbol of psychological and spiritual renewal which he so often needed. His notion is that God’s revelation is made through the individual, distinctive, and utterly unique. The more distinctive the beauty of each thing is, the more striking a revelation of God it makes. Each beautiful object in the universe gives a unique reflection of the excellence of God.

The comprehensive cosmic vision, of Hopkins, was achieved by a progressive penetration of reality from the outer surface to the inner self. The precision with which he describes the effect of the instress created by the

outer stress, is remarkable. Normally the incoming stress of a sorrow sets up an instress in the one who sorrows. The understanding will participate in this instress and react suitable by prompting tears. He explains this saying that at times the instress could be so delicate that it traces on one's reasoning faculty could be hardly noticed though the consequences could be strong.

Many who enjoy what they consider nature poetry of Hopkins in fact relish the religious inscape and its hidden instress always present in the poetry. The matter of his religious poetry basically consists in the religious theme adequately considered. He creates out of a spiritual aesthetic experience a creative act, before he gives the theme by the ultimate form of a poem, assimilates it in his spirit as an aesthetic experience. The form and content mutually act on each other.

The poems demonstrate Hopkins' child like joy in fairy love, his deep love of nature, and a metaphysical rapture over God's magnificence, a simple joy born of a deep religion. The poet looks at the objects of nature, whose clarity and radiance were a symbol to him of his own mystical and moral earnings. The heavens declare the glory of God"(Psalm 8) In a sense every object of nature, however mighty or insignificant it might be, is a manifestation of the glory of God. "The sun and the stars shining glorify God. They stand

where He placed them, they move when He bid them.

Hopkins was attracted towards nature not only because it manifested the glory of God, he was also attracted towards nature because of its own sensuous appeal, because of its grandeur, splendour and wonders. Here he was one with the Victorian poets who were also impressed by the glory and grandeur of nature.

'Pied Beauty' is one of the best of his shortest poems, which belong to the first phase highlighting the ardent devotion of Hopkins' great love for God. The theme of the poem is praise and glorification of God for creating multi-coloured, multi-shaped and multi-natured things in this universe. He alone is the Creator of all animate and inanimate objects. He is the great Provider and Giver and Supporter. It is from Him that all things are born. His beauty is eternal, which never changes. He is the Creator of Pied beauty .

The poet gives glory to God for the rich, colourful, pied beauty of the world of Nature and man. As illustrations of the pied beauty of the world he makes a mention of the sky of couple-colour, fallen chestnuts revealing the reddish-brown nuts, finches' wings, the landscape which looks like a patch work and is plotted and pieced, and all trade and industry. These dappled things are full of great variety and contrast. They are

swift and slow, sweet and sour, bright and dim, and fickle and freckled.

In the words of R.K.Thornton, “Beginning with praise, it builds up through a description of a variety of beautiful things which either are pied or contain opposites of various kinds – colour, taste, speed, brightness- to an assertion of the Creator of them, whose ability to comprehend the paradoxes within His unity, aptly demanding praise, which ends the poem with a formal perfection by returning to its beginning (p. 45.)

The external, stanzaic pattern merely frames the inner thought structure and helps to create a repetitive rhythmic pattern appropriate to the enumeration. All of this structure both internal and external, sets off the experience of the poem, from the experience of real life and gives its shape and form of its own. This external stanzaic pattern is something like a frame of a picture.

The central structure of thought and mood is like the visual pattern of the painting itself. Rhythm, alliteration, assonance, repetition of consonant sounds give the poem a shape and a design, a form and structure, which give it a distinct individuality of style of the inscape. He prefers the concentrated thrust of compounds like ‘fresh-fire-coal chestnut-falls’ and dispenses with prepositions and articles . Excessive use of alliteration results in verbal inscape. On the

whole, the poem itself becomes an ‘inscape’ of delicate variety and pattern.

In the words of J.F.J. Russell, “Pied Beauty is basically nothing but a poem of praise, for the beauty derived from contrast, and an assertion that God is directly responsible for His creation: by recreating the very beauty he is marvelling at,through the choice of the most exact words, and the interplay of assonance and alliteration. The poet makes the poem a living instance of ‘Pied beauty’. To quote,

> Glory be to God for dappled things _
> For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
> For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
> Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; flinches’ wings;
> Landscape plotted and pieced-fold, fallow, and plough;
> And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim. (ll –1-6)

J.F.J. Russell rightly remarks , “The rapidity with which the images follow each other suggests that they are the result of accumulated experience, and points to a habit of precise observation. The comparison of the sky flecked with clouds to the patches of colour on a ‘brinded’ cow is the achievement of a discipline of observation and language. A contrived word such

as ‘couple-colour’, with its balanced alliteration and vowel sounds, enacts the tension implicit in our perception of contrast and penetrates to the nature of our experience of dapple. The ‘moles’ upon the trout are not a particular type of mole, individually and in a cluster bearing some resemblance to roses-they are ‘rose-moles’ existing in their own right, and as far as he can, he conveys it in one compound word. In this way he attempts to revitalize language, which through constant use, has lost its power to direct the mind to the actuality which it represents. Language and experience have become divorced, and Hopkins is forced to create a new language to avoid falsifying his feelings”(p.15).

The language is colloquial; the diction is simple and archaic. The language has a Biblical simplicity and grandeur. /pl/and / kl/ sounds are frequent to give as added emphasis to dapple, e.g. ‘couple’, ‘stipple’, ‘tackle’, ‘fickle’, ‘frecked’, ‘adazzle’. In Pied Beauty, the poet as painter and musician is displayed, showing his deep concern for bringing to bear in a poem all the senses.

The language, diction and the very form of the poem clearly bring out the mystical experiences of the poet. Above all, the technique impels one to a patient study until the inner mystery implodes in the spirit , springing a shock of recognition that draws aside the veil to present a vision ‘a billion times told lovelier’ than any, the readers might have had before.

James Finn Cotter opines that, “The poet’s eager apprehension of natural loveliness, as in ‘Inversnaid’, ‘The Starlight Night’ and ‘The Windhover’, is an expression of his worship”(p. 172).A command and invitation to see the heavens in imagination , opens Hopkins’s next sonnet, “The Starlight Night”

> Look at the stars! Look, look up at the skies!
> O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air !
> The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!
> Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elves’-eyes !(1-4).

‘As we drove home’, he wrote in 1874, ‘the stars came out thick: Stars back to look at them and my heart opening more than usual praise the Lord to and in whom all that beauty comes home’ (J. 254). In the poem he sees the stars as an enchanting world of cities, people, woods and orchards. In the end, however, all this beauty is only an outward sign of an inner and spiritual Beauty; in Hopkins’s own words a poem’ which house the Heaven of Christ and his saints. (McChesney p. 53)

‘The Starlight Night’ is a wonderful sonnet about nature. This sonnet is a contemplation of the stars in all their magnificence, multitude and brilliance. The poet asks about the price of true love and understanding of the beauty of the

universe. The answer, is prayer, patience, alms, and vows. Stars are the boundaries of Christ's own home. He asserts that the beauties of nature can be felt only by those who possess catholic virtues.

The language of the poem 'The Starlight Night', is also characteristic of Hopkins. It is strong, intensely personal, intensely inventive and it recreates with great vigour and warmth the experience which gave it birth. Some extraordinary compound adjectives have been coined by Hopkins in this poem,"mealed-with yellow" and "piece-meal" can be cited as examples. Some evocative adjectives also adorn this poem, for example, the diamond delves" and "the elves' eyes".'The Starlight Night' illustrates the counter pointed rhythms, the startling pauses, the harmonic word fusion among many other interesting poetic, semantic, and linguistic devices.

'Inversnaid' is a wonderful nature poem of Hopkins. The poem tells us about his love of nature, his love is not for a cultivated landscape. He wants it to be a wilderness. His love of streams and rivers, mountains and other terrestrial landscape comes to the fore, in this poem. The poet cannot imagine that there can be life without rivers and wilderness:

> What would the world be, once bereft
> Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,

O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet
(p. 56).

Hopkins makes some very pertinent comments in his poem 'Inversnaid'. In the words of Mackenzie, "Inversnaid is no friendly, conversational Tennysonian brook, sparkling its pleasant way through the countryside under man-made bridges. The word 'darksome' tells us about the difficulty of coming to terms with this somber river. The poem is also replete with typical Hopkins' coinages like "fell - frowning' and 'beadbony'. The poem is also significant for its terseness and depth" (p. 54)

In 'The Sea and the Skylark' the poet reveals that the natural joy with which man once inherited the earth has given place to an impulse for self-destruction, and that the new breed of man, together with the things that he has made, is now in the process of disintegrating, of reducing itself to its first elements, the dust and the slime.

The poem mentions the town of Rhyl but it could be any "shallow and frail" town. Standing on the seashore, the mystic poet listens intently to the noise of the waves, which comes from his right, and the song of the bird skylark, which comes from the land, which lies on his left. These two sounds belong equally to the distant past and the remote future. The sea and the skylark

appear to the poet to reduce to insignificance both the town itself and the civilization which has given birth to this town. He says that the song of the waves and the skylark is “too old to end” while the town is “shallow and frail.”

The poem abounds in difficult and unusual images. One such image concerns the song of the skylark which Hopkins says is “rash-fresh.” The “new-skeined score” of the skylark has been explained thus by Hopkins “it gives the impression of something falling to the earth and not vertically quite, but trickingly or wavingly, something as a skein of silk ribbed by having been tightly wound on a narrow card or a notched holder or as fishing tackle or twine unwinding from a reel”. Explaining the metaphor he uses, the song of the Sky lark’s he wrote to Bridges, “the new-skeined score is the lark’s song ‘which from his height gives the impression of something falling to the earth” (Hopkins, p.20).

The poem “The Sea and the Skylark” is full of technical innovations. The sonnet is written in the Italian pattern. It is a technical triumph. Hopkins has succeeded admirably in making his purpose clear without compromising or contradicting what he wanted to say. The rhyming of the sestet is rather happy and successful with each rhyming word falling into place with wonderful inevitability.

Then the onomatopoeic effect of the line "with a flood or a fall, low lull-off or all roar" describing so effectively the sound of a retreating and advancing wave. The Hopkinsian coinages of "rash-fresh" and "crisps of curl" are very effective. The poem is also noteworthy for its many alliterations. These consonantal chimes are very efficacious in this poem. According to Hopkins this poem was written "in my Welsh days, in my salad days, when I was fascinated with consonant chime." (Mc Chesney, p. 63) Examples are "wear and wend" ,"pour and pelt", "spill nor spend", and "shame this shallow."

Sometimes Hopkins uses alliteration with onomatopoeic effect as in "off wild winch whirl." Many a time Hopkins has also used alliteration for a point of contrast as in "flood and a fall."

> Being Pure ! We, life's pride and cared-for crown,
> Have lost that cheer and charm of earth's past prime:
> Our make and making break, are breaking, down
> To man's last dust, drain fast towards man's first slime
> ('The Sea and The Skylark', 11-14).

In 'Ribblesdale', Donald McChesney says, "Nature though devoid of consciousness, nevertheless gives a kind of glory to God by the mere fact of its existence; as exemplified in the

poem ‘Ribblesdale’. “They tell of Him, they give Him glory, but they do not know they do. They do not know Him they never can, they are brute things that only think of nothing. This then is poor praise, faint reverence, slight service and dull glory. Nevertheless what they can they always do” (p. 123).

The implication, with Hopkins is always, that man, the one creature that can choose to give glory to God, in fact fails to do so. This sonnet is a priestly meditation on fallen mankind. The contrast is between the loveliness of nature and the unloveliness of man.

EARTH, sweet Earth, sweet landscape, with leaves throng
And louched low grass, heaven that dost appeal
To, with no tongue to plead, no heart to feel;
That canst but only be, but dost that long-
Thou canst but be, that thou well dost; strong
Thy plea with him who dealt, nay does now deal,
Thy lovely dale down thus and bids reel
Thy river, and o’er gives all to rack or wrong.
And what is Earth’s eye, tongue, or heart else, where
Else, but in dear and dogged man?- Ah, the heir
To his own selfbent so bound, so tied to

his turn,
To thriftless reave both our rich round world bare
And none reck of world after, this wear
Earth brows of such care, care and dear concern.

('Ribblesdale' , p.88).

Norman White rightly remarks that the sonnet, "Spring, starts with a burgeoning sounds, a hyperbole, which is followed by an ecstatic scene of movements, shapes, sounds, textures and colour" (p.279).

NOTHING is so beautiful as Spring-

When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling ('Spring', 1-8).

The Sonnet 'Spring', contemplates the loveliness of spring and points back to its original source-Paradise - The Garden of Eden and the innocence of mankind before the fall. It is an urgent plea to Christ to claim for himself the minds of young people before, they become 'sour with sinning'. The contrast of the sestet's interpretation is starting, 'What is all this juice and all this joy?'. Now the tone, pace and imagery has changed.

'God's Grandeur' is one of the loveliest poems of Hopkins which opens on a note of optimism, 'The world is charged with the grandeur of God.'

And this grandeur of God bursts out like shining from a hammered foil- " like shining from shook foil." This gathers greatness just as the oil gathers after it has been crushed out from Olives. So, the poet suggests that God's grandeur gets its totality after a fruitful but painful crushing of human ego under religious discipline. Just as oil becomes useful only after it has been taken out of olives, in the like manner human ego partakes of God's glory and grandeur only after a great deal of religious perspiration and devotion.

The similes introduced by the poet in the beginning are unique. He mentions "shook foil" and "ooze of oil crushed." These similes are highly suggestive. The repetition of the phrase "have trod" is very effective. And all is seared with trade, bleared, smeared with toil. The internal rhymes

in “seared” and “bleared” and “smeared” are very effective indeed.. The rhymes suggest richness and plentitude. And everything is bound in Hopkinsian language. It is very, strong, personal and inventive. The poet, being confident of the grandeur of God, is sure, and for all this, nature is never spent.

Edward Sapir says, “He was magnificently earnest about the Holy Ghost that ... over the bent. World broods with warm breast and with an bright wings. As for imagery, there is hardly a line in these eighty-odd pages that does not glow with some strange new flower, divinely picked from his imagination.” (p. 65). Because the Holy Ghost over the bent/World broods with warm breast and with ah! Bright wings(God’s Grandeur, 13-14).

“The heard and the unheard rhythms run in combination, producing an effect known in music as counterpoint. There is a carefully wrought rhetorical splendour in the line, perfected by a patterning of vowel and consonant sequences of emotionalism. ‘The chiming of consonants I got as a part from the Welsh which is very rich in sound and imagery’, wrote Hopkins (Mc Chesney, p.52).

In ‘The Habit of perfection’ one of Hopkins’ astonishing compositions raises for himself a lofty ideal of asceticism and devotion. The greatness of the poem lies in the fact that when the poet is

stressing the renunciation of his senses, his love for the beauties of the earth flows over into the poem. His religious asceticism makes him reject the sense his keen sensitivity to natural beauty asserts itself in shape, texture and colour. The poem becomes enigmatic because of the irremovable presence of the very thing which he rejects. He admonishes each of his senses to shut out the material world. He prefers silence because he has ears only for the songs in praise of God. The characteristic features of his mystical experiences are echoed in 'The Habit of perfection' for the bride of Christ, garments which like the lilies of the field, shall not be toiled at or spun.

It is a religious poem of great order. The beauty of alliteration and assonance, the coinages of new compounds, personification, antithesis, new adjectives are some of the remarkable and artistic features of the poem. Adjectives follow the nouns, as illustrated in the following examples, 'crust so fresh', 'fast divine'. Phrases such as "lovely-dumb", "feel-of-primrose hands" and the lines such as

> Elected Silence, sing to me
> And beat upon my whorled ear,
> Pipe me to pastures still and be
> The music that I care to hear
> ('The Habit of Perfection', 1-4).

reveal Hopkins' original diction and style. The lines such as the following could be

written only by Hopkins:
Be shelled, eyes, with double dark
And find the uncreated light:
This rusk and reel which you remark
Coils, keeps, and teases simple sight
(9-12).

Images pertaining to the sense of taste, smell and touch are especially striking. W.H. Gardner observes that this poem "indicates Hopkins' desire to become a priest: but the surrender to asceticism is made in terms so delicately sensuous that the fusion of the artist and neophyte (a beginner in some religious order) is strangely tense and poignant" (p. 25).

In the words of K.E.Smith "The choice of an ascetic, rather than aesthetic, approach to life is codified by Hopkins in this self-instructional poem. Paradoxically, however, it contains more memorable sensuous imagery than any other poem of these Oxford years. The problematic relationship between sensuous enjoyment and religious dedication was only resolved eleven years later in 'The Wind-hover' and its companions Welsh Sonnets" (p. 32).

The Sonnet 'Duns Scotus's Oxford' is remarkable for the usual qualities of Hopkins' diction and style. The poet was always in favour of a healthy relationship between man and Nature. He was of the opinion that growing

industrialisation of his age is mutilating the beautiful objects of Nature. Beautiful surroundings of Oxford have also been spoilt by the new structures raised recently.

> Thou has a base and brickish skirt there, sours
> That neighbour-nature thy grey beauty is grounded
> Best in; graceless growth, thou hast confounded
> Rural rural keeping – folk, flocks, and flowers
> ('Duns Scotus's Oxford', 4-8).

According to Norman H. Mackenzie, the ambivalence of Hopkins, bearing towards the city of Oxford is displayed in his well known sonnet, 'Duns Scotus's Oxford'. The poet seems alternately allured and pained. The city is "cuckoo echoing" but also "bell-swarmed". The poem pits "lark-charmed" and "river-rounded" against "rook racked".

McChesney rightly remarks, "Written in the Italian form of the sonnet, using the sprung rhythm, the sonnet is remarkable for the usual qualities of Hopkins, diction and style. Economy of words and his habit of saying much in a little space and coining new words and compounds can be seen throughout the poem. For example the first line of the poem: "Cuckoo-echoing, bell-swarmed, lark-charmed, rook-racked, river-

rounded". It is a line at once melodious, jangling, inscaping the sights and sounds of Oxford"(p.35).

One single line conveys a cluster of images- cuckoo, skylark and crow; bells and rivers are conjured before the reader. These few words sum up the landscape. The rural setting is summed up in three words: 'folk, flocks, and flowers". The words "a base and brickish skirt there" sum up the ugliness of all the new, discordant structures raised near the gasworks and the railway station of Oxford. Reference to Scotus' defence of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary is also made in fewest possible words.

Besides the condensed phraseology and Hopkinsian coinages the use of alliterations in the poem is striking half-alliterations in "branchy between", "cuckoo-echoing" and full alliterations in "rook-racked, river-rounded". "these weeds and waters, these walls are what", can be cited as examples.

The most perfect fusion of the poetic personality and the religious character of Hopkins, is seen in 'The Windhover'. Hopkins seeks God in the inscape, and finds Him in mystical encounters. His presence to him is both beautiful and dangerous, it is like a mystic's apprehension which is not intellectual alone but spiritual.

'The Windhover' has been named repeatedly as Hopkins' best poem. McLuhan, asserts that, "The Windhover could never have become the richly complex poem, if Hopkins had not tested and explored all its themes beforehand in other poems. There is no other poem of comparable length in English, or perhaps in any language, which surpasses its richness and intensity or realized artistic organization. There are two or three sonnets of Shakespeare..... which might be put with Donne's "At the round earths" for comparison and contrast with this sonnet. But they are not comparable with the range of experience and multiplicity of integrated perception which is found in The Windhover" (P. 19).

Hopkins called the poem "the best thing I have ever done" (P. 25). The title as well as the whole poem is highly suggestive and symbolic. 'The Windhover' is no ordinary poem. It is a deeply religious and symbolic poem. Here the falcon is symbolic of Christ. He is the morning's minion because he himself is the light, and hence the dauphin of the kingdom of daylight. He is dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, because he is attracted towards those who have seen his light, who follow the lightful path of religion and have brought themselves out of darkness. That is why the poet-devotee is filled with ecstasy and is bewildered to see the Falcon's zig-zag, curved movements like those of a skater on his skating expedition. His flight is indeed a great miracle, it is a

masterful achievement. The poet's heart is filled with rapture and pleasure at the energy and fire which Christ has. He is stirred, he feels elevated, but he cannot describe the experience.

The virtues possessed by the Falcon such as valour, brute beauty, air, pride, plume, are the attributes of Christ. And the fire that breaks through from him is terrible, miraculous and eternal. It would make the poet a more devoted servant of Christ. As the plodding of a ploughman, as he pushes his plough down the furrow produces a brightness on his ploughsare, so shall fidelity in religious life produce a spiritual brightness in the soul. The poet's soul is also 'bule bleak' or seemingly lifeless. But through suffering and mortification for the sake of Christ, the poet would experience a spiritual glory. The embers breaking open to reveal their fiery heart suggest the sacrifice of Christ.

Thus the poet seems to be saying symbolically, "May the human equivalents of this bird's heroic graces and beautifully disciplined physical activity be combined with a much higher spiritual activity in my being, just as they were once so transmuted in Christ O my Chevalier: It is the law of things that all characteristic natural action, o "sieving", however, humble it may be gives off flashes of divine beauty. How much more then should characterisically Christ-like action, give glory and be pleasing to Christ, our Lord" (Helen Gardner, p.40).

The imagery of this poem is deep and symbolic. It is only because of its rich imagery that the poem is so rich in meaning. The images of buckling, gashing, and galling recall the Crucifixion. The images of painful plot and bleak embers convey the lot of those who follow Christ in a religious order. As compared to this beauty of voluntary redemptive Sacrifice, the beauty of nature and created order is nothing. The final images show the shining armour of the falcon's imitation, of Christ's mastery. It is to be buckled in the hidden heart of the poet. The embers breaking open to reveal their fiery heart suggest the sacrifice of Christ.

Norman White asserts that, "The bulk of imagery in Hopkins' poetry is both vivid and concrete. Images are presented to us through original phrases and words; they are novel; yet they have a majesty of their own. Many of them are Biblical, some from philosophy, especially from Duns Scotus. But a majority of his images are from Nature and elemental forces. Comparison of Christ with the Falcon or the horse are conventional. Images are thus turned into symbols and symbols into images" (p. 282).

The assonance and alliteration in the first three lines of 'The Windhover' convey, in combination with the even phrasing, the delicate poise, the hovering emphasis of the falcon's movements. The falcon is seen as a chevalier, a horseman exulting in the great power under him,

and quick response to the rein as he sweeps "forth on swing". The skate on ice image, shifts the point of view only to emphasize the precision and sharply etched movements of the bird. "Dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon" also insists upon the etched quality of the scene. The bird is drawn to the light but it is also drawn, etched, against the dawn.

"The major success of the poem" says J.F.J. Russell, lies in the opening account of the bird itself:

> I caught this morning morning's minion, king-dome of daylight's dauphin, dapple-drawn Falcon, in his riding Of the rolling level underneath him stead air, and striding High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing In his ecstasy! then off, forth en 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: ('The Windhover', ll-1-8)

The poem contains some of the best compounds, the, coinages framed by Hopkins, such as, "dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon", "blue-bleak embers", "gash gold-vermilion". "morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin", "the rein of a wimpling wing" "chevalier", and "sillion shine", The "rhythm and emotion seem to be

simultaneously perfect in the words ‘ how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing/ In his ecstasy’, ‘dapple-dawn-drawn’. His special kind of earnestness over the exact representation of an action triumphs in the rolling level underneath him steady air”.

Herbert Read asserts, “The Windhover’ is the masterpiece of his metrical revision of the sonnet form. It has all the power and velocity of his mental creation. It wears the character of that joy of the senses which is the unmistakable Hopkins” (p. 31).

The poem is Hopkins’ first major poem in the sprung rhythm. It is remarkable for its verbal excitement, the multiple associations of some of its words and phrases, and the ecstatic lift and roll of its rhythms. “In its eight-line stanzas the typical Hopkins technique is seen for the first time. Sprung rhythm, counterpoint rhythm, alliteration, assonance, internal rhyme, coinages, and unorthodox syntax give to the poem a revolutionary appearance .....” . But, if it is difficult in thought and unconventional in technique it is full of brilliant passages, and has an artistic and emotional unity of the highest order” (E. Albert, p. 29).

Hopkins has best used Sprung rhythm in several of his poems, but especially, his use of rhythm in the first stanza of “The Wreck of Deutschland” , is evident in the following lines,

Thou mastering me
God ! giver of breath & bread;
World's strand, sway of the sea;
Lord of living and dead;
Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh,
And after it almost unmade, what with dread,
Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?
Over again I feel thy finger find thee
(Stanza 1).

To quote J.F.J. Russell "The most important point to be made about sprung rhythm is that made by Hopkins himself, that it is the most natural of things'. Sprung rhythm is the means through which Hopkins captured the movement of common speech in poetry, and we recognise its presence not through technical analysis but because it is the rhythm of the language we ourselves speak" (p. 64).

According to J.F.J. Russell, "It is in 'The Wreck of Deutschland' the full force of Hopkins' genius, is first seen. The poem is not only about a shipwreck; it is also about Christ's passion, and yet, not so such about the sufferings as about the triumph which was inherent in the Crucifixion. It becomes the mystery of the incarnation of God, the redemptive action and the active love of God. It concerns the Passion and redemption working themselves out in the lives of men. And the man who wrote 'The Wreck'

was not only a poet but also a priest fervently religious - one who had himself meditated long upon the Passion and Resurrection of Christ as the greatest manifestation of God upon the earth" (p.68)

Though a Christian poem, it has wider appeal and elements that will make it immortal and universal for posterity. It astonishes the reader by its religious insight, its vivid natural description, and its verbal exuberance. The opening stanzas are not only poetry of astonishing power, they are an invaluable revelation of the spiritual experiences which produce the new integration of consciousness that is to be the basis of Hopkins' mature writing. They are an expression of the unmaking of his mind, described to a God of transcendent power and majesty.

The seasons vision of the material world is transfigured by the 'instress' of a divine mystery behind it.

I kiss thy hand
To the stars, lovely-asunder
Starlight, wafting him out of it; and
Glow, glory in thunder;
Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:
Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,
His mystery must be instressed, stressed;

For I greet him the days I meet him, and
bless when I understand. (stanza 5)

For the poet who wrote these lines an ‘answering voice’ has ‘come from the skies’. Nature is no longer empty but filled with spiritual power. James Finn Cotter rightly says, “In the Deutschland, Hopkins makes use of repetition, “oftening, over-and-overing, aftering of the inscape,” in order to shape it for contemplation in the mind”(p. 150).

Just as Hopkins in his journals inscaped Christ’s presence in stars and blue bells, and in his poems in sunlight and fields, so the nun inscapes the risen Jesus in the storm. Her unerring aim is here the fullfillment of her whole life of dedicated service through poverty, chastity, and obedience, which in her death is focused and summed up in her fetching of the master. The nun’s inscape then is the inscape of the poem.

Ah! There was a heart right!
There was single eye!
Read the unshapeable shock night
And knew the who and the why;
Wording it how but by him that present
and past,
Heaven and earth are word of, worded by ?
(stanza 29)

The Wreck can also be read as the spiritual autobiography of Hopkins. There are close and deliberate parallels between the ship caught in the storm and the poet caught in his religious beliefs. The picture of the Deutschland sailing into the snow storm is a striking example of Hopkins revolutionary use of language.

> Into the snows she sweeps,
> Hurling the haven behind,
> The Deutschland, on Sunday; and so the sky keeps,
> For the infinite air is unkind,
> And the sea flint-flake, black-backed in the regular blow,
> Sitting Eastnortheast, in cursed quarter, the wind;
> Wiry and white-fiery and whirlwind-swivelled snow
> Spins to the widow-making unfathering deeps (stanza 13).

The concreteness of the language and imagery by which Christ is made existentially presents testifies to Hopkins's intense identification of the world with the incarnate word.

'Penmaen Pool', is a poem wholly sincere in its enjoyment of natural beauty. In this poem with all the naive glee of a child, Hopkins has gone straight to nature, to the "pure wild violation and energy," says W.H. Gardner (p. 227). Further

he reiterates, “Here we have a frank study in Onomatopoeia, from the first line to the “sweet-sweet-joy” of the close; more than that, the effects of varying line-lengths as produced by sprung rhythm upon the four-stress verse, have been successfully combined with the richest effects of Welsh cynghaneld and sensuous suggestion” (p. 253).

In the view of W.H. Gardner, “In Hurrahing in Harvest we meet four elements in fusion - the senses, aspiration, the Incarnation, and the Beatitude; and the catalyst that brings about this combination is the mystery of Immanence – the immanence of the transcendent God”.

> Summer ends now; now, barbarous in beauty, the stooks rise Around; up above, what wind-walks ! What lovely behaviour Of silk-sack clouds ! has wilder, willful - wavier Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies? (1-4)

The pivotal word, for both rhythm and meaning , is “barbarous”, with its “great stress” and succeeding slight pause. The whole phrase “barbarous in beauty” epitomizes both the shaggy tidiness of stoked corn and the graceful disarray of fluctuant, disintegrating clouds - in fact, all the apparently capricious energy in nature (p.253).

The metaphor in “glean” links the natural to the supernatural harvest. The mystical imagination follows in the track of natural forces and picks up vestiges of God- no matter how small, but the gleanings prove an abundant reward, as the sudden shift from metaphor to personification, which is made clear.

Two truths reiterated are namely, God is in the visible universe and Christ is God when the moral and physical powers are rightly attuned one can perceive Christ “And the azurous hung hills are his world- wielding Majestic- as a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet!-

In this moment of insight the poet assimilates the unmoved Mover and that which is moved; sees the gracefully rounded hills, with their veils of tranquilizing vapour, as part of the mystical anatomy of Christ.

As these hills, though softly bloomed with haze, remind him of a powerful stallion, of the supernatural beauty of Christ; majestic, yet still comforting, nostalgic, gentle and attractive. Images of this kind must be interpreted in the light of traditional Catholic nature, mysticism.

The close of ‘Hurrahing in Harvest’ as portrayed in the following lines is emphasizes the transcendence of God.

These things, these things were here and
but the beholder
Wanting; which two when they once meet,
The heart rears wings bold and bolder
And hurls for him, O half earth for him off
under his Feet (12-15).

W.H. Gardner says, “Hopkins the mystic , had “seen something” that “something far more deeply interfused” whose dwelling, is everywhere in nature and in the mind of man. For Hopkins, Beatitude was more than vision. To him it was love (p. 255).

“ Hopkins’ most ecstatic poem has one of his best beginnings. A strong stress on ends is followed by the almost silent dropping away of “now”, and the repeated low “now” prepares for the shooting up of the emphatically barbarous stooks of corn. The textures and meanings of “barbarous” “beauty” play against each other, in a vivid pining process. The ecstatic heightened involvement of the narrator is shown by the exaggerated textual description of the clouds as “silk”, a word which elevates and changes “sack”. (Norman White, p.287)

Along with Hurrahing in Harvest, “The Caged Skylark” is another poem which deal with “the man’s mounting spirit”. Hopkins is concerned of the essential freedom of the spirit.

As a dare – gale Skylark scanted in a dull cage
Man's mounting spirit in his bone-house, mean house, dwells-
That bird beyond the remembering his free fells,
This in drudgery, day-labouring-out life's age (p. 1-4).

The significant phrase is "beyond the remembering 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; it seems to have forfeited its birthright, to be cut off from its natural 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.

The first line is skillfully made to apply to both captive bird and human spirit, the lark's cage is hung, 'aloft' for safety, and a 'turf' is placed on it for dictatic purpose .Again, the "perch" and "poor" low stage indicate clearly enough those moments of joy or vision which relieve the tedium of cage-bound and earth-bound existence.

Two themes , of resignation and frustration are developed in the second quatrain.
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 bursts of fear or
rage
(The Caged Skylark', 5-8).

The sestet takes up the comparison between the free bird, the dare-gale skylark, and the human spirit which strives to mount, and the inference is not immediately consoling, but the closing tercet restores man's prestige by rehabilitating the human body on the supernatural plane.

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 uncumbered: meadow-down is not
distressed
For a rainbow footing it nor he for his
bones risen (9-11).

Hopkins desire to express the uniqueness of his feeling requires a unique diction and rhythm, even though he defined poetic style as the heightening of the common speech. The

emphasis is on 'the heightening' and the devices used by him for this purpose have resulted in a language condensed, elliptical, contorted and replete with expressions and compound epithets as well as the images which are the last word in oddity and have no parallel in English poetry.

In the second phase of his poetic career Hopkins was undergiong what an early Christian mystic, has called 'the dark night of the Soul,' when he felt that his God, for whom he had given up everything, had deserted him. The Dark Night of the soul which is said to be subjecting the intellect to God is one of the important mystical experience. The kind of suffering is said to be of a more painful ordeal.

St. John of the cross known as mystic's mystic defines 'Dark Night of the Soul' along with 'Dark Night of the Senses' as follows: 'The two nights are successive degrees of contemplation of God, and both involve severe purgation by which the soul is prepared for God. They are called 'Nights' because God deprives the soul of the use of the ordinary ways of attaining Him which had formerly been satisfactory and at the same time blinded, as it were by the new light of infused contemplation' (Pick 130).

He further reiterates that the Dark Night of the soul, 'designates the sum total of all its trials and sufferings which precede the spiritual marriage. 'The Nights involve great aridity,

desolation and trial for their purpose is to detach the soul from all that stands between it and its union with God in the intuitive way" (Pick 130).

'The Night of the spirit is even more painful, than the first night of the senses. In this night, God assails the soul in order to renew and divinize it. A man feels that he is completely forsaken by God and all human beings, and enters most deeply into an agonizing realization of his own wretchedness. He feels that he is completely annihilated and lives in an anguish that anticipates the sufferings of purgatory, very often not only unable to pray but even to perform his normal duties' (Graef 246).

The loneliness of the night of God according to St. John of the cross is as follows, "We may say that there are three reasons for which this journey made by the soul to union with God is called night. The first has to do with the point from which the soul goes forth, for it has gradually to deprive itself of desire for all the worldly things which it possessed, by denying them to itself; the denial and deprivation are, as it were, night to all the senses of man. The second reason has to do with the mean, or the road along which the soul must travel to this union - that is, faith, which is likewise as dark as night to the understanding. The third had to do with the point to which it travels - namely God, who, equally is dark night to the soul in this life..." (Coghill 136-137).

The sonnets of Desolation are the outcome of Hopkins' "Moments of lacerated emotions" (Watt 67). By way of giving a title to these sonnets Robert Bridges had named them the "Terrible sonnets". According to Dr. W.H. Gardner "These sonnets derive their name from The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and he prefered to call them Sonnets of Desolation (Mackenzie, 169). The subject Matter of terrible sonnets Self-suffering, self-negation, glorification of God, spiritual quest, priestly virtues are the subject matters of these sonnets.

The theme of these Sonnets "is threefold; (1)the darkness that has enveloped the whole of creation, (2) the desertion of God and the failure of inspiration (3) the fate that has made him time's eunuch" (Reeves xxvi). The following are the sonnets of Desolation: 'Carrion Comforts', 'No worst, there is none', 'To seem the stranger',' I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day', 'Patience, hard thing!' and 'My own heart let me more have pity on'.

Commenting on the experience of the Dark Night of the soul as found in Hopkins' terrible sonnets Fr. Joseph Keating remarks "What ever experiences are reflected in those four or five 'terrible sonnets' so full of Gethsemane, so expensive of the Dark Night of the soul'. Which those close to Christ are at times privileged to pass through, they cannot have been due to a mere human sense of failure and frustration, still

less to a doubt, as to whether he had chosen aright" (Roberts 304).

"They are all masterpieces, wrung out of despair and aridity, in other words, 'chronicles of the Lord's suffering servant parched and bare. Most of them were written in 1885 during and after a long bout of psychological torment that crushed Hopkins nearly to madness "(McChesney 145). In the opinion of C.C. Abbot these sonnets belong to the quintessential poetry of man's spirit in travail and explore the darkest places of human sufferings. These poems are salt with the taste of his blood and bitter with work of a man tried to the utmost limit of his strength and clinging to the last ledge where reason may find a refuge (Roberts 299).

The terrible sonnets are the result of his feelings of exhaustion, depression, desolation and poetic aridity. In the words of W.H. Gardner: "There is much to be said of the view that the spiritual dereliction of those last sonnets akin to that dark night of the soul, which is described by the mystics as an advanced phase in the progress of the soul towards the ineffable peace of union with God, for to be busied only with God was Hopkins fervent wish in 1881"(xxx).

According to H. Mackenzie, "Many have felt that Hopkins was passing in exhausted pilgrimage through the Dark Night of the soul of

> which mystics and saints have left barren descriptions. But to the priest himself his experiences did not seem to correspond to any familiar ordeal on the road to sanctity: he was aware only of his own imperfections overwrought by the image of his own utter failure, often too jaded in body, mind and spirit to find relief in meditation or prayer. Yet out of this extremity like drops of his own blood came these eloquent sonnets of desolation" (88).

In the words of David Daiches, "Perhaps the most impressive and the most profoundly moving of Hopkins' poems are his terrible sonnets where he expresses his experience of the dark night of the soul with extraordinary power. In these sonnets, says Patricia A. Wolfe, Hopkins gives expression to his feeling of "the nothingness of self and the overwhelming all of God." These sonnets describe the changing nature of Hopkins' relationship as the culprit, an opponent of God, a lose sheep" (p. 25). He invented his own variety combining the best elements of both the types. His sonnets are remarkable for his prosodic inventions, new types of rhythms, assonance, consonant chimes, alliteration and coinages and compounds'. He uses in his sonnets conventional end rhymes.

The sonnets reflect his spiritual suffering and spiritual quest, priestly virtues, his

frustration and sadness. But they are unforgettable for their religious fervour and glorifiction of Christ and Virgin Mary “Carrion Comfort”, “No worst, there is none”, “To seem the stranger”, “I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day”, “Patience, hard thing”, “My own heart let me have more pity on”, are known as “terrible sonnets”, because they deal with the terrible beauty of Christ. These sonnets are profoundly moving. In their passionate, direct simplicity they stand apart from most of Hopkins’ work. Language in these sonnets is much more polished and chiseled than that of his other poems

The central conflict in the terrible sonnets is the clash between the impulses which are in the poet’s mind. These poems are filled with tension, misery and despair. In the words of Patricia A Wolfe “these intensely introspective sonnets were the outcries of a man of his tortured consciousness” (Botrall 219).

Despair is one of the painful experiences of Hopkins reflected in the terrible sonnets. In the words of J.C Watt , “Despair means more than great dejection and hopelessness; theologically, it is a mortal sin, it is the state of mind in which a person wrongly comes to believe that God’s mercy is no longer available” (69).

In the opinion of Humphrey House “Hopkins religious experience, the acute sense of sin and

resulting conflicts between love and fear; the feeling of alienation from a majestic and transcendent God with a correlative deep and sudden tenderness at its removal; the sense of failure to interpret the will of God in practical life with a proportionate anxiety to be able to do so - these items are not all by any means; but they are the most simple, they are those which his discipline brought into greater prominence and they were the direct origin of some of his greatest poems" (Bottrall, 112).

'Carrion Comfort' is said to have been "written in blood". In the first stage of spiritual crisis Hopkins' battles with an enemy whose identity is progressively revealed. As the poem opens however, Hopkins is fighting his own self-pity, 'It me or, most weary, cry I can no more, I can'.

This poem expresses as no other poem does, the indifference of God towards the sufferings of the poet. He is rather taken as an enemy:But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on the / Thy wring-world right foot rock? Lay a lionlimb against me?

This reminds us of the poet's complaint in another famous poem,"Thou art Indeed Just, Lord" in which Hopkins says:

> Why do sinners' ways prosper? And why must

Disappointment all I endeavour end?
Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me? (3-5)

In the sonnet 'Carrion Comfort' Hopkins finds himself confronted with despair as the predominant mood. He promptly declares his resolve not to recourse to it. He doubts in his mind as to why God is cruel to him and threatens to devour him. At the outset when the poet resolves to reject despair his state is such that his spiritual being turning slack and the vital energies are ebbing away.

The feeling of spiritual bewilderment is expressed in the words. "Thy wring – world right foot rock' a lion limb against me? Scan / With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones? (6-7) Hopkins sees Christ as a terrible monster, and he thinks of being rocked to and fro by the 'Right Foot' which wrings the world. God's wrath is implied by the word 'rock'. The poet feels that Christ is threatening him as a lion hovering over its victim. He thinks that Christ is scanning over his bruised bones and hence feels despondent and dejected.

The poet also sees God coming towards him as a mighty whirlwind which is like a scourge and to avoid the encounter with God he wants to flee, as reflected in the line: 'O in turns of

tempest, me heaped there; me frantic to avoid thee/and flee? (8).

The poet recalls a moment of crisis on a particular night which seems to him as a year due to the intense torment in darkness. It is during this night , he experiences spiritual darkness. He has been wrestling with God, and with a feeling of profound guilt he says ". . . That night, that year / of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) / My God" (13 – 14). In the last two lines he refers to the dark night of the soul' in which he makes his bitter self-examination (Reeves 93).

The tone of the poem "Carrion Comfort" is intensely personal , argumentative and exclamatory. The tension which the poet feels almost tears the sonnet apart with its variable line and length. The frequent run on lines and from heavy stopping including ends of sentences within the line. This exclamatory tone is also reinforced by interrupted syntax, repetition and parenthesis. This tone is part of the subject matter. This intensely personal, intensely inventive tone of the poem recreates with great power, the experience which gives birth to the poem.

This poem justifies the definition of poetry as heightened language, which offers revelation of mystical experience rather than exposition, interpretation rather than statement. In a word,

one can say that the sonnet is rhetoric. In this connection Donald McChesney says “Rhetorically this sonnet is a master-piece. Noteworthy are the restless weaving of alliteration and internal rhyme, the constant shift of pace and mood, all capped and closed by the memorable last line”.

The spiritual energies seem to be ebbing away, but he does not cry like a helpless person that he cannot do anything. He still desires and hopes for the light of Grace. Though it is still night, he could still hope for the day to dawn. In the last two lines of the poem he refers to the darkness, “the dark night of the soul”, in which the poet makes his bitter self-examination. The poet expresses his feelings of profound and appalling guilt. He now realises that his dreaded adversary is his beloved Master and is exhausted by his ultimate discovery. He has received a stress from Christ; and has undergone the first stage in his spiritual crisis. The emotional climate of the sonnet reminds one of the agony which Christ endured before his supreme sacrifice.

The poem ‘No Worst, There is None’ is an outcry of despair from depths of desolation which according to St. Ignatius is the desolation of spirit. To quote: A darkening of the soul, troubled mind, movement to base and earthly things, restlessness of various agitations and temptations, moving to distrust, loss of hope, loss of love; when the soul feels herself thoroughly apathetic, said,

and as it were seperated from her creator and Lord (Alan 144).

The poem is one of the most violent and hopeless of the sonnets of desolation reflecting the complexity of human mind. It explores fear. The emotional climate of the sonnet reminds one, of the agony Christ endured before His supreme sacrifice.

The opening line 'No worst, there is None' recalls the experiences of Satan, Moloch and Belial in Hell. The poet is placed on a higher suffering of grief than he has been experiencing previously. He has been pitched into a new sphere of spiritual activity by the grace of Christ.

In the words of Patricia A. Wolfe, Hopkins laments imply an exceptional degree of intensity by the term pitch. A comment from his spiritual exercises suggests 'I find myself both as man and as myself something most determined and distinctive, at pitch, more distinctive and higher pitched than anything else I see.... (Bottrall 223).

About these sonnets David Daitches has remarked: 'Perhaps the most impressive and the most profoundly moving of Hopkins poems are his terrible sonnets, where he expresses his experience of the dark night of the soul with extraordinary power. The most packed and powerful of all is the sonnet beginning "No worst, there is none".

The poet feels that he has already been tormented with many sorrows and this will increase in intensity in the days to come. He comes to a point where he feels that God who, has always given comfort to everyone, is far away. His cries of anguish, seems to have no answer. The cry of pain and agony which he undergoes is compared to a herd of cattle, huddling under one enormous sorrow. He feels that he is pounded on an old anvil.

In the sestet the mental agony that the poet is undergoing, is at a remove, although there are mountains of terror rising in his mind, and falling from it may be fatal by the poet's soul seeking comfort in the knowledge, that the day's sufferings come to an end, at the day's end and the poet withdraws into the comfort in sleep and agony in death.

In the words of Patricia A. Wolfe, "Incited by divine example, the poet is confronted with an enormous spiritual ideal. He realizes that he must become the master of himself in life, for he achieves selflessness merely through death, he has not participated actively and willingly in Christ's sacrifice. He sees that he must pattern himself after his Savior, but wonders if he is strong enough to succeed. To the poet, then there is no worse ordeal than seeing the right trying to follow it and being hindered by human weakness. It is the fear that he will not live up to Christ's

example which leads him to a painfully emotional state of mind" (222-223).

Hopkins comment in his spiritual notebook is worthy of note: "All my undertakings miscarry and again I am like a straining eunuch. I wish then for death: yet if I died now I should die imperfect no master of myself, and that is the worst failure of all. O my God, look down on me (McChesney, 178).

The poem is written in a metaphorical style. The sorrows that come to him are called by the poet "herds-long". The phrase "Pitched past pitch of grief" conveys the idea of the sorrows coming on the poet from somewhere in the upper regions of the heavens. This sonnet is a masterpiece of alliteration and internal rhyme. Here also the use of sprung rhythm, riding feet and long lines give the sonnet an unusual breath and complexity. The poem has enormous energy and immediately portrays the drama of the tormented mind. A remarkable compression is achieved, especially by coinages like forepangs, herds-long and "no-man fathomed". The movement is that impassioned speech, counter-pointed against the metrical pattern, and using the line break to achieve emphasis, as in "chief /Woe" (5-6).

The word 'pitched past pitch of grief' is associated by Norman. H. Mackenize to the terrible experiences such as the pitching of a ship into a sea-chasm, by a crew which finds that it is

so deep that there is not hope to struggle out again. He also says about the steep pitch of rock that trap the mountain climbers. It is also compared to a feeling of a bird, which is driven by a hawk to beyond an altitude or pitch, that it can climb without getting utterly exhausted.

Hopkins' words "More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring is connected by Mackenzie to the highest level of pain experienced by human beings. 'More pangs will' is related to the pain experienced by a woman having difficult childbirth, or to a dying wounded soldier. 'Schooled at fore pangs' personifies the pangs.

The poets feeling that God is far away from him, as he gets no immediate reply for his anguished cries, is a typical experience of the dark night of the soul which are reflected in the following lines Comforter, where is your comforting / where is your relief" (3 - 4).

Just as in thinking of Christ's passion, man must "contemplate the withdrawal and hiding of the godhead', so also in enduring his own spiritual agony man loses his sense of communication with God. Feeling this loss keenly the poet cries out for the comfort from God" (Bottrall 223). The poet thinks that there is no relief for his tormented soul.

In the second quatrain he cries: 'My cries heave, herds long; huddle in a main a chief/ woe, world – sorrow on an age – old anvil wince and sing-/. Then lull, then leave off, Fury had shrieked 'No ling/ ering let me be fell: force I must be brief''(5-8).

The continuous torment, frustration, and anguish the poet experiences makes him cry like a herd of beasts which are long drawn out and straggling home-wards interminably. Commenting on these lines J.F. Cotter says that "His grief is that of mankind everywhere and for ages past; but nonetheless his own, packed "herds - long" within his troubled heart"(224). Mackenzie says that the sound of melancholy in these words is associated with man's sorrow. Hopkins feels that, he is pounded on an old anvil. McChesney's remarks on an age – old anvil wince' is that 'the anvil is old because the chosen man of God has always suffered beyond endurance.

The images of terror that arises in the poet's mind is revealed in the sestet. "O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs to fall / Frightful sheer, no -man-fathomed, sold them cheap" (10-11). The terrors arise like huge mountains, from which fall may be fatal. From these mountains of terror the sufferer plunges into despair. Mackenzie says that in the last century the worlds mountains have been conquered one by one, 'an index of man's spiritual aspiration, but never before, I think, have so many found themselves on the

brink of mental precipices' (178). Having climbed the cliffs brings no consolation if one feels that he is clinging with strength that is gradually failing to a crumbling ledge above an abyss.

Patricia A. Wolfe remarks that Hopkins knows "the dangers of an overly sensitive mind. There are, he explains, razor-edge cliffs which no man every fully understands or explores, but the human being who has never chosen to grapple with the paradoxes of his own consciousness cannot possibly understand their gravity or terror: 'Hold them cheap / may who ne'er hung there! (10-11). The poet cannot ridicule these people, however; for even a sensitive individual is unable to sustain himself for long under the pressure, of such frightening insights" (Bottrall 225-226)."…….Here ! creep, / Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind all /. Life death does end and each day dies with sleep. (12-14).

James Reeves comments "In the whirlwind of spiritual torment, let the poor soul seek comfort in the knowledge that the day's agony dies with the day and all agony ends with death". (94). In the words of J.F. Cotter the poet groups himself with what is left for the unheroic, which is a protection from the main action and passion of redeeming pain. The sonnet ends in dejection. The poet looks for "a respite in sleep or death". (Gardner 337).

The sonnet 'To seem a stranger lies my lot my life' is considered to be the most personal and yet calm statement of grief and alienation among the sonnets of desolation. "Its origin is both literary and personal. The solitariness and exile which are described are the poet's experience in Ireland (Watt 69). "The sonnet deals more particularly of the poet's reaction to the social and political aspects of his exile in Dublin" (Gardner 341).

H. Sherwood comments that there is a three-fold separation experienced by the poet which is emphasized in the poem. A separation that is physical from his country and family, a spiritual separation by virtue of belief not shared and a political apartness by which he was torn between sympathy for Ireland and love for his own country.

Hopkins view of solitude is a curse unlike Wordsworth's view. He laments his alienation from family and country. The word a stranger implies that he seems a stranger to other as revealed in the lines: 'To seem the stranger lies my lot, my life/ Among strangers. Father and Mother dear, / Brothers and sisters are in Christ not near" (1-3).

W.H. Gardner comments: "It meant that as an artist he was deprived of that intimate friendship and conversation which affords

sympathetic understanding and encouragement" (341).

The second cause of his isolation is described in the lines: 'England, whose honour O all my heart woos, wife / To my creating thought, would neither hear / Me, were I pleading, plead nor do I:I wear- / y of idle a being but by where wars are rife' (4-8). The poet laments his reputation in England. "weary of idle a being but by where wars and rife" (7-8). Lamenting his ineffectuality as a priest artist and man, he fears the loss of human potency.

The sonnet 'I Wake and Feel the fell of Dark, not Day' suggests the 'purgative way' or the 'Dark Night of the Soul' (Gardner xxv). In this poem the note of agony is deeper. It describes the experience of frustration and negation. The poet feels miserable by lying awake during the night, when he should be sleeping peacefully. The hours of the night seem to stand still. He feels that his cries of anguish has no response from God. The octave ends with a poignant note of abandonment. He compares himself with the souls that are damned in hell but consoles himself that his condition is not so worse as them. The sestet retreats within the self and finds only disgust.

Hopkins expresses his experience of spiritual darkness in 'I wake and feel the fell of dark'. In this poem he also expresses a sense of futility, of oppression and a recognition of shame

and guilt. His sufferings are deep and intense and his thoughts often echo the archetypal figures of agony Lear and Job. The “fell of dark” in the poem might suggest the fell of a mountain, a high moorland waste on which he has wandered, torn with self disgust or the miseries of a terrible unsparing night when men are feverish with worry.

The technique adapted by Hopkins in his poems enhances the mystical significance of the poem. The language used in the poems unravells the profound mystical elements. The sonnet ‘I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, not Day’ suggests the ‘purgative way’ or the ‘Dark Night of the Soul’ (Gardner XX). In this poem the note of agony is keener. It describes the experience of frustration and negation.

The poet awakens and finds that darkness is surrounding him The poem begins: ‘ I wake and feel the fell of dark’ not day. Mackenzie comments that the fell of dark night suggests the fell of a mountain, a high moorland waste on which he has been wandering, torn with self-disgust or the miseries of a terrible unsparing night, when a man is suffering with worries. Hopkins makes the readers feel as though an oppressive weight has been thrown on him, “as in the plague of Egypt - a darkness could be felt” (Mackenzie 182). H. Sherwood’s words regarding the darkness is that it becomes palpable, darkness is figured as smothering animal pelt.

The poet finds that there is no sign of day dawning, because the hours of the night appears to be standing still leaving the poet to suffer in anguish. During this 'Dark Night of the soul' he sees terrible sights in his imagination while travelling such unending paths. To quote

> What hours, O what black hours we have spent
> This night! What sights you, heart, saw: ways you went
> And more must, in yet longer lights delay (2 - 4).

McChesney refers 'black hours' to his experience of "being tormented by selfloathing, tempted by suicidal impulses and crushed by despair approaching madness (158). N.H. Mackenzie declares that black hours "disfigures the past as the hours are reinterpreted as years sulling the whole of his life, every part of it viewed in searing retrospect as a failure" (182). The scale of time and place widens suddenly, as his cries are changed into letters which are not answered.

The lines, with witness I speak this, But where I say / Hours meant years, mean life. And my lament / Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent / To dearest him that lives alas! Away (5-8), describe the poet lamenting his condition that his countless cries addressed to God, seems to have no response. 'The words 'with witness' is the result of the poet's experiencing torment so

that he is able to describe. His ordeal was not one of a few hours but it is of a life time' (Bottrall 228).

The words also mean that he is aware of what is happening. It also hints at 'God, the witness of all his doings. Even in the darkest moment his faith never wavers. But it makes it all the more inexplicable to him that God, who hears and witnesses should not heed to his cries. God seems to be far away because he feels that he does not get answer to his agonizing cries. God is still the poet's dearest even though he seems to be far away from the poet.

The poet acknowledges the true nature of man in the following lines: I am gall, I am heart burn, God most deep decree / Bitter would have me taste, my taste was me; / Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse? (9-11).

McChesney comments that the imagery in 'I am gall, I am heart burn' is of accute physical malaise and discomfort which is not merely symbolic of Hopkins inner state of mind. His whole body and mind was enervated at these times. "The body cannot rest when it is in pain', he wrote on retreat in 1888, 'nor the mind at peace as long as something bitter distills in it and it aches" (159). The line 'Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse' (11) explain the feelings of the poet of his bones being built with that curse, due to the disobedience of Adam

to God. His blood brims to a point of overflowing. Gardner remarks that both the spirit and the body could do the souring, for as St. Paul said: the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh: for these are contrary to one and another. Galatians V:17, (339).

The lines in the last tercet follows the line of St. Paul's thought that those who give way to weakness and lusts of the body will not enter the kingdom of God. The poet is aware that his condition is not so worse as the suffering of the damned souls in hell. The 'sweating selves' in the closing line indicate the vigorous prosecution of the degree: "The undressed sweat unproductively, without hope or belief" (Cotter 227). The Sonnet's ending is somewhat enigmatic. "Perhaps because he could not decide whether it was more painful to be an outlaw aware that he is justly punished or to be a loyal citizen summarily imprisoned on the uncharge and left to languish unheard" (Mackenzie 182).

The poet gives "to all appearance thrown back on himself with the common lot of fallen mankind, gives full outlet to his Job like distress and at the same time manages to fuse both personal and universal meaning into one statement (Cotter 226). In these last tragic poems of Hopkins, his endless experiments, his love of elaborate technique and artifice, disappear, and are replaced by a new starkness and clarity, 'the

terrible crystal' as Dixon called it, of his later style.

This period of the Dark Night of the Soul is followed by spiritual consolation in which occurs "increase of hope, faith and charity, and all interior joy which calls and attracts man to heavenly things', rendering his soul quiet and tranquil in its creator and Lord" (Mackenzie 173). "The poet is lifted to a higher state of grace and on a higher cross" (McChesney 147).

Hopkins contemplation of God leads him to server purgation of the soul. The trials and suffering precede his great union with God. The agonizing realization of his own wretchedness that he has been forsaken by God makes him in live in anguish. His suffering is a way of union with God. Finally he is led to the joys of mystical union.

The poet realizes that the ultimate answer for all his suffering is from the Cross. His whole attitude towards suffering changes upon the poet's humble submission and resignation and surrender. The storm is followed by a calm. Indeed dawn follows the dark night.

Hopkins' deep underlying faith from which he draws his power of spiritual recovery, the patience and comfort he obtained can be seen in poems like 'Patience, hard thing! The hard thing but to pray,' 'My own heart let me more have

pity on', and 'That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection'. Even in his desolation what emerged in poem after poem, was his refusal to give way to his depression or to believe that God is dead. Even in the darkest hour be orientated himself towards the dawn.

Hopkins' self is finally shorn of its pride and rebelliousness which helps him to get closer to God. He asks for patience to bear his troubles and allowed comfort to take root in his heart. He is also happy in the hope of the hereafter.The Sonnet 'Patience, hard thing! The hard thing but to pray', concerns with the views of St. Ignatius who writes "Let him who is in desolation', 'Strive to remain in patience, which is the virtue contrary to the troubles which harass him; and let him think that he will shortly be consoled, making diligent efforts against the desolation" (McChesney 161).

In 'Patience, hard thing! The hard thing to pray', he asks for patience which is the suffering of afflictions, pain, toil, calamity, provocation or other evil with a calm unruffled temper. When a man asks for this he is by corollary inviting afflictions, pain, toil and so forth... he may well be said to be asking for a continuance of the conflicts in which he is already being buffeted. By accepting as an apparently inevitable, the circumstances which time again blocked him from completing a scholarly undertaking and publishing it, he was crushing one aspect of his

self- his professional respect and his belief in the need to educate the public and enrich the nation-but simultaneously being strengthened in grace. The true patience demands a particularly harsh soil in which to flourish but once it has struck root, it spreads like ivy over ruins, hiding wrecked attempts from eight.

The Sonnet deals with an objective remedy for failure and disappointment. His “whole attitude of suffering is totally free from the clinches of consolation, classically etched for ever in the words of Job’s self-righteous friends, the self appointed counselors and consolers” (Cotter 228). The poet finds it hard to pray for patience. He realizes that spiritual crisis is necessary to attain the complex virtue called patience. It makes clear that the placid surface conceals the continuing pain below. The final definition of patience is referred to Jesus Christ as a model of patience.

Going through the agonizing submission the poet exclaims, ‘Patience, hard thing! The hard thing but to pray, ‘But bid for, patience is ! (1 -2). He realizes that praying for patience is hard and it will not come passively but it should be asked for. He specifies the demands of the bitter cup of Patience, who asks / Wantswar, wants wounds, weary his times, / his tasks; To do without, take tosses and obey’ (2 - 4).

As Charles Williams says, “The work of the intellect is in the choice of the words” (pg. 82). Bottrall reiterates, “The above words convey the sense of his difficulties experienced through the period of the Dark Night of the Soul. He is given to fight interior battles, an infinitely harder ‘war’ ‘to fight and not heed the wounds’. He discovers “that his spiritual crisis necessary, that without ‘war’, without ‘wound’ he could never attain the ultimate virtue - patience” (Bottrall 230).

I.A. Richards says, “Gerard Hopkins technique indicates the temper and mould as a poet”. Hopkins is always ready to disturb the usual word order of prose to gain an improvement in rhythm or an increased emotional poignancy. He uses words always as tools, ... intellectually satisfying as well as emotionally moving (p.142).

Patience demands from an individual who is weary of his activities, his task, his deprivations, his disappointments, his obedience, to suffer war and wounds. The Sestet deals with the poet’s realization that prayer for patience is to ask for the rack. Images of horror are pictured in the following lines. “We hear our hearts grate on themselves; it kills ‘To bruise them dearer” (9 - 10). In the ‘Letters’ of Hopkins one is able to hear his heart grating on itself, “..... When one mixes with the world and meets on every side its secret solicitations, to live by faith is harder, it is very hard (Gardner 346).

R.J.C. Watt comments that the heart is grating perhaps due to the contradictoriness of fluctuating emotions. Patricia A. Wolfe opines “In times of Spiritual Crisis men’s hearts still grate on themselves” (Bottrall 231). Father Devlin commenting on the lines, ‘yet the rebellious wills / of us we do bid God bend to his even so (9 - 10), points out that it was not Hopkins will but ‘his outraged nature, over-driven by his will, that is in rebellion (McChesney 162).

W.H. Gardner emphasizes the importance of the words ‘even so’ (10), The poet seems to say: “Even though we in mastering our moods, and suppressing our desires, may feel at the last that we are tearing at the fibres of our very being; even though it seems that one more pang will burst the heart, yet it is right that our wills should be oriented towards God, not matter what the cost in sighs and tears” (346).

The sonnet, ‘My Own heart let me more have more pity on’ highlights the poet’s harassed mind. In this letter to Bridges he affirms “And in the life I lead now, which is one of a continually jaded and harassed mind, if in any leisure I try to do anything I make no way nor with my work, alas, but so it must be” /.... (McChesney 163).

My own heart let me more have pity on is a recognition that though man can actively seek patience, cannot actively seek solace. This must come unexpectedly after patience has taught

man to accept his place in the divine scheme of things, when the poet says “My own heart let me more have pity on; let / Me live to my sad self hereafter kind, “ (p.102). He admits that he must allow for his own human weakness, a weakness which becomes apparent when he likens himself, a comfort seeking comfortless soul, to daylight seeking blind eyes. This insight into human inadequacy makes him realize that it is not in one’s own power to acquire or retain devotion, ardent loves, tears or any other spiritual consolation, but that all is a gift and grace of God.

In the sestet the poet addresses a self, shorn of its pride and rebelliousness, ‘ Soul, self; come, poor Jackself. I do advice / You, jaded, let be; call off thoughts a while...’ (p.103). His long struggle has exhausted him, but it has also prepared him for productive passivity, he will “... leave comfort root room; let joy size / At God knows when to God knows what”; (p.103). Comfort then is rooted inside of man. Hopkins defined it as any increase of hope, faith, and charity and any interior joy which calls and attracts one to heavenly things and to the salvation of one’s own soul rendering it quiet and at peace with its creator and Lord. The sigh of aspiration from an imperfect or injured spirit, opens the way from inside for God’s grace to enter.

In the concluding lines of the sonnet Hopkins explains, joys' ...smile / 's not wrung, see you; unforeseen times rather- as skies / between pie mountains- lights a lovely mile" (p. 103). Thus the soul which has prepared itself will receive suddenly and surprisingly, an ultimate stress from God, teaching it to value the end for which it was created.

Oddly enough, this ultimate consolation co-exists with human misery. When all is done if one feels one's sorrows still, it is so, for comfort is not to undo what is done-and yet it is comfort , yet it comforts. It is a comfort in that, in spite of all, God loves one, it is a comfort that the sufferings of the present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed.

In the words of McChesney this poem "is an attempt at self consolation. He instructs himself to be a little more kind to his own human nature and to cease the endless morbid introspection that is eating away his life. He urges himself to cease anticipating endless misery in order to leave room for small unexpected joys to come unbidden" (163).

The poet realizes that he has driven himself too hard and has not shown sufficient charity towards himself (Sherwood 81). There is an impression of sincerity in his plea when he begins: 'My own heart let me more have pity on; Let / Me live to my sad self hereafter kind (1 - 2)

because the poet the heart is of all the members of the body the one which must strongly and in most of its own accord sympathizes and in itself what goes within the soul.

Harman Grise Wood says, “No poet in the English language has worked more satisfactorily in this field” (p. 97). “Tears are something forced, smiles may be put on, but the beauty of the heart is the truth of nature” (Mackenzie 187). The meaning of ‘my sad self’ is confirmed in his letter to Bridges in April 1885 where he speaks of “that coffin of weakness and dejection in which I live” (McChesney, 163).

R.J.C Watts comments that the poet “relents, recognising the need to be kinder to himself, and recognising too that if he is the tormented one he is also the tormentor. Yet even in the middle of this introspection he has not entirely put God out of mind, for to be ‘kind’ and ‘charitable’ is to imitate the qualities which above all the others he associated with Christ” (71 - 72).

The poet next reviews his own state of his soul and concludes that he turns himself in vain: ‘I Cast for comfort, I can no more get. / By groping round my comfortless, than blind / Eyes in their dark Can day or thirst can find / Thirst’s all in-all a world of wet’ (6-8).

R.J.C Watt comments that the comfort that the poet requires is not easily got. In this comfortless world it is hard to find comfort, as day light is for blind eyes or fresh water to those dying of thirst as they drift upon an ocean. “His mental soul confesses his own inability to find comfort” (Pick 148). James Finn Cotter remarks that the poet will not be able to find comfort even though he may direct his eyes towards it.

Commenting on the words ‘than blind / eyes in their dark’ McChesney remarks ‘I grope for comfort. I can no more get than blind eyes in their dark can get day light or thirst can find relief in the midst of ocean. The latter analogy sounds like an echo of Coleridge’s ‘Ancient Mariner’ who finds ‘water, water every where but not a drop to drink’ (163 - 164). Norman.H Mackenzie while expressing his opinion on the same lines remarks that the poet is identified with his victim into “a prison devoid of light and furnishings” (187).

The lines, ‘Charitable, not live this tormented mind / with this tormented mind tormenting yet’ (3 - 4), express Hopkins’ fit of self loathing that drives his thoughts to madness or suicide. He soon identifies “with his victim and precipitated into the torture chamber of the mind” (Mackenzie 187).

I. A. Richard says, “Hopkins was always ready to disturb the word order of prose to gain

an improvement in rhythm or an increased emotional poignancy. To own my heart-to my owu heart, reaving taking away. He uses words always as tools, an attitude towards them which the purist and grammarian can never understand" (p. 72).

Margaret Bottrall says, "My own heart let, me more have pity on ... Analysed to show the aptness of the word-coinages and syntactical innovations" (p.16).

Almost as an example of patience , a calm acceptance making for sanctity, Hopkins wrote the sonnet in honour of St.Alphonsus Rodriguez. He depicts a man in the society of Jesus who carried out the inward service which he himself found so difficult , yet did so full. The poem contrasts the war without, where there are heroic martyrdoms and fighting for the cause which provide obvious honour with the war within which seems to go unheard.

In keeping with his thought about the opposing aspects of God as hower of vast shapes and gentle instigator of growth both in the tiny and large aspects of nature , Hopkins sees God as able to make the war within of significance even when life seems without event

Yet God.....
Could crowd career with conquest
While there went

Those years and years by of world
Without event
That in Majorca Alfonso
Watched the door (pg.106).

Hopkins counters his despair with self mockery in “The shepherds brow”. His own tempests of self hatred and consciousness of man’s fallen state are seen as merely a storm in a teacup , his own fire and fever fussy rather than heroic . His consciousness of man’s littleness calms the violence of his anger.

‘That nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection’ reveals the joy which fills the poet when he thinks about the Resurrection. According to Heraclitus, man, however, unique a creation he is , is destined for oblivion like everything else. This sombre train of thought is interrupted by the joyful and saving thought of Christ’s Resurrection. Man will not die because through Christ he is assured of immortality.

He admits that trivialities of the physical world which disturbed him in ‘The shepherd’s brow’

‘Flesh fade and mortal trash Fall to the residuary word; World’s wild fire, leave but ash:’ but the end of the poem can still be that sense of joy so exuberant that it hurls ever off, of the earth except the center core of quality. The joy created

by seeing the light in Stanza 29 of 'The Wreck of the Deutschland that had been hymned in Hurrahing in Harvest, now is created out of the very depths of his own despairs. The images from his other poems crowd in... his faith asserts his triumph. (R.K.P. Thornton, p.60)

Even the verse form is part of the argument .The conventional sonnet ends after fourteen lines, at which point in his poem man is removed by death, but the poet probes through layers of appearance to reach significance and refuses to end the poem there. Beyond the conventional end he finds the Resurrection, the corruption end he finds the transformation which he so much desired.

Enough : the Resurrection,
A heart's — Clarion : away grief's
Gasping, joyless days, dejection.
Across my foundering
deck shone
A beacon , an eternal beam...
In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
I am all at once what Christ is,
since he was what I am, and
This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch
matchwood, immortal diamond,
Is immortal diamond. (p.105,106).

The heroism and promise of this final breakthrough sustained Hopkins through his most arid patches.

Prayer for rain to make fruitful his own private wasteland is part of Thou art indeed just Lord which mixes faith and anger and frustration. His complaint to God is expressed with consciousness of the answer. The poet feels that the wicked prosper whereas he is disappointed in all that he does, Birds build nests but he cannot build. None of his works prosper.

> Birds build ----------—
> but not I build ; no, But strain. Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes. Mine, O thou lord of life, Send my roots rain. (p.107).

He is 'time's Eunuch. He had written to Bridges that he was an eunuch but it was for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He thus realized that all his sufferings had some purpose.

After all his struggles he realizes that he had in common with Christ, the immortal diamond, the divine soul which would survive any calamity and therefore he is consoled.

> Infact 'The sonnet ends with a moving request for some kind of fertility of spirit : Christ the maker of the universe, is asked to bring the inner man renewal! (236 Cotter).

The final line is a prayer, a prayer for deliverance from the desert of calvary : "Never I

think" Aldous Huxley writes " has the just man's complaint against the universe been put more forcibly, worded more tersley and fiercely than in Hopkin's sonnet. God's answers one found that most moving, most magnificent and profoundest book of antiquity, the Book of job. Yes but the ultimate answer the priest knew really came from the cross" (Pick 153).

The mystical experiences of Hopkins are brought out in the directness of form, and the fluency of the rhythm .A new and a daring use of the associate power of words, allied to complex sound effects produced by alliteration and internal rhyme illustrate significant features of his mystical experience .

Hopkins is reported to have died "after uttering, three times, the words " I am so happy". And if ever the consciousness of duty done, or atleast nobly attempted, could console a dying man, that man was Hopkins. His dying words are the only logical outcome of his life; had they not been uttered all his ecstasies, and pains would have seemed empty and futile" (Bottrall 367).

CONCLUSION

'Technique as revelation of mystical Experience; A study of the poems of George Herbert and Gerard Manley Hopkins',deals with Christian mystical experience of the poets.. It further explains how as Christian mystics their experiences involve the perfect consummation of the love of God and highlights the art of their establishing a conscious relation with the absolute. Their mystical experiences serve as the fundamental background to their poetry.

It is impossible to discuss for long the distinctive qualities of the poetry of Herbert and Hopkins without referring to their religious experiences. As Christian mystics the quest for perfect and supreme knowledge personal relationship with God and intense communion and union with God, prove them to be Christian mystics.

As mystics they aspire for a direct knowledge of God by spiritual apprehension. The course they take is a pathway of the soul to God realisation. The route through which they travel is not a well used road but rugged, long and difficult making them realise the importance of perfect and faithful obedience to God. Transcending all, the greatest benefit resulting from their lives seem to be the inculcation and development of the spiritual life and realization of the presence of God.

The intense relationship with God enable them to experience inexplicable happiness in the presence of God. Their lives in fellowship with Christ enable them to acquire the blessedness of peace and joy for which they had to struggle. In their respective collection of poems one can find epitomized the quests and fruits of their realisation of the divine presence and the mystic union with Christ . The technique of their poems reflect these mystical experiences.

The poems are closely concerned with the life problem which has been pulsating in man from the earliest times down to the present day. It is the quest of a soul for union with the Lord and the various stages and experience through which it passes. In the course of their spiritual quest, they are is obliged to sail across stormy seas of trails and conflicts before achieving mystic union with God.

Several difficulties and privations contribute a great deal towards their godly and spiritual life. As mystics they experience inexplicable joy and happiness in the presence of God and under all circumstances as they recognize that sufferings are indispensable for their spiritual progress.

In their lives, life's circumstance outward or inward, physical or mental, temporarily overpower their sensibilities, outdistance their will, impoverish their zeal, and enclose their

endeavours. The attendant feeling is one of being thwarted, constricted and imprisoned. Life looks like being circumscribed in gnawingly narrow bounds and tethered by tightening bands of constraint. A sense of non-fulfilment, barrenness, emptiness and sterility are other stages of this state of confinement.

The mystical experience begins with their quest for God, within the frame work of spiritual perception and kinship with the divine nature, holiness and love. These experiences lead them to put God at the centre and make the little self follow His command. With a synthesis of knowledge and faith, their spiritual life is in a perpetual moment towards Christ, the eternal object of love. The poems prove the inherent kinship with God and ascent towards union with the triune God. The mystical apprehensions of the poets finally enable them to establish a relationship with God.

The poetic techniques used by Herbert describe his mystic pilgrimage. There are techniques which bring out his conflicts and those which reveal his spiritual progresses and mystic union with Christ in the course of his spiritual life. The Mystical experiences of Herbert serve as a source of inspiration for his poetic verses. His constant effort is therefore to write poetry as a genuine part of his Christian mystical experiences. The technique illustrates the emotional pattern of the poet. The very form of

the poem exposes Herbert's spiritual conflict, progress and union with Jesus Christ.

Dualism is one of the fundamental virtues of Herbert's poems, which reflect his spiritual conflicts. The dual aspects of the themes such as obedience and disobedience, world and God, false liberty and true, tension between love and sin, are manifested in the many poems of 'The Temple'.

Apart from dualistic themes the spiritual conflicts are also embodied in dualistic thoughts and feelings, ideas, moods, and tone, variations in the rhyme scheme, metric and stanza patterns, hieroglyphic forms and plaintive questions. The chapter further deals with the technique that exhibits his spiritual progress and mystic union with Christ. The conflicts and progress are depicted in the dualistic titles, moods, tones, metrical rhyme schemes and stanza patterns. Therefore his technique is shaped by his psyche.

The very experience of his spiritual progress and mystic union with Christ are formed and formulated by his words. The mystic union with the dominant fusion of emotion and intellect promoted by the spiritual progress dictates the rhythmic form. This chapter proves that technique is indeed an expression of the blending of Herbert's art and religion.

The techniques of Hopkins' poems are the revelation of his Psyche. Among the three phases of his spiritual career, the poems of the first phase express the conflict between basic sensuousness and intense religious faith. It shows a constant conflict between aestheticism and asceticism, sensuousness and spiritualism.

The poems of this phase are the outward expression of the poets mystical insight. The use of counter point rhythm, sprung rhythm, alliteration, assonance, repetition of consonant sounds, and internal rhyme scheme give the poems a shape and a design, a form and structure and the inscape is a distinct individuality of style.

The poems of the last two phases of his mystical experiences are noted for his wit, extensive use of imagery, economy of language, terseness of style, blend of passion and intellect and startling phraseology. The elements of mysticism in the poems are enhanced through these different literary devices.

The tone is reinforced by interrupted syntax, repetition and parenthesis. It recreates with great power the mystical experiences which give birth to the poems. Noteworthy are the weaving alliteration, internal rhyme and the constant shift of pace and mood. The poems thus offer revelation of his mystical experiences.

The unique diction, devise and rhythm resulting in a language condensed, elliptical, contorted and replete with expressions and compound epithets as well as images, portrays Hopkins' mystical experiences. The assortment of words and compounds emphasize his singularity. The perfect fusion of the poetic personality and mystical character of Hopkins is reflected in his poems.

The poems of Herbert and Hopkins convey to us the very mystic, dynamic and ideas of God's love for man. It is most inspiring to note that the spiritual struggle helps them to gradually progress to the perfection of Christian life of absolute surrender and submission with the chief purpose of glorifying God and inheriting union with God.

Commenting on surrender H.Mackenzie exclaims "It is the yielding of life to God, to do and suffer all His will, in all things and at all times (Palmer, p.9). The ultimate goal of worship is a heart that is a receptive and sensitive to God; a heart that is willing to be obedient" exclaims John Kelly. It is noteworthy that the poets exemplify this spiritual truth in their lives.

According to Ghose "There is in fact no other aim or theory of life that gives human life dignity as the mystical. It points to a living God and a personal self, capable of communing with Him (pg. 38). The lives of Herbert and Hopkins prove

that perfection is achieved when there is an absolute divestation of self, which is surrendered to God as an instrument of God's will Love, faith and humility are other requisites which promote their mystical union with God.

Self-effacement and abandonment of personal comfort of the poets and their act of dispossessing themselves of wealth, in exchange for the Lordship of Christ, the direct relationship with Christ are the chief characteristic features of Herbert and Hopkins as mystics. To be in Christ connotes for them both an internal and external relationship, each indispensable to the other and to live a transformed life of faith, hope and love through the ennobling grace of the indwelling Christ.

First of all their mystical experiences of their lives on a higher plane are not only possible but proved. In spite of uncongenial circumstances and apparent conflicts which assail their earthly lives, they get into an intimate contact with Christ for they realize that it is worth a world to have an ultimate fellowship with Him. Secondly, the challenge involved is sufficiently strong to become a consuming passion for the soul of everyman. But as their poems reveal that only in fellowship with God that true contentment can be realised.

The poets excel in their extra-ordinary spiritual experiences. Their works are a challenging exposition of the study of spiritual

conflict, and a fascinating enquiry into the mysteries of the interaction of body, soul and spirit. The poems deal with the never ending question of man's destiny and God's way with him here on this earth. The lives and their works are a stirring challenge to plan life with eternity in view.

Their lives serve as object lessons from which generations to come can learn the truth about God's dealings with them. Their inspiring lives make one feel that any attempt to think fairly and squarely about man's existence here on earth must take into account the startling realisation that man lives here only once. When gripped with the reality of human life, one comes to realize that life is a sacred trust and that it is not be wasted, but be devoted to the best possible use.

What makes their poems so telling is the dynamic awareness it creates in the readers that the same supernatural power which inspired the poets and energized their lives is available to us all here and now. The fully designed relationship between the creator and the creature are conjured up by the different modes of technique that the poets have used.

Herbert and Hopkins stand as part of the great inheritance of the poetic world. Their poems give a perspective, informative and a biblical look for facing the problems of life. There can be no

doubt that among those who turn the pages of their works in a pious frame of mind there will be some who will recognise themselves in some places, their hearts and fashions painted true like a portrait before their eyes as they behold their own conduct in the carriage of another.

There is a great theological acumen in the their writings. The divine truths penetrate into the inmost heart. They present a blending of personal experience transmitted into poetry, traditional form, dramatic theology and earnest preaching to the reader. Their wonderful collection of poems should be read over repeatedly at different times, and each time with a new and different pleasure, for it is a lively portrait. Undoubtedly their influence will reach far into the future of English poetry.

The poems put forth the question to everyman. If we are brought face to face with the love of God afresh, what should be our reaction. Some may take a due recognition of his love and gratefully say, 'He loved me and gave himself for me'. More recognition will not suffice. God craves to have deep fellowship with man as testified by the poems.

The poets prove that only companionship with God can complete life. Without it there is a sense of incompleteness, emptiness and frustration. Man needs to know God as his father, friend, lover and Saviour and as eternal

companion. Their "very weakness and incompleteness drive them "instinctively to prayer and be the means of establishing a deep and abiding fellowship with God" (Ibid, P. 19). Thomas a Kempis reiterating the same point exclaims, "By disordinately loving myself I lost myself, and by seeking purely to love you alone, I find myself and both you, and for this love I learned to enter more profoundly into my nothingness" (Kempis, p. 208)

To those who endeavour to grasp the divine essence, the poems impress as works not only of a very able, but also as very serious minds revealing the characters of extraordinary spiritual quality. There can be no doubt that among those who turn the pages of the poems of Hopkins and Herbert in a pious frame of mind, there will be some who will recognize in some places, their hearts painted true like a portrait before their eyes as they behold their own selves in relation with God.

No grandeur and no more touching a picture of human life has been painted as in the poems of George Herbert and Gerard Manley Hopkins. The human being in quest of union and communion with God is highlighted and it comes alive in its fullness only to those who endeavour to grasp the divine essence.

By and large they are very rightly and deservedly called religious poets and have

rendered an incalculable service to further the cause of Christianity as much as many famous evangelists or preachers can possible do. The supreme places that the poets occupy in the sphere of literature are due not so much to the aesthetic or exclusively literary excellence as to their extraordinary inner struggle or close communion with God and the spiritual experience resulting therefrom.

Religion has been the first waking thought of the poets as well as their last image before sleep. They labour for its cause alone. There is one thing in which they are dead earnest that is the cause of Christ. What the Puritan preacher Richard Baxter has commented on Herbert applies to Hopkins also. “He speaks to God like one who really believeth a God and whose business in the world is most with God. (Stowell, p.50).

Their capacity for faith, the ability to pray, the power to efface self through consecration and absolute losing of themselves for God’s glory and an insatiable yearning and seeking after the fullness of God make them relevant to the modern times, as they prove themselves to be participants in the timeless drama of human life.

To look upon the poems of Herbert and Hopkins, as useful and beneficial only to the Christian community is far from correct. It is important to remember that all their works are

true manifestations of inmost recess of their heart. The following views of T.S. Eliot on 'The Temple' is applicable to the works of Hopkins too.

"It is a personal record of a man very conscious of weakness and failure, a man of intellect and sensibility who hungered and thirsted after righteousness and that by its content, as well as because of its technical accomplishments it is a work of importance for every lover of poetry (Eliot T.S., p.35).

Life has a peculiar way of placing several problems before every man. Why and what we believe, how we can find what is worth suffering for, where and how we can get on and reach the final destiny, such problems as these never escape from human awareness and consciousness. Modern age, in a sense, finds a glimpse of an answer to such questions in their lives.

The poems of George Herbert and Gerard Manley Hopkins make one to read them over repeatedly at different times with different pleasure, for they are a graphic portrayal of their mystical life. The technique which reveal their mystical experience will definitely challenge consideration in the name of art among the best audience.

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