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Course

Date

**Group Member Roles**

**Introduction**

Gerald Manley Hopkins was born in then Essex, in an extremely religious family. His academic life was a journey of poetic and spiritual development. He started writing poems inspired by nature and the beautiful sceneries of the Welsh and his poetic style seem inspired by it too. The context of his writings was religious and philosophical, literary and spiritual. For him, poetry was a way of seeing reality and interpreting the hidden meanings and messages in nature for mankind. One of his finest works is a sonnet written by him in 1877 while he was studying for the priesthood at North Wales. The inspiration behind writing this poem is described by himself as; "The Hurrahing sonnet was the outcome of half an hour of extreme enthusiasm as I walked home alone one day from fishing in the Elwy.” He undergoes a mystical experience while walking down the river and expresses in this poem that how he sees God in the beautiful scenes.

**Body**

In my view, the topic of the poem is quite transcendent itself as the writer talks about beautiful autumn weather and while walking through the streets and down the river, he sees nature. He realizes how beautiful it is and then the mystic revelation upon him makes him joyous and contented. He believes that God is alive and present in nature. He sees Christ as the embodiment of the majesty and beauty of the natural sceneries. He meets God on a day of autumn. After the summers, the season of the harvest begins, and so the poet refers to that. The word ‘hurrahing' is the expression of his happiness and satisfaction. So the title is the expression of his ecstatic mood upon having believed that he has seen God.

The poet enunciates the idea that God can be felt and seen in his creation but one has to look for Him. The observer of nature has to be a beholder. The beholder only looks at nature when its beauty attracts one and incites excitement. The eyes of a faithful can see God in the skies and clouds and hills that the poet sees as the shoulders on which God carries the weight of the world. The joyous title of the poem entails the paradox about God's presence that the perception of God in nature is immanent though He is transcendent too. The divine presence can be found anywhere in reality at any time. The worth and beauty of any scene in nature are understandable only when someone sees through it, the power of the beauty lends wings and enters the human heart. In that moment, one forgets about the worldly existence but ascends high in the sky in a mood of joy and ecstasy.

The language of the sonnet is as a powerful tool as its imagery is. Hopkins made excessive use of oxymoron and alliterative phrases in the poem. The title itself is an example of alliteration. He has used many alliterative phrases such as ‘silk-sack’, ‘world-wielding’, ‘wind-walks' etc. His choice of an oxymoron is also exceptional as for the description of excessive beauty he used a striking phrase ‘barbarous in beauty'. Hopkins also used biblical tone for his poem mainly inspired by his religious attachment and excessive studies of the Bible during his priesthood education. Even the very title of the poem ‘Hurrahing' seems to be derived from the Isaiah 55:12; "for you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you with singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”

The structure of the sonnet is rhythmic that grows deep in the quatrains as the philosophical interpretation intensifies. Hopkins has used the Petrarchan style in which a rhetorical question is addressed in the octaves and then the sestet answer which is not entirely the answer of the question asked but the development of philosophical perceptions. The sonnet consists of some long lines while others are slightly shorter. The lines have fluency among them as the same message continues in the next line without even the pause. Hopkins has also used repetitive words and phrases for giving it emphasis and dramatic touch for example ‘now; now’, ‘these things, these things’. The structure of the sonnet gives it sheer energy and the excitement that is dictated by the use of powerful phrases and this layout.

The imagery and personification used by Hopkins in this sonnet glorify the figurative language and its hidden meanings centered in it. He used personification phrases such as ‘lovely behavior', for clouds, which is mainly an attribute of humans or anything alive. He used the words ‘eyes' and ‘hearts' to personify the characteristics of an individual. The use of ‘lips' on the other hand is a synecdoche that symbolizes the ability of speech. Hopkin's use of figurative language primarily the rhetoric and imagery are quite dense. An example from one of the quatrains is Hopkin's fascination with the sky when he says; ‘I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes..’ is him captivated by the skyscape rather than the landscape and the echoing to the Psalm 121:1; “I will lift my eyes up unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." This is the depiction of his vision that after the first sight of glory all that is left is the sight of God.

**Conclusion**

This sonnet is a masterpiece as only a select few poetries have this much strong influence and rhetoric that is inculcated in the hearts of the readers. Hopkins has used his imagination and penned it down in the most eloquent way that takes the readers on that journey of spirituality. It is simply enthralling that how by looking at nature he revealed that he has seen God in it. However, not everyone can perceive a revelation and have an insight of God Himself, it requires the eyes of a beholder. That is when a person's heart is lifted higher and send into a mystical journey. It is fascinating that Hopkins was able to take the readers with him on that imaginative path and understand the worth of nature. The vocabulary and rhythm in the lines have an imparting effect on the theme of the sonnet.

**Works Cited**

Hopkins, Gerard Manley. “Hurrahing in Harvest.” *Representative Poetry Online*, 1877, <https://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poems/hurrahing-harvest>.