

G. M. Hopkins' *God's Grandeur*: An Aesthetic Delight

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Abstract

This research paper intellectually sheds light on aesthetic delight in Gerard Manley Hopkins' God's Grandeur. This study based on qualitative research approach examines how God's grandeur generates the aesthetic delight or beauty to uphold the intellectual knowledge. The purpose or the objective of the research paper is to make an analysis examination of God's greatness. The poet's firm belief in the glory of God/Nature proves to be an inspiring approach/method to enlighten readers on his sonnet God's Grandeur. This poem, God's Grandeur, appeals to the intellectual mind, manner and moral. This genre in literature depicts the creation and nature of the incorporeal world. The creator of the universe plays an inspirational role to acknowledge the God's glory and beauties in the world. The role of the Creator/God is spelt out in the title of the poem i.e. God's Grandeur. The message that the poem imparts is significant: what is corporeal and incorporeal becomes clear only after it appeals to the intellectual mind. The study helps us to elevate God's Grandeur. It adopts an analytical research design. Hopkins, a Nature poet, is well aware of God's gifts and beauties. How Hopkins' poem explains the glory of God is the statement of the study. The facts and figures of divine grandeur contribute to the readers' positive response to the poem. The use of intellectual insight transcends the unseen and incorporeal forms. So, the importance of intellectual mind is highlighted by the aesthetic delight that the poem generates for both secular and religious societies. People in the world, however, are less spiritual and more physically and materially conscious.

Keywords: God's Grandeur, an aesthetic delight, an intellectual insight, generates in societies

Introduction to the Study

Hopkins transcends a universal message of Nature/God and he is like Anne Sproule who glimpses, "people who have helped the world" (5). Very few people are aware of the intellectual partaking message that is richly conveyed in G.M. Hopkins's poem *God's Grandeur*. This academic and scholarly memorandum is, all in all, as a potential experience deals with Hopkins's poem. Through this poem *God's Grandeur* the poet inspires the audience who ignore the aesthetic beauty and magnificence of God i.e. Nature. How G.M. Hopkins sees God's intellectual aesthetic beauty, greatness or magnificence that people ignore is the statement of problem in research study. The hypothesis of this problem is: "people in the world aren't yet familiar with *God's Grandeur*" (75). They are excessively obsessed with material pleasures and acquisitions. Instead of being an intellectual and kind soul, they have entangled themselves with the mundane and materialistic world rather than

the world of purity based on the lofty ideals. Hopkins hypothesizes that people in the world are getting seared, bleared and smeared in a materialistic and corporeal world, rather than in nature which is ideal and unspoiled entity for the sake of both religious and irreligious phenomenon.

The intellectual quest of G. M. Hopkins is virtually based on Christian theology. Roger L. Slakey quotes: "God is what we may call a broad term for the divine." (72). Hopkins, in his poem, imparts intellectual knowledge to his readers. His intellectual service, explicitly selfless, directly helps readers to examine as well as know Self, Other and God too. It is like an eye – witness evaluation and it leads to weigh the state of mind, body and soul where we live, have lived and will remain to live further. This intellectual service is felt only by having spiritual consciousness rather than physical attachment. It may be pertinent to quote the Om Shanti Today's Murli "Consider yourselves to be souls and remember Me (God)" (2/3). In a similar fashion, scholars of different ages like T. S. Eliot in his *The Waste Land* (1922), Rudyard Kipling in *Kim* (1901), G.M. Hopkins in *God Grandeur* (1877), W. B. Yeats in *Purgatory* (1921), and William Shakespeare in *Hamlet* (1599), S. T. Coleridge in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1834), John Milton in *Lycidas* (1637), and others are much attuned to the intellectual ethos in literature. These textual analyses mentioned above are highly charged with intellectual message to the readers who are immersed in the literature of God or Nature. Imparting knowledge and message from this poem *God's Grandeur* forms a significant basis for the readers' understanding and intellectual delight. The theological position of Hopkins, in his poem, contains a critical vocabulary evident from his way of reading God's creations in the world.

Portrayal of Issues

The first and foremost approach of Hopkins' *God's Grandeur* is a significant narration of Nature/God. His poem is like a story in James Ussher's *Annals of the World* as well as the verses in Francis Gigot's *Book of Wisdom*. The word 'charged' that occurs in the *Book of Wisdom* hints people to deliberately measure the flame and light are the divine judgments of the *Creation*, which initiates with His formations are neither far away off nor dreamy too: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1.3). Up till now this responsibility was not God's one time and former frequency that Hopkins quotes, "the world is charged with the grandeur of God" (75). Or, in the words of Wisdom 1:7 "The spirit of the Lord fills the world (Boyle, 1961)". This line in the poem also sounds like the *Book of Wisdom* 17:20: "For the whole world shone with brilliant light . . ." Nor does the comparison end with the first part of this theological verse. The writer of *Wisdom* continues to express us that "the light continued its works without interruption; Over [the Egyptians] alone was spread oppressive night . . ." (*Wisdom*. 17.20-21). Here is a close and lived interpretation about the essence of Hopkins' *God's Grandeur*. In lines five through eight, Hopkins portrays the unjust and unreasonable darkness that men bring upon themselves by disregarding or discounting the God's magnificence and majesty. The poet, in the last sestet of the poem, asserts that the light will continue to sparkle uninterrupted. Nature or God never breaks the cycling of operating, working and functioning on the earth. They are as a simultaneous

presence of human's mind; because they are aberrant to humans' knowledge. This is said that God's glory and majesty never spend on the earth. About glory of Nature or God William Wordsworth also remarks, "Nature never spends" her glamorous deeds and duties for the preservation of the universe and its spaces. This is God's appealing, attractive, and alluring beauty in Nature's eyesight and perception.

Methods and Materials

In the research study, the researcher has imbedded a seductive appearance coined as a model for the concept of theoretical modality, which formulates an appealing message in the bettering of Hopkins's poem, *God's Grandeur*. For instance, Sigmund Freud exposes, "Oedipal desire and craving is a universal psychological phenomenon innate to the human beings, and the cause of much unconscious guilt" (21), which are skipping in my intellects. The Freudian theory empowers children's complex emotion, which is only fulfilled with the parents' grandeur. In this regards, the poet as an unconscious child has sought the same excitement to this *God's Grandeur*. The study adopts the qualitative research enquiry to judge the aesthetic and alluring delight in the poem. The methodology is applied to highlight man's manner as well as moral attitudes in God's grandeur and magnificence. With regard to the textual knowledge through its form and content, Hopkins' *God's Grandeur* (1877) depicts readers' insightful ways/methods for the sake of Natural piety. Hopkins' aesthetic message, in the *God's Grandeur*, challenges the readers to examine the philosophy, idea, manner and morality towards Nature/God's gifts. Harry Blamers comments, "I declare here, once for all, I describe not men, but manners" (173). This man's manner is like a truth-seeking delight in the glory or beauty of God/Nature. In the similar vein, Immanuel Kant emphasizes, "If the truth shall kill them, let them die." (326). It is an immediate pleasure in Hopkins's poem. This line narrates whether someone becomes victim by having said truth.

People without virtues and manners are unable to fully appreciate as well as transmit the aesthetic beauty of nature or the divinity of God. According to Harry Blamers, "the poet's only duty is to give immediate pleasure to human being . . ." (240). John Keats focuses on manner and moral as a means to understand and appreciate Nature's/God's worth or significance, which emphasizes man's duty as being the work for the sake of the glory and beauty in *God's Grandeur*. Keats' enjoyment and delight in his famous line: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" (235). I. A. Richards, in a similar vein, remarks: "Beauty is an objectification of the emotion" (75). Further, Hopkins' *God's Grandeur* aesthetically delights in I. A. Richards' method of beauty and emotion is extensively seen, felt, and caught even in each and every object of nature. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak portrays symbol of God/Nature as, "it is a study of the construction of an object, for investigation and control" (66). Hopkins's *God's Grandeur* expresses firm faith in Nature/God. He recognizes how Nature/God is highly inspiring provides aesthetic delight. In this regard, Om Shanti's Today Murli (et al., 2023) states: God is the Father, Teacher and Sadaguru (guru of the guru) of all souls. He is not called the creator of souls. He is called the creator of the world and the creator of heaven. Rabindranath Tagore's *Nationalism* presents, "God's role in

making man human, but this modern product has such marvelous square-cut finish . . .” (71). Tagore viewed that Men of thought and power discover spiritual unity, realize it, and preach it. Sadia Malik displays, “Spirituality is something greater than myself” (1). Spirituality, as a message in Hopkins’ poem, conveys a positive message to the world, portraying the beauty of God/Nature.

Results and Discussion

Mind, Manner and Moral Mean in *God’s Grandeur*

According to the preaching of Ridley Virginia Ellis, “the world remains charged with the grandeur of Nature/God, in spite of all mankind has done and is doing to pollute . . .” (25). Gigot Franc is exposes God, through the constant presence of His Holy Spirit, “continues to rejuvenate . . .” (57). So, no matter how depressed and dreary the God’s creatures appears, for example, it does in lines five to eight of the poem, we must not surrender our courage as well as hope. As John Christ utters: “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (16). The lesson of spirituality begins at this confluence age. It also provides us knowledge to know the mystery of drama’s stage – beginning, middle and end. Neither a body conscious person sees God’s grandeur, nor does he touch, feel and smell the resources of God. Spiritually, God resides in a pure and pioussoul. A body conscious person cannot observe God’s grandeur (i.e. the beauties of Nature) unless one becomes a soul conscious. Hopkins’ poem *God’s Grandeur* proves God’s magnificence with both scientific and artistic reasoning. His secular and spiritual knowledge is highly elevated into discerning good and bad evils. Knowledge without a spiritual frame is like a mundane, material, physical or corporeal one – that destroys both self and others.

Poet G. M. Hopkins, the Jesuit priest in his sonnet *God’s Grandeur* of the Italian variety, highlights the grandness and glory of God. Hopkins extols the grand deeds or acts of God. The poet emphasizes that Nature/God is an entire and ultimate goal for humans’ cheerful and optimistic generation. God’s characteristics result in positive acts and deeds on Earth. Nature persists despite human destruction. The firm faith of the poet imparts a spiritual knowledge that is possible only when people recognize God’s magnificence. God alone is the ocean of knowledge and the purifier. Faith in God is like an inner power which eliminates all five vices – lust, anger, greed, ego and hate. These evil spirits have made people placeless. To quote Hopkins again: “nor can foot feel, being shod” (75). Hopkins’ verse argues both Nature and God are same sides of the single coin. Hopkins’s poem also helps create spiritual pleasure and determination for wellbeing of all creatures on the earth. For instance, the first line has the organ-like declaratory simplicity of a litany: indeed, it recalls the nineteenth Hymn: “The heavens declare the glory of God”. The arguments, which survey “It will flame out” The identical metaphor “like shining from shook foil” demands a close examination of the universe of objects when you add the personal urgency. The central theme, in the poem, is shaped in the opening line, where the poet portrays: “The world is charged with the grandeur of God” (75). The reference to oil, in the poem, has no connection, as Father Cuzie highlights the searing and smearing of the earth by “man’s toil in the fire of industries” (31). Nor is it, as George P.L and ow suggests, the oil burned in

lamps, the oil which oozes through the wick to give light to men. The olive oil produces quite literally by crushing or pressing olives. It is, of course, that Hopkins wrote pressed originally before revising it to the much stronger crushed. In the first four lines of the sonnet, the central point is that a magnificence or prominence of God revealed first in action, then in passion; first in doing, then in suffering. Consequently, *God's grandeur* "flames out" in the world. If the olives oil is to "gather to greatness," it must be crushed. Mysteriously, the olives oil after crushing is related to, yet contrasted with, the flaming, shining Holy Ghost, charging the whole world with power. On the other hand, an effort in life is exemplified to the literal meaning in Hopkins' *God's Grandeur*.

The poem drives to draw the comparison and contrast between the constant renewal of life seen in nature and the devitalizing and smearing effect that man has had on the planet. Hopkins often addresses this subject in sermons, correspondence, and poems like *The Sea and the Skylark* and *Ribblesdale*. In a similar fashion, William Wordsworth states: "Nature never spends" (45). Similarly, Hopkins states in *God's Grandeur*: "God's just and loving purposes will not be thwarted — the Holy Spirit is not yet finished with us" (75)! The last six lines of the sonnet express the response of God to what extent the human beings have done to themselves. The above lines inspire readers to support the creations of God, whose lights continue from the westward to the eastward. It is implicitly envisaged that creation and creator are not separated; instead they create a harmonious impact on all in the world. Hopkins's notion of intellectual mind and thoughts is nicely dovetailed with the principle of impersonal vision in *God's Grandeur*. The power of light or spirit in *God's Grandeur* is mingled into the face of three figures: First, God the Father, second, God the Son, and third, God the Holy Ghost. These figures are indispensably rooted to the realm of intellectually envisioned spirituality. But Hopkins, unlike the earlier Romantic poets, was neither pagan nor pantheist; it is, on the other hand, an affirmation of his faith in the Christian God epitomized by His Three Persons: God the Father, who shaped the world "and now it was good" (Genesis 32); God the Son, who redeemed the fallen world through suffering and love; God the Holy Ghost, who perpetually continues to sustain it.

The sestet (the last six lines of the sonnet) of the second line, in *God's Grandeur*, states: "Deep down things" (33), which threads all sorts of beads viz. all things on the earth into the spirit of intellectual stirring beauty and dignity. Hopkins from the very beginning of his poem *Gad's Grandeur* tends to cultivate and broaden the spirit of appealing pleasure in human kind. This element of intellectuality should not and cannot be tied into personal instinct, as this intellectuality is impersonal. At the first hand reading, the first quatrain of *God's Grandeur* pursues H. G. Gardner (1966), who describe Hopkins' comments on the *Spiritual Experience*: "All things are charged with God and if we know how to touch them". (Gardener, 2:230). Whatsoever the world contains should equally be perceived in the light of consciousness of spirituality. It does not matter how many religions are there in the world. All the essence of their thrust is only one God as His manifestation of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. That is why Gertrude M. White points out, "God in Nature" (p.584). How *God's Grandeur* does enhance intellectual beauty, glory and

dignity are the subjects of admiration for the research gap. This is like a self-pride in the poet and he himself feels much pound of the *God's Grandeur*. White sums up the meaning of spirituality firmly integrated into the Christian theology rather than personal or social matters. It stands for matter and spirit, according to Christian theology. Furthermore, Bump Jerome also comments, "both spirit and matters (God/Nature) are inseparable from the human world" (109), whereas the last line in Hopkins's *God's Grandeur* (1877) – the dove which broods over the nest of the world with its warm breast- lucidly suggests more than the loving care of God. And He intermingles inseparably with the world of Nature, of history, and of men.

Conclusion

After two and a half decades of teaching experience, I have experienced how people, intellectuals or laymen, adore or ignore the aesthetic beauties/glorious of God/Nature pervading the universe. I am amazed at the ignorance of people while I am engaged in the teaching of Hopkins' *God's Grandeur*. This research communicates to the readers Hopkins' visual message about God/Nature through his poem *God's Grandeur*. Finally, the study focuses on the need for sensitivity to and preservation of God's grandeur reflected in pristine beauty and glory of Nature. Briefly, the message obtained from the researcher's study is transmitted from Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). From the foregoing it becomes clear that the world is filled with the prominence of God which makes the world shine like a *shook foil*. The world moves upwards to the "grandeur" or "greatness", as it is full of resources. Despite this fact, human beings act adversely. People are still not aware of the greatness and glory of God. The toils of their usual works and duties destroy the world's beauties instead of abiding by God's precepts. The earth was damaged by previous generations, and the current generation is no different. Individuals are less interested in praising the grandeur of a loving, merciful, heavenly Father and more focused on materialistic wealth and goods. i.e. Hopkins' God the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Trinity. He reveals Himself to men in dazzling splendor. The first two lines of the poem, with their emphatic verbs and expressions are themselves electrified with energy. Nevertheless, people all around the world are busy and selfish in their materialistic world. They have no time to pray, and to listen to God. They work and live as if they are not rational creatures without any propensity for sublime inspirations.

The outcome of their action is that the earth discards rubbish and junks that dry and smell like people's toils rather than the fragrance of Nature/God's *Grandeur*. More specifically, the planet is on the brink of destruction. But, because of the freshness found inside things, the world is not entirely ruined. Nature never halts reintroducing itself. After setting in the evening, the sun rises again in the morning. These activities of repetitions are the outcomes and effects of God's beauties/glorious. God, the world Creator, the Ocean of Knowledge, Purifier of mind and soul, benevolent and incorporeal One, who shelters the earth as well as its creatures "just like a bird broods over its eggs" on the earth. Intellectually, the readers acknowledge that all the creations of the creator on this earth continue to function as a daily routine. The grandeur or greatness of God is a recurring

phenomenon and it keeps on moving as usual. These grandeurs, beauties and glory of Nature or God are so soothing and gentle that they further contribute to the service of Nature, of history, and of mankind. Thus, we should uphold the aesthetic beauties and glory of God with intellectual clarity and deeper understanding.

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