THE DEPLOYMENT OF COMPLEX LANGUAGE IN THE POETRY OF GERALD MANLEY HOPKINS

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ABSTRACT *This paper is an attempt to examine the use of language in the poetry of Gerald Manley Hopkins. While all the contemporaries of Hopkins are considered Victorian writers, he is classified as a modernist. The paper argues that Hopkins, though chronologically a Victorian, wrestled with words and gained uniqueness as a modern poet. The researcher critically examined more than a decade of his poems by looking at his use of neologisms, archaism, functional conversion, among others. The paper concludes that his use of vocabulary and syntax was complex and that he deliberately used or misused poetic license to attain uniqueness of self. In the conclusion, the researcher argues that although each poet has his or her own way of expressing himself or herself, he or she must still be seen as belonging to his or her age. Hopkins, however, lived and wrote in a particular age, but his deployment of language belonged to a different period.*

KEYWORDS: Deployment, Complex Language, Poetry of Gerald, Manley Hopkins

INTRODUCTION

The use of language in any writing especially in literature has always attracted critical comments from language users. All through the centuries, writers, depending on the age they live in, like to write taking current language use into consideration. However, it is also not uncommon or impossible to meet a deviant writer who deliberately decides to use language that is outdated in the opinion of critics of his or her age. This is in spite of the common knowledge that each writer likes to write in his or her own style. Hopkins was born and also died in the nineteenth ceentury. This means he lived and wrote in the Victorian period. The conclusion then is that he must belong to the Victorian lirerary canon. However, for several reasons which all bother on his style of writing, it is impossible to categorize him as a Victorian writer. This argument as to whether Hopkins is a Victorian or a modern writer is the problem this paper seeks to address. Through analyses of Hopkins' language, it should be possible to draw conclusions as to whether he was a Victorian or modern writer.

Indeed, Thomas Gray aware of this, therefore, says that "the language of the age is never the language of poetry". Hopkins himself was aware of this when he said that poetry is "current language heightened" (Crystal 1987, p.73). In fact Hopkins' style was so distinctive that it is said the editor of the Jesuit magazine, "The Month" dared not print his ode 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' (Trevedi 2006, p.703). Apparently, the editor did not want his magazine to come into conflict with critics of his age. Hopkins is credited with the sprung rhythm which emphasizes the natural rhythm of speech. Also he filled his verse with alliteration and unusual word order among other devices. Hopkins' use of syntax and vocabulary are remarkable and will be discussed in detail in this article. He sought to make a poem as compact and unified as a tune and words and grammar are subdued to this effect (Ifor, 1940).

As regards Hopkins' language, I shall discuss his use of the following: Coinages or neologisms; Archaism and obsolete words; Functional shift/conversion; Omission of relative pronouns; Twisted word order, and Complex genitive constructions.

Purpose of the study
The purpose of the article is to use a decade of Hopkins' poems through analyses to argue that Hopkins is a modern writer and not a Victorian.

Hopkins' use of Neologisms
The first one I would like to discuss is neologisms. The most obvious and most remarkable way that Hopkins produces neologisms or coinages is by means of compound nouns. Neologism is the invention of new words that go beyond the normal resources of a language. To produce compound words in English, for example, we simply add together any two roots or stems and, since the roots of a language are virtually unlimited, a very large number of compounds are possible. But Hopkins goes far beyond the facility English has for producing compounds and treats English as though it were a language such as Greek or German that has an enormous capacity to manufacture such words (Trevedi, 2006). The majority of compounds in English are of the endocentric type where the meaning of the centre is restricted by the non-centre element. For example, gunpowder is powder that is used in guns, walking stick is a stick used for walking.

This type of compound achieves compression by suppressing the relative clause. Hopkins' compound are sometimes a combination of two adjectives that arc co-ordinate but not linked by the connective 'and': 'rush fresh: "lovely-felicitous ': 'wild-worst'. Occasionally, Hopkins combines two nouns: "martyr-master': "knack-nave': 'heaven-haven'.

He usually produces endocentric compounds where one word is subordinate to another: 'rock- fire': is fire caused by rock. In the poem 'Duns Scotus's Oxford', Hopkins puts together a succession of five new compound adjectives of the endocentric type: "Cuckoo-echoing, bell- swarmed, lark-charmed, rock-racked, river-rounded". Here he makes heavy use of compression: not only is there no connecting 'and' between the five compound adjectives, but each adjective is itself reduced from the format of a noun followed by a relative clause: city that echoes with cuckoos. In 'The Wreck of the Deutschland', 'the window-making unchilding unfathering deeps' is created. In fact the meaning, cognitively, could be the deeps which deprive (wives) of husbands, (children) of fathers, and (parents) of children. There is a degree of compounding. In 'Binsey Poplars', it is 'mind-wandering weed-mining bank' whiles in 'The Straight Night' it is 'rnealed-with-yellow sallows' that Hopkins creates. In 'Windhover'; the compound adjective 'dapple-down-drawn falcon' is created making the object appear in unusual light. These unheard of compound words are a unique feature of Hopkins's poetry. In 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' it is 'scroll-leaved' that is created to describe 'flowers' and 'dappled-with-damson' is used to describe 'West' in the line 'Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west'.

In other poems, Hopkins creates words out of existing ones. Most often he turns normal English words to their opposites by adding prefixes and suffixes. In 'Duns Scotus Oxford', he crcates; 'untraveller' from the common word traveller. 'Untraveller', then, is someone who does not travel or has not travelled. In 'Felix Randal' 'heavenlier' is created from heaven when he talks of Felix having a 'heavenlier' heart'. One cannot help but argue that Hopkins has succeeded in creating the comparative of his adjective 'heaven'. In 'Binsey Poplars', Hopkins creates 'unselvc ' from selve. If 'selve' can give an individual 'self", then according to him 'unselve' robs one of 'self". In 'Epithalamion' 'downdolphinly and bell bright bodies huddling out' are followed by 'carthworld, airworld, waterworld thorough hurled'. 'fairyland, silk-beach, scrolled ash, packed sycamore, wild wychelm, hornbeam fretty' are Hopkins's own creation. In the same 'Epithalamion', Hopkins in an attempt to use

superlative adjectives will create 'shadowiest' in the line ' ... sweetest, freshest, and shadowicst'. 'Unshapeablc' is created in 'The Wreck of the Deutschland 'in describing a shock night.

The use of Archaism

The next item to be discussed under vocabulary is archaism or the use of obsolete words. Archaism is the use of grammar and vocabulary that are no longer current. Hopkins was an excellent classical scholar and had a deep knowledge of the character and inheritance of words (Fowler 1997, p. 118). Hence, there are times that he resorts to the use of unfamiliar words. He takes his readers to well forgotten words in order to make his poetry not only special but also to draw attention to the object being presented. Instead of 'round' he prefers to use 'roundy' and he uses 'wert' in place of 'were'. It did appear that Hopkins again will go into archaism to use words like 'heardst' (heard) 'knowest' (know) and 'thence' (from that place) all in 'The Wreck of/he Deutschland'. In the poem 'Epithalamion' instead of 'go quickly', Hopkins prefers to go into archaism to produce 'hies' in the line, 'That he hies to a pool neighbouring'. 'Bespoken', the past tense of the old word 'bespeak' is what Hopkins prefers in the line: 'But he scores it in scarlet himself on his bespoken' (The Wreck of the Deutschland). It must be said that perhaps Hopkins used a lot of archaic vocabulary because most of them appear in his religious poems and religious poetry like hymns uses a lot of archaic vocabulary.

Functional Conversion in Hopkins' Poems

A further means of extending his use of the vocabulary of English is functional conversion, a device in which a word has a new grammatical function without changing its form. According to Leech (1996) functional conversion can be referred to as 'zero conversion'. Now, it is of course the case that English has many words that have one form for noun, adjective, and verb - 'fast', 'counter'. In Hopkins' grammar school of functional conversion, functional shift is given further impetus: By functional conversion or shift, Hopkins takes words that we normally expect to see used as nouns and turns them into verbs or vice versa. The word 'fast' for example, to the old grammarian may be said to be 'adverb' as in , 'He ran fast'. Modern grammar with its emphasis on functional role can only determine the function of 'fast' when it is found or used in a sentence.

In that case, fast can be adverb, verb, adjective or noun as in the following illustrations:

1. The girl drank the water <u>fast</u>. (adverb)
2. The women <u>fast</u> everyday. (verb)
3. The girl is a <u>fast</u> runner. (adjective)
4. The boy breaks his <u>fast</u> every 6:00 p.m. (noun)

In the poem 'As Kingfishers Catch Fire', Hopkins says, 'I say more: the just man justices'. He says in the poem 'what I do is me: for that I came.' It must be the case therefore, that if a teacher teaches and a judge judges, then the just man justices. 'Justice' which traditionally and grammatically belongs to the noun word class, is used in the verb sense to draw attention. Its peculiar use is immediately recognized by the reader. In like manner, Hopkins changes the normal function of 'achieve' a verb to a noun in the last line of the octave in the poem' The Windhover '.

In short, Hopkins gives familiar words strange meanings. Two other examples of functional conversion occur in 'The Wreck of the Deutschland'. In stanza I I, Hopkins writes of a personified Death that 'storms bugle his fame'. Drawing on the use of the bugle in the army as a signal, Hopkins makes the statement vivid not only by converting the noun 'bugle' into a verb, but also by making its object the abstract 'fame'. When Hopkins pictures in the mind the conversion of England in the last stanza of' The Wreck of the Deutschland' he writes of Christ, 'Let him easter in us' and the noun 'caster' turned verb vividly suggests that spring and resurrection should be experienced now and in England. According to Fowler (1987), Hopkins charged older words with meanings by the contexts in which he set them.

Hopkins' Syntax

Having looked at Hopkins' use of vocabulary, I shall go ahead and look at his syntax. In my discussion of Hopkins's syntax, I shall consider his use of inversion and embedded sentences. While it is true that poets have poetic license which enables them to use language in unusual ways, Hopkins, it appears, over utilizes this facility. His inversion of sentences is the subject of this discussion in this paragraph. In English we normally let the auxiliary verb precede the main verb as in 'They are coming'. But Hopkins not only lets the verb 'Iaced'come before the main verb, but also he lets the main verb precede the subiect. In 'Thou Art Indeed Just, Lord', Hopkins says 'Iaccd they are again ... ' Normally, English construction will have this as 'they are laced again'. This verb + noun + auxiliary + adjunct are Hopkins' creation. In 'I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, not Day', it is 'with witness I speak this', that is formed, foregrounding 'witness'. In 'Epithalamion', the inversion is more complex as used in line 35: 'Till walk the world he can with bare his feet' referring to Jesus' work on Earth. It must be acknowledged that sometimes Hopkins does this to achieve a regular (iambic) musical rhythm. Another form of inversion used by Hopkins is that related to the collocation of words. The 20th stanza of 'Epithalamion' also has an inverted sentence. He writes: 'Abel is Cain's brother and breasts they have sucked the same'. Normal English will have it as: Abel and his brother Cain sucked from the same breast. The normal collocation of words is also sometimes violated by Hopkins. In 'Spring', Hopkins instead of 'in the garden of Eden' says 'In Eden garden'. In 'Epithalamion', it is 'a pool neighbouring' instead of 'a neighbouring pool'. In both cases, Hopkins foregrounds or highlights 'garden' and 'pool' respectively. In 'Thou Art Indeed Just, Lord', instead of 'why must all my endeavours end in disappointment, Hopkins will say ' ... why must disappointment all my endeavours end?' which emphatically foregrounds disappointment.

Another kind of strange syntax used by Hopkins is the striking use of the genetive or the possessive construction. The genitive or possessive construction in English is one of those which can be indefinitely repeated. In such a- construction, each successive genitive is dependent on its successor. For example, in the construction, 'Kwame's mother's brother-in-Iaw's friend', each of the successive construction controls the preceding one. In practice, however, this is uncommon; the most one can find is not more than two genitives at a time in a construction. That is why Hopkins' use of it can be described as odd but special. In the last line of the poem 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' Hopkins writes: Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' chivalry's throng's Lord. The possessive construction is repeated six times, each parallel construction contains three successive genitives. This practice of Hopkins in this line is not un-English and un-idiomatic but hardly is it found in everyday use.

The use of embedded sentences

The use of embedded sentences is crucial in Hopkins' poetry. Embedding is defined as the process of including one sentence within another or any construction where this operation has taken place. It involves the use of a matrix sentence defined as a super ordinate sentence within which another is embedded and another sentence surrounded by the two parts of the matrix sentence, with the result that the subject is separated from the predicate. The effect of embedding on the readers is to postpone their ability to understand the sentence. Hopkins himself says that he holds back the meaning of the poem until the end, when as a result of repeated readings, it ultimately 'explodes' and is made clear. (Trevcdi, 2006). The explosion is the result of the total impact of the poem so that sometimes we feel Hopkins uses language so as to deliberately prevent the escape of premature meanings until the total expression has been achieved. This creates a kind of suspense in the reader as he or she tries to get to the bottom of whatever the person is driving at. Embedded sentences are used differently by Hopkins. One example is found in the opening of the poem' The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo', which deals with beauty. The fundamental question being asked is how to maintain beauty against the ravages of time: 'How to keep ...... Back beauty?'

But between the first three words' How to keep' and the words' Back beauty' that completes the question, are no fewer than twenty - five other words. This vast expansion in the syntax implies both the extreme difficulty of the task and the variety of means that might be used to ach ieve it: How to keep ..... is this any way, is there none such, no where Known some, bow or brooch or braid, lace, latch or catch or key to keep Back beauty?

Other times Hopkins starts his poems with a number of subordinate clauses before arriving at the main clause. What happens is that there is a long delay before arriving at the main clause. This idea is typified in the example below which comes from the poem 'As Kingfishers Catch Fire ': As Kingfishers catch fire, dragon flies draw flame; As tumbled over rim in roundy wells Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's Bow strung finds tongue to fling out proud its name; Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:

The idea being expressed here has to do with what people do. Instead of saying that at the beginning of the poem, Hopkins keeps it till the last line. On the other hand, in 'Epithalamion', Hopkins starts the poem with a sentence and follows it up with a number of embedded phrases before arriving at the main purpose of the persona:
Hark, hearer, hear what I do; lend a thought now, make believe
We are leafwhclmcd somewhere with the hood Of branchy bunchy bushybowered
Wood Southern dene or Lancashire clough or Devon cleave,
That leans along the lions of hills, where a eandycoloured, where a glucgold-brown
Marbled river, boisterously beautiful, between Roots and rocks is danced and dandled, all in froth and waterblowballs, down.

In the above, the main idea in contrast to what we find in 'Kingfishers' opens the poem. In fact the whole of' 'Epithalamion' of fifty lines is written in this style. This same style is used in 'Pied Beauty'. God is praised in the opening line and this is followed by a number of phrases giving instances why God deserves glory:
Glory be to God for dappled things-For skies of couple-colour as
a brinded cow; For rose moles of all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firccoal chestnut-falls, finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced-Fold, Fallow, and plough; And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

In the sestet of his sonnet to Bridges, Hopkins complains of lack of poetic inspiration. To describe his unhappy situation, he uses two embedded phrases - the first about lack of happiness, the second about his resulting sorrow - that neatly link the themes of an unsatisfactory situation and the lack of creativity that follows:
Othen if in my lagging lines you miss The roll, the rise, the carol, the creation, My winter
world, that scarcely breathes that bliss Now, yields you, with some sighs, our explanation.

Bridges once complained to Hopkins that grammar should enforce the meaning; it must not have to be determined by the meaning, but Hopkins's complex syntax in this poem and elsewhere, enacts in the language the situation it sets out to portray and docs so in a very rich and effective way.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion so far, it becomes clear that Hopkins was a lover of nature. In order to show this, he deployed complex vocabulary and syntax. Ousby (1996) says that Hopkins' pursuit of a 'language of inspiration that would capture experience afresh led him to break with the conventional poetic diction of his time, reviving archaisms, borrowing dialect words and using coinages of his own'. No wonder, therefore, that although chronologically a Victorian, he rightly belongs to the 'modern

period'. Indeed he could be described as the single individual among Victorian poets who was unaffected by Victorian writing flavor. In fact on first becoming known, he was hailed by his 'perfervid admirers as the most original and the greatest of English poets' (Trivedi, 2006). It is also significant to note that when Hopkins's tutor at Balliol, R. L. Nettleship, a man renowned for getting his students to think, called him one of the cleverest and most original men at Oxford in his time, he drew attention to Hopkins's delicate perception of language (Arkins, 1987). This subtle use of language by Hopkins may not appeal to those who believe in Victorian orthodoxy. He was neither in the Wordsworthian nor the Tennysonian tradition. He discovered his own tradition, out of his own reading and out of the needs of his own temperament and situation (Daiches, 1997). Hopkins challenges tradition and hence achieves that defarniliarization in the use of language that is so crucial to serious poetry. It is important to conclude that it is the technique of Hopkins' verse and not its content that has attracted his followers.

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