



Research Article

**Citation:** Şenduran, Elif Derya. “‘Sprints the Stress Felt’: Rhythm as a Priority Indicator of Subject and Object in Gerard Manley Hopkins’ Poetry.” *Overtones* 3 (2024): 19-29.

**Received:** 1 July 2023

**Accepted:** 4 December 2023

**Corresponding Author:** Elif Derya Şenduran, Independent Researcher.

**ORCID:** 0000-0002-4840-5053

**“Sprints the Stress Felt”: Rhythm as a Priority Indicator of Subject and Object in Gerard Manley Hopkins’ Poetry**

Elif Derya Şenduran 

**Abstract:** This article aims to explicate the terms subjective and objectification while tracing the priority of subject or object in terms of stress patterns, specifically sprung rhythm in Gerard Manley Hopkins’ poetry. The theories of Duns Scotus, Walter Pater, and Romanticism influences Hopkins and the influence can be sensed in his rhythm and stress as a method to demonstrate the position of the poetic persona and object in Hopkins’ poetry. Hopkins’ two notions of inscape and instress are also hidden in speech of subject’s perception and conceiving of the object. The inscape (design) is in the object and instress is the intensified form of the stress with will. Thus, these two notions also include the combination of the concepts of poetic persona and his/her perception of the object. In other words, this article claims that Hopkins’ philosophy regarding subjectivity and objectification has a gap to be explored with his use of sprung rhythm in poetry. The priority of subject and object illustrates how these two are foregrounded with rhythmic patterns in Hopkins’ poetry. Hopkins’ own explanations provide a backbone for this article, and these have been clarified by subsequent scholarship that reveals the Romanticist influence in his poetry. Hopkins explains the meaning of inscape as “design and pattern” and his main aim in poetry. Ultimately, his two notions, inscape and instress, that emerge with sprung rhythm intersect to form the objectification on the eye of the beholder, or rather the subject or sometimes the poetic persona in his poetry.

**Keywords:** subject, object, Romanticism, Gerard Manley Hopkins’ poetry, sprung rhythm

**Introduction**

Gerard Manley Hopkins had a Victorian well-to-do family (Philips 2002, xv). His father was a “marine adjuster” who wrote manuals about shipping, songs, novels, and poems. His mother knew Italian and German. Gerard Manley Hopkins was influenced from his father in writing *The Wreck of Deutschland* and *The Loss of the Eurydice*. He was educated in Latin and Greek (xvi). At Oxford, he was influenced by the Oxford Movement so he joined Catholic Church in 1866 (xxxvii). He has poems, letters, and sermons and devotional writings.

This article is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.



\*Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0)

Hopkins had never written poetry until rector Fr. Jones commissioned him to write a poem for the shipwreck of Deutschland. Therefore, he wrote *The Wreck of the Deutschland* but the *Month* refused the poem due to odd “scansion marks” (Roberts 6). Bridges and Patmore also criticized their friend for the poem as being “unreadable” (Phillips 2002, xxv). The poem was experimental for its sprung rhythm and each stanza was read as a unit (2002, xxv).

G. M. Hopkins’ experiments with poetry are tripartite with his notions of inscape, instress, and sprung rhythm: Inscap is Hopkins’ word for “the uniqueness of an observed object”<sup>1</sup>, instress is “the force or energy which sustains an inscape”<sup>2</sup>, and sprung rhythm is “a poetic metre approximating to the rhythm of speech”<sup>3</sup>. The rhythmic effect, especially sprung rhythm<sup>4</sup> is significant for the analysis of Hopkins’ poetry. The argument at hand claims sprung rhythm or the stress patterns as a tool to analyse the concepts of subject and object in Hopkins’ poetry. Thus, the article proposes to reach the conclusion that the priority of either object over subject or subject over object can be achieved in linguistic terms, in this respect, through sprung rhythm or stress patterns.

Hopkins’ use of accentuated stress, or stress patterns in his poetry, specifically sprung rhythm is used to analyse the priority of subject and object in his poetry. As far as linguistic terminology is concerned, there may be overlaps of various terms used differently by Hopkins and other critics. Hopkins’ works do not describe technical terms. He describes in general terms which are not known to all. The introduction to rhythm and metre therefore includes a section on terminology in which I aim to provide and explain the currently accepted terms in place of the vague, changeable and impressionistic terms that were used in the past and that are still used by some commentators.

Hopkins uses stress patterns to foreground subject and object agency as he depicts nature and beauty with passion and energy. The entropy between subject and object is felt in his poetry with sprung rhythm that he experiments with other than iambic pentameter in his poems. In this respect, the study proposes theme, theory, and stylistics as inseparable means for the studies of poetry, so each area of study is consulted to provide a sound construct for the argument without experimental reasoning, and statistical data. These rhythmic patterns may establish “objective rules that might stand as a corrective to the subjective basis of much literary analysis” (Head 1077).

In order to highlight rhythmic competence in poetry, my argument proposes the deviance in stress patterns to reconcile the subject and object positions in Gerard Manley Hopkins’ poetry. Similarly, Reuven Tsur puts forward the aesthetics and poetic rhythm and reasserts Coleridge’s statement “the balance and reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities” to mark the deviance in rhythm, or “discordance” for the settlement of meaning (19). That is to say, lack of harmony or inconsistency in meaning may be settled with poetic rhythm but the question of how can it be related to subject and object position in poetry remains. Hopkins elucidates the significance of rhythm in his *Letter to Bridges* that he wrote in St Beuno’s, St. Asaph. on 21 August 1877 as follows: “My verse is less to be read than heard, as I have told you before; it is oratorical, that is the rhythm is so” (in Philips 229). My argument claims that the position of poetic persona and object in Hopkins’ poetry cannot be analysed only in terms of semantics or theoretical background because rhythm is an inseparable means to poetry as Hopkins proposes for “verse” to be heard. Hopkins creates sound patterns and it may be claimed that these sound patterns are objects (in language) created by the poet (subject, in the cases of poetic persona “I”) to reconcile the dialectical relationship between the two. What is more, it may also be stated that the deviation of the verse sound foregrounds certain words during utterance so subject and object relationship in poetry can be modified with rhythmic effect. This deviation might also provide a prosodic method for the prioritization of subject or object in Hopkins’ poetry.

Although Hopkins’ poem was refused to be published due to the oddity of its stress patterns, studies of his poetry elucidate the importance of his sprung rhythm and his notion of instress and inscape: Michael Hurley, in his article “Wrestling with Gerard Manley Hopkins”, suggests that plotting “a single stylistic habit, [Hopkins’]

<sup>1</sup> For further information see: <<https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=inscape>>.

<sup>2</sup> For further information see: <<https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=instress>>.

<sup>3</sup> For further information see: <<https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=sprung%20rhythm>>.

<sup>4</sup> “A poetic rhythm designed to imitate the rhythm of natural speech constructed from feet in which the first syllable is stressed and may be followed by a variable number of unstressed syllables” (Feeney n.p.).

‘wrestling’; that is,” comes from “his agonistic impulse, arising from his instinctive independence of mind, his intellectual and religious formation, and from the themes of his poems” (922). Thus, as Hurley argues Hopkins’ formation of his notions of inscape and instress is directly related to his free will, intellect, and his belief. Bernadette Waterman Ward, on the other hand, foregrounds that Hopkins lived “to break the narrowness of his will; rather than impose his insights on others by the ‘force’ of his poems” (9). As both writers elucidate, Hopkins is a distinctive poet whose struggle is with the hardships of life, and his poems reflect this in stress patterns through his notions of inscape and instress. In so doing, he objectifies the things in nature and manifests the multicoloured individuation of things in nature with a specific energy. Existing research recognises the critical role played by Hopkins’ sprung rhythm but there still seems to be a gap in literature regarding objectification of things in nature and in his environment, their individuation through the eyes of the beholder. Thus, this essay claims to find that trajectory by analysing his poetry through his notions of sprung rhythm, inscape and instress.

As far as Gerard Manley Hopkins’ poetry is concerned, the first line of *Pied Beauty* “Glory be to God for dappled things” may suggest how Hopkins perceives objects in nature. This may be considered as another aspect of objectification of Hopkins: The way he sees things in nature, (the first one was his objectification of language in stress patterns<sup>5</sup>) or how the subjective consciousness (the poetic “I” or the lyric speaker in the case of this poem) defines that object in nature, and how the poet uses stress patterns to indicate deviations that foreground the tension or the chaos between the subject and the object.

Gerard Manley Hopkins’ explanation of his notion of inscape can be seen in his letter to Coventary Patmore in 7<sup>th</sup> November 1868 while commenting on William Butler Yeats’ verse that leaves out inscape which he refers to as species or individuality, distinctive beauty or style:

I thought how sadly beauty of inscape was unknown and buried away from simple people and yet how near at hand it was if they had eyes to see it and it could be called out everywhere again [...]. After the examinations we went for our holiday out to Douglas in the Isle of Man. Aug.3 – At this time I had first begun to get hold of the copy of Scotus on the Sentences in the Baddely library and was flush with a new stroke of enthusiasm. It may come to nothing or it may be a mercy from God. But just then when I took in any inscape of the sky or sea I thought of Scotus [...]. About all turns of the scaping from the break and flooding of wave to its run out again I have not yet satisfied myself. (Hopkins 2002, 55-6)

Apart from these explanations by Hopkins, Scotus’ ontological aspect of nature as essence (object as *per se being* in relation to individuation, and its reflections in Hopkins’ inscape and instress), divine nature and God’s presence in nature foregrounds his theoretical stance. Wimsatt associates the uniqueness of every object in nature (selfhood) with respect to Hopkins’ sprung rhythm, and this aspect of Hopkins’ “inscape of spoken sound” can be combined with Duns Scotus’ concept of thisness (554).

The objects are prior to the context in this respect as Scotus states. However, they may lead to a kind of apprehension or instress. Scotus points out that “[a] *first subject* is a primary subject of a disposition directed towards its object” (Vos 268) (emphasis original).

### **Duns Scotus and Hopkins’ Objectification**

Duns Scotus defends freedom, love, and the will against Aristotelian knowledge and intellect. He is acknowledged as a philosopher of realism. His attempt to construct validity of the existence of God is prevalent in his theory. Hopkins was influenced by Scotus regarding his ideas on *haecceitas* meaning “the individuating differences in a thing, as opposed to those features it shares in common with other individuals” (Head 333). *Haecceitas* also paved the way for Hopkins to found his own ideas about individuation (333). Then, individuation may also be modified to my argument with two claims: The first one is about how Hopkins perceives and designs things (objects) in nature and their unique individuating qualities, and how he designs his

---

<sup>5</sup> Donald McChesney in his essay “The Meaning of Inscape” (1968) claims inscape has two meanings: The first is about “the world of nature as perceived by the mind” and the second is about language in which he considers sprung rhythm as a means of “inscaping” (patterning) language (202-3, 206-7).

patterns of rhythm, such as sprung rhythm (for language, the object created by Hopkins). These two claims may maintain the subject and object relationship in Hopkins' poetry.

Duns Scotus' notion of object can be examined in relation to different concepts that he takes into account such as logic and concept, individual and essence in reality or in materiality, intellect, perception and mind, insightful understanding, truth and falsity, subject and predicate structure, subject of theology, subject of ontology, intuitive knowledge of senses, recollections of objects, scientia and epistemic object, *subiectum* and *obiectum*, *passiones* and *ens*, human will and opposite objects, the problem of universals, species and genera, material substance and *haecceity*. His demonstration of the notion of object can be presented with respect to these concepts.

Duns Scotus' conception of logic is based on "the subject-predicate structure of a proposition" (Vos 156). He states that a "knowable likeness" such "as the senses are the subject of the *species sensibilis*" (Vos 157) (emphasis original). Scotus also suggests that the opposite predicate leads to the destruction of the subject (Vos 186). Both the idea of objective and subject can be integrated to Hopkins' objects. The winding eyes and the winding object, or in other words, focus is dependent on the object. The object may not have the faculty of knowing as Hopkins states but it still is the focus: Objective may have the object for reference of contents like the sweetness of honey, the greatness of the sea, the terror of thunder. The destruction of subject may appeal to the perception of the object as the predicate has relation with it.

Then, a question may be raised about why this article chooses rhythm as a priority indicator of subject and object of Hopkins' poetry if it is already stated as a pattern of language created by the subject. The argument presents rhythm as a part of language and also proposes rhythmic quality of language as a construct for the things in nature. It also presents the notion that subject's perception of the individuating objects may also be indicated by the stress patterns in the poem.

To further illustrate on the point, Duns Scotus' approach to sciences may be taken into consideration. For Scotus, there are three theoretical sciences: "[M]etaphysics, mathematics, and physics" (King 15). They are either related to things or concept of things (how people think about things) (King 15). In this respect, it may be asserted that Scotus' things represent objects and concept of things represents "sense perception" or subjectivity. Thus, he clearly distinguishes materials, things, composite of matter from concepts, logic, ethics, and sense perception as a part of subjectivity (King 15). Scotus' distinction of things (in this respect objects) and how subject perceives them (subjectivity) bring out the dialectical relationship between subject and object. Then, it may be claimed that this dialectical relationship proposes a theoretical background for Gerard Manley Hopkins' poetry as he was deeply influenced by Scotus.

However, Scotus explicates "the subject of metaphysics as being *qua* being" because metaphysics is not only about God and substance for Scotus but there is also "the notion of a primary object" requiring "the notion of a *per se*<sup>6</sup> object" (King 16). The *per se* object can be exemplified by the blackness of a sheep's wool (King 17). It may also be interpreted as the individuating quality inherent in that object, regarding this-ness, or *haecceitas*. The primary object should be general and "nonrelational" (King 17). The object becomes *per se* as it stands by itself, being general and nonrelational. The second stanza of Hopkins' poem *Pied Beauty* may demonstrate how he handles Scotus's notion of primary object for the objectification of things:

/ 7  
 All things counter, original, spåre, strange;  
 Whatever is fickle, freckléd (who knows how?)  
 / / / / /  
 With swift, slow, sweet, sour, adazzle, dim;  
 /  
 He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:  
 / /  
 Praise him. ("Pied Beauty" 7-11)

<sup>6</sup> Object standing by itself (King 16)

<sup>7</sup> The ictuses are marked in Catherine Phillips' *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Major Works*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986. (133).

Hopkins explicates “all things” as “spòre”. The ictus on “spòre” may foreground a strong stress for the word. This strong stress foregrounds the individuating difference of “all things” as “spòre” meaning “undecorated”<sup>8</sup> (Phillips 353). The contextualization of the primary object “all things” may be called thisness. “All things” stand for themselves (object *per se*) for being undecorated<sup>9</sup> (Phillips 353). A Scottist approach may also consider “all things” as general due to the word “all” regarding the primary object. There is another deviation in the last syllable of “freckléd” meaning “variegated, here slightly eccentric”<sup>10</sup> (Phillips 353). The deviation caused by the stress of “-éd” suffix may foreground Scottist notion of God, substance and the primary object. The stressed suffix “-éd” is an evidence that may indicate God’s existence as a creator but the ambiguity of the process is heightened in parenthesis with the question “who knows how?”. The obscurity of the creation process of object: “[A]ll things” may be interpreted as “nonrelational” aspects regarding the primary object of Scottist philosophy because the creation process cannot be related to anything else. However, the undecorated (“spòre”) things may also substantiate the notion that the primary object is general. These evidences may strengthen the argument that the stressed patterns in Hopkins’ poetry foreground both the theoretical aspect and the meaning of the primary object of Scotus.

The Scottist definition of nature is put forth to point out the significance of nature in his philosophy. He defines nature as not singular of itself because intellect apprehends nature as universal not singular, and the nature even in stone has its own unity, its unity is “proper to itself”(Noone 107). Scotus also believed the nature did not exist apart from concrete things (Noone 109). This may mean that Duns Scotus, who was highly influential on Hopkins’ poetics, claimed that objects and the nature existed together. Timothy B. Noone explicates that for Scotus “there is [...] a natural priority enjoyed by the nature with respect to either manifestation of nature, within the mind or without” (109). This priority of nature in the mind of the beholder, or as an outside world may manifest a kind of common ground on which the subject and the object could merge for Scotus.

Individuation was explained in terms of “accidents” (Noone 115) (experiences, event) encountered by a subject for Scotus. It is the number of experiences that the subject had, the matter that constructs the subject, the existence (*esse*) of the subject, the relation between the subject and its creator, God (Noone 115). Individuation may also create a basis for the investigation of Hopkins’ poetics as a process of positioning the subject or the object because as Christopher Devlin suggests Scotus and Hopkins believed in the difference between “the Nature in a thing and its Individuality” (114) and they assumed nature “as the nature of the world, elemental, vegetative, sensitive, human” (114). The individuality in Hopkins does not include eternity since man has all “natural activities, animal, rational...” (114) and this individuality leads him to God. Then, the individuation may be claimed as a significant feature to analyse subject and object in Hopkins’ poetry as well.

Ultimately, it may be stated that Duns Scotus’ ideas provide a theoretical basis for the dialectical relationship between subject and object, the analysis of the primary object, subject, and individuation, or thisness including the stress patterns with respect to Hopkins’ poetry.

### **Walter Pater’s Musical Aspiration and Hopkins’ Keeness on Rhythm**

Walter Pater is another philosopher that was influential for Hopkins mainly because he tutored him at Oxford in 1866 (Bergonzi 18). Pater had thoughts against Christianity but Hopkins entered the Jesuit order (18). Despite their opposite beliefs, both supported “the individual moment, the sudden insight and illumination” (18-9) regarding subjectivity. However, Pater was sceptical about certain beliefs and values whereas Hopkins believed in “the singularity and substantiality of things” (19).

Walter Pater had ideas that were a turning point in art. He marked the condition of music as an aspiration but he had doubts about symbolism (Grisewood 97). He supported music and rhythm in poetry and this affected Hopkins’ poetry. Hopkins reveals Pater’s influence in his essay, “On the Origin of Beauty: a Platonic Dialogue”

<sup>8</sup> All the references to Catherine Phillips’ *Notes* are from *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Major Works*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986.

<sup>9</sup> Notes of Catherine Phillips.

<sup>10</sup> Notes of Catherine Phillips.

(Bergonzi 19) which will be quoted in the fifth part regarding its relation to rhythm. Pater's aesthetic aspiration to music and rhythm can be observed in Hopkins' keenness on patterns of stress and sprung rhythm as well.

Pater's sceptical thoughts led him to base his ideas on terms "absolute spirit" and "relative spirit" (Pater 66). Absolute spirit believes in hierarchical categories whereas relative spirit thinks there may be expansion of things or obliteration of dividing lines. For Pater, reality is closer when observation takes place with multiple experiences of nature (Pater 66):

Modern thought is distinguished from ancient by its cultivation of the "relative spirit" in place of the "absolute." Ancient philosophy sought to arrest every object in an eternal outline to fix thought in a necessary formula, and the varieties of life in a classification by "kinds" or *genera*. To the modern spirit nothing is, or can be rightly known, except relatively and under conditions. The philosophical conception of the relative has been developed in modern times through the influence of the sciences of observation. [...] The faculty for truth is recognised as a power of distinguishing and fixing delicate and figurative detail. The moral world is ever in contact with the physical, and the relative spirit has invaded moral philosophy from the ground of the inductive sciences. There it has started a new analysis of the relation of the body and mind, good and evil, freedom and necessity. (Pater 66-7)

As the above quotation indicates, Pater points out that observation, truth, morality, body and mind, good and evil, freedom and necessity are all ideas that cannot be fixed according to the relative spirit. As Pater asserts, every object is not fixed on infinite lines rather they are in a flux. There is no way for fixed truth so there is instability for the object. Hopkins' implementation of sprung rhythm may also be regarded as volatile if language is seen as the object created by Hopkins.

This volatile feature of object, (things man perceives in nature) may also lead to misery and desperation of individual due to endless scepticism. Gerard Manley Hopkins also went through suffering and inward struggle in his life, the effects of which can be observed in his *Terrible Sonnets* (1885-86). The effect of Pater's relative spirit can be observed in one of his *Terrible Sonnets*, "To Seem the Stranger". Hopkins was a professor in Dublin at that moment and he felt depressed by the poverty of slums, by being separated from England, and his family, by being culturally isolated, so he felt alienated with the struggle for Home Rule which Hopkins supported as the alternatives were not favourable (Easson 108):

I am in Ireland now; now I am at a th<sup>11</sup>rd  
Remove. Not but in all removes I can  
Kind love both give and get. Only what word (9-11)

The repetition of "I", also in "I"reland may indicate the subjectivity of the poem. The poetic persona is Gerard Manley Hopkins himself. "I"reland, the stressed first syllable may be interpreted as a significant location, a turning point for Hopkins. In this respect, Hopkins' thoughts may be instable in Ireland since that he is "at a th<sup>11</sup>rd". The stress on letter "i" again may present the third desperate turning point in his life as a Catholic. Catherine Phillips backs up this argument in her notes as: "[T]h<sup>11</sup>rd remove. Perhaps the first remove was the partial estrangement with his family brought about by their holding different religious beliefs (ll.2-4). The second remove may have been from the English people who were mostly Anglican but whom Hopkins longed to see converted to Catholicism (ll.5-7). In Ireland, although Hopkins found himself among Catholics, they were disloyal to England" (Phillips 373). Phillips' arguments about the explication of "th<sup>11</sup>rd" and its stress, and the stress on "I" all strengthen Pater's influence on Hopkins. First, Pater's keenness on musical aspiration may have affected Hopkins with respect to his emphasis on rhythm. Second, Pater was sceptical about hierarchy, and fixed norms which may also be traced in Hopkins' *Terrible Sonnets* with his touch on his desperate situation in Ireland. Nevertheless, Hopkins may seem to have searched for a sound ground for his alienation. Nonetheless, nobody can deny the slippery ground for the subject or poetic persona's position in search for a more reliable atmosphere in the poem, "To Seem the Stranger".

---

<sup>11</sup> The ictus is marked in Catherine Phillips' notes.

It may be stated that the priority indicator or the stress on “i” in “third remove” somewhat slips to relative spirit evoking scepticism regarding the alienated position of the subject, as Hopkins himself, in his *Terrible Sonnet*, “To Seem Stranger”.

Pater also argues that subjectivity transforms objects into impressions, so the object disappears behind metaphors and the subject comes out. He favours “new modes of awareness” (Iser 59) in which there would be new constructions. These ideas propose that Walter Pater supports relative spirit rather than absolute spirit. The divine spirit can be found in these “new modes of awareness” (59). Similarly, Hopkins’ subjectivity transforms the object (cloth) to his idle being that he wears in the following lines of his *Terrible Sonnet*, “To Seem Stranger”:

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 wé<sup>12</sup>ar-  
Y of idle a being but by where wars are rife.(5-8)

The stress on “wéar” may indicate “idle a being” as a cloth to be worn by the poet to depict his present situation in Ireland when the lines are read aloud. The capital letter “Y” in the beginning of the following line pronounced as “Why” may raise a question about the reason for being dressed in an idle cloth. This is an impression created both by the stress and the object (idle cloth being worn). This idle cloth may also hide Hopkins’ real feelings as he wishes to be seen as idle when he wears it. This cloth disappears as a metaphor, with “-” at the end of “I wéar- / Y”. Then, the meaning changes to his subjective state, as being weary of idleness at times of abundant wars. This is similar to what Pater calls “new modes of awareness”. This evidence strengthens the argument, founded around the argument that Pater’s thoughts on relative spirit and his aspirations for rhythmic effect can also be analysed in Hopkins’ poetry. Pater’s relativity principle may be significant in terms of subjectivity and the instability of both subject and object. The influence of Pater on Hopkins’ poetry can be seen in above lines, in terms of subject and object regarding the rhythmic effect.

### **Romanticism and Hopkins’ Subject Object Agency**

The dialectic of subject and object and its synthesis is also inherent in Romanticism and Hopkins’ poetry (Day 105-6). Human beings consider that they are separate beings so they place object as an antithesis to the subject (107). However, Romanticism tries to “overcome the split between subject and object, and the celebration of Romantic poetry” (Day 112). That is, the subject and object dichotomy is a part of Romanticist imagery in which the dialectic between the self and nature is temporal in the terms that nature’s movements endure and change, leaving “the core intact” (Day 116). For Coleridge, the coincidence of an object with a subject or the thought with a thing is a synthesis. In this synthesis, the separate identities of the elements are lost because the subject and object merge into each other. This is an artistic creation with a creative perception. The reconciliation of the dialectical elements, such as subject with object, is obtained in this way (Bloom 219-20). Romantic meditations demonstrate the transaction between subject and object. Thought, or imagination, makes the implicit in nature explicit and in nature the distinction between subject and object fades away (223).

For instance, the sprung rhythm is a device that frees Hopkins from “fixed syllables” so that he can add extra stress to some of the words to form an intersubjectivity between the object he mentions and his subjective reaction to it in tone by using the stress patterns (McChesney 213-4). The individuality in his poems bu eğer dönemse büyük harf olmalcomes forth as plurality within his notions of inscape and instress in Hopkins’ poetry. His use of Christian symbols goes hand in hand with the notions of sacrifice and salvation and then comes his Romanticist love of nature, and his affinity with Wordsworth.

Paul de Man uses the words “affinity” and “sympathy” to draw attention to the idea that Romanticism is not a matter of the merging of two opposites rather it is the reference to the relationships between subject and

---

<sup>12</sup> The ictus is marked in Catherine Phillips’ *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Major Works, Including all the Poems and Selected Prose*.

nature in terms of an inter-subjective, interpersonal relationship. Therefore, the priority of the outside world passes to the priority of subject (de Man 195-6).

Hopkins associates "Tractarian aesthetics" as "an outgrowth of Romanticism" when he classifies the Tractarians Newman and Keble within the school of the Lake poets and hands "a theological aesthetics" (Ward 54-5). Hopkins was attracted to the theological aspect in their poetry and the Romantic side according to Ward. What is more, Hopkins denigrates the emotionalism of Romanticism although he takes sides with the intellectual deep ideas of the movement because Hopkins never trusts the imagination as an agent of truth. Thus, about subject object agency, his detailed depictions of nature and the objects outstand "the power of truth coming into revelation" (Wordsworth 206-7). Hopkins is committed to the Catholic doctrine so within his notion of inscape the poetic persona interacts with objects to "exercise living power" (Ward 114-5).

Catherine Belsey in her essay "Constructing the Subject: Deconstructing the Text" suggests that Romanticism involves subjectivity as its main theme. The poet is conscious of himself and develops with his fight against the strains of "outer reality" (360). The "I" of Romantic poetry is generally a "super-subject" who experiences life at a higher depth than ordinary man. He is absorbed in himself and the external world which is contrasted either leads to confinement or sustenance. The transcendence of the subject is manifested as problematic. The "I" addresses an individual reader and invites him to respond to this call (Belsey 360). The confinement or sustenance effect of an object on the "super-subject" may create tension in Romantic poetry. Regarding these ideas, this article examines the similarities between Hopkins' poetry and Romanticism concerning subject object agency. The sprung rhythm as the stress pattern foregrounds how the poetic persona constructs intersubjectivity with the object forming an entropy between the subject and the object: "What you look hard at seems to look hard at you, hence the true and the false instress of nature" (Hopkins 2002, 204).

### **Can Sprung Rhythm Prioritize the Position of the Subject and Object in Hopkins' Poetry?**

This article hypothesizes rhythm as an element to examine the variations of perception to group events in sequence of sound. Paul de Man, in his article "The Resistance to Theory", states that aesthetics is related to "the effect of meaning rather than with content *per se*" (98). Later, he explains it as "a phenomenism of a process of meaning and understanding" (98). Furthermore, he claims that the fusion of sound and meaning is "a mere effect which language can perfectly achieve" (99). This fusion is not related to anything else for de Man. De Man argues on the conventionality of sound as follows: "The phenomenality of the signifier, as sound, is unquestionably involved in the correspondence between the name and the thing named, but the link, the relationship between the word and thing, is not phenomenal but conventional" (99). This aspect of language provides freedom from being simply referential for de Man as for all structuralists and poststructuralists. In this respect, even Hopkins' poetry, with its fusion of sound and meaning, cannot be regarded as merely referential. The fusion of sprung rhythm and meaning would therefore create a basis for the prioritization of subject and object with respect to stress patterns of sound.

Gerard Manley Hopkins in "On the Origin of Beauty: a Platonic Dialogue" defines rhythm as an aesthetic form that can create beauty, as discussed in the following lines:

"We must be dialectical again then," said the Professor. "You think these things beautiful, do you not, rhythm, metre, and rhyme?"

"Of course I do; everybody does. Swoop away," said Hanbury.

"And what is rhythm? Is it not the repetition of a regular sequence of syllables either in accent or quantity?"

"The repetition of a regular sequence of syllables. If I understand, yes."

[...] The repetition of them makes language rhythmical.

[...] "You remember we agreed that regularity was the consistency of agreement or likeness either of a thing to itself or of several things to each other. Rhythm therefore is an instance of regularity, is it not?"

[...] Rhythm therefore is likeness tempered with difference." (15-6)

Hopkins' Platonic dialogue is more than a definition of what rhythm is because it may also be interpreted as a means to adapt rhythm to dialectics which leads to the statement that "it is likeness tempered with difference". That difference is "the accentual sequence" (16) or as in a trochee, or an iamb, or any other repeated

foot that includes both stressed and unstressed sounds. The same sequence of accentuation may be manifested in different syllables (16). The strong stress may cause the deviation so that difference may make it appear as beautiful. In addition to this, the following poem, “Pied Beauty”, challenges the idea that different accentuation of rhythm may both mark the priority of subject or object and the coalescence of them in a higher being, which is also similar to Romanticism presented in the previous part of the chapter:

/ X / X /      X / X      / <sup>13</sup>

“Glory | be to God | for dappled | things” (“Pied Beauty” 1). The poem is written in sprung paeonic rhythm (Phillips 353). As Abrams states Hopkins’ metric decisions in complex examples may seem to be arbitrary in sprung rhythm (199). However, when the strong stresses of the words “glory”, “be”, “God”, “dappled”, “things” are concerned the subject’s glorification of “dappled things” or the objects are emphasized with the stress patterns. This arbitrariness of the sprung rhythm may be interpreted as Hopkins’ full authority and absolute control over the rhythm of the poem. This feature of sprung rhythm may further indicate the absolute rhythmic effect created by the poet to give priority to the subject or the object. That is to say, phonologically the subject and object relationship and their coalescence in God, which resemble the Romantic ideology of Coleridge are put forth in “Glory be to God for dappled things”. This method of prosodic approach may be employed to Hopkins’ other poems to highlight the agency of subject and object as well.

Furthermore, Mick Short suggests that the grouping of events in sequence of sound ends up with regularity and that leads to boredom. Variations in regularity create an interesting rhythmic effect (125). The variations in regularity may validate Hopkins’ sprung rhythm as attractive for the audience in this respect. Also, Short claims that stress patterns make the meaning clear in context (142). Attractive variations and making the meaning clear may provide a way for sprung rhythm to point out the priority given to subject or object in poetry. Sprung rhythm is a tool chosen by Hopkins to contextualize the subject and object relationship in his poetry because the audience’s attention could be directed by the variations of stresses. The priority of the subject, like it is in the Romantic ideology, may be sought regarding the rhythmic effect of poetry. Thus, how Hopkins creates variations in his poetry with rhythmic effect foregrounds the priority of the position of subject and object.

Julia Kristeva in her *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974) suggests that sound patterns could disrupt the linear thought and with the repetition of sound patterns object in poetry would be created not from the world of things but from language (in Belsey 17-8). Then language and rhythm are both at work during the objectification process. This is another evidence for this claim that rhythmic effect is significant to analyse subject and object in poetry. The disruption of the linear thought may be considered as a deviation in terms of linguistics. The foregrounded rhythmical effect of language may produce object as a metalanguage. The construction of object through rhythmic patterns of language can also be analysed in Hopkins’ poetry.

Similarly, Hopkins explains the meaning of inscape as “design and pattern” and his main aim in poetry. For Hopkins, the world is abundant with inscape. He has two definitions for inscape: the first one is it is about the world of nature, perceived by the mind, and the second one is about language (McChesney 202), the patterns he created in language such as the stress patterns or sprung rhythm.

In conclusion, this article examines subject and object as defined by Duns Scotus, Walter Pater, and Romanticism in terms of stress patterns, which were also essential for poetry for Pater, and claims that the stress patterns or at times sprung rhythm for Hopkins are significant in the analysis of Gerard Manley Hopkins’ poetry. There may be various other approaches for investigation such as gender and theology. Nonetheless, the approach of this article provides a background that offers theme, theory, and linguistics as inseparable means to analyse the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Overall, this article strengthens the idea that either object or subject is foregrounded in Hopkins’ poems through stress patterns or sprung rhythm. These findings also have significant implications for the understanding of how the intensified form of the will or instress takes place in speech in Hopkins’ poetry. Although this article focuses on rhythmic patterns and stresses in Hopkins’ poetry, the findings may well have a bearing on his notions of inscape and instress regarding the energy created by the stress patterns. By providing a conceptual model, this work offers a novel understanding of considering the

---

<sup>13</sup> Markings of ictus and remis mine. Mick Short’s *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays and Prose* is used as a reference.

relationship between poetic persona and object in most of the case natural objects in poetry. A greater focus on sprung rhythm could produce interesting findings that account more for various notions such as the asymmetrical relation between animals and people, plants, natural environment and people or even the society and people in Hopkins' poems. My argument claims that the position of subject and object in Hopkins' poetry cannot be analysed only in terms of semantics or theoretical background because rhythm is an inseparable means to poetry as Hopkins proposes. Hopkins creates sound patterns and it may be claimed that these sound patterns are objects (in language) created by the poet (subject, in the cases of poetic persona "I") to reconcile the dialectical relationship between the two.

### Works Cited

- Abrams, M. H. A. *Glossary of Literary Terms, Ninth Edition*. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009.
- Belsey, Catherine. "Constructing the Subject: Deconstructing the Text." in *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies, Third Edition*. Eds. Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer. London: Longman, 1994. 355-70.
- , Ed. *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.
- Bergonzi, Bernard. *Gerard Manley Hopkins*. London: Macmillan, 1977.
- Bloom, Harold, Ed. *Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1970.
- Day, Aidan. *Romanticism*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- De Man, Paul. "The Resistance to Theory." in *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies Third Edition*. Eds. Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer. London: Longman, 1994. 94-108.
- Devlin, Christopher. "Hopkins and Duns Scotus." in *Gerard Manley Hopkins Poems: A Casebook*. Ed. Margaret Bottrall. London: Macmillan, 1975. 113-6.
- Easson, Angus. *Gerard Manley Hopkins*. London: Routledge, 2011.
- Feeney, Joseph J. *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Magician of Words, Sounds, Images, and Insights*. 15-25 Minutes. Audiobook: A Now You Know Media Study Guide, 2013.
- Grisewood, Harman. "The Impact of G. M. Hopkins." in *Gerard Manley Hopkins Poems: A Casebook*. Ed. Margaret Bottrall. London: Macmillan, 1975. 92-108.
- Head, Dominic, Ed. *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*, Third Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006.
- Hopkins, Gerard Manley. *The Major Works*. Ed. Catherine Phillips. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.
- . *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- Hurley, Michael. "Wrestling with Gerard Manley Hopkins." *Textual Practice* 35.6 (2021): 921-940. DOI: 10.1080/0950236X.2021.1936774.
- Iser, Wolfgang. *Walter Pater: The Aesthetic Moment*. Trans. David Henry Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.
- King, Peter. "Scotus on Metaphysics." in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*. Ed. Thomas Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. 16-68.
- McChesney, Donald. "The Meaning of Inscape." in *Gerard Manley Hopkins Poems: A Casebook*. Ed. Margaret Bottrall. London: Macmillan, 1975. 202-7.
- Noone, Timothy B. "Universals and Individuation." in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*. Ed. Thomas Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. 100-28.
- Pater, Walter. *Appreciations with an Essay on Style*. London: Macmillan, 1920. E-book. <<https://archive.org/stream/cu31924105726180#page/n9/mode/2up>>.
- Phillips, Catherine. *The Oxford Authors: Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986.
- . *Introduction. Hopkins, Gerard Manley. The Major Works*. Ed. Catherine Phillips Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.
- Roberts, Gerald. *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Literary Life*. London: Macmillan, 1994.
- Short, Mick. *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays and Prose*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Tsur, Reuven. *Poetic Rhythm: Structure and Performance: An Empirical Study in Cognitive Poetics*. Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2012.

Vos, Antonie, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2006.

Ward, Bernadette Waterman. *World as Word: Philosophical Theology in Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Washington DC: The Catholic U of America P, 2002.

Williams, Thomas, Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003.

Wimsatt, James I., *Hopkins's Poetics of Speech Sound: Sprung Rhythm, Lettering, Inscap*. Toronto: Toronto UP, 2006.

Wordsworth, William. "The Prelude." in *Wordsworth: Selected Poetry*. Ed. Van Doren. London: The Modern Library Classics, 2002.

---