Projections of Modernism:
The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins

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Abstract

The modernist challenge to tradition and its urge for experimentation in both content and form are generally identified with pre-World War I continental avant-garde art and literature. Modernism in Englis poetry, on the other hand, reached its peak in 1920s with the publication of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which by employing avant-garde forms, explored the trauma of living in a world devoid of meaning due to the collapse of former cultural and philosophical values. One of the main reasons for the delayed arrival of modernism in England is the British Empire's dominance in world politics, industrialisation and trade during the reigns of Queen Victoria and King Edward VII. However, despite living during the Victorian Age, Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) could not identify with its dominant discourse and consequently, while studying at Oxford, he chose to convert to Catholicism. A closer look at Hopkins's conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism reveals that it was a manifestation of his crisis of subjectivity, which in turn stimulated the composition of experimental poems exploring his search for spirituality and the futility of existence in a meaningless universe. In light of Michel Foucault's theory on the subject and power, the aim of this study is to analyse Hopkins's struggle to construct his subjectivity as a Catholic poet and the power mechanisms that shaped his subjection. Moreover, this paper also focuses on how Hopkins's quest for subjectivity, his experimental formal techniques and thematic concerns make him a precursor of modernist English poetry.

Keywords: Gerard Manley Hopkins, Michel Foucault, subjectivity, power, modernism.

Modernist İzdüşümler: Gerard Manley Hopkins'in Şiiri

Öz

Geleneğe meydan okuyarak içerik ve biçim açışından deneyselliği teşvik eden modernizm çoğunlukla I. Dünya Savaşı öncesi Kıta Avrupa'sında ortaya çıkan avangart sanat ve edebiyatla özdeşleştirilmektedir. Öte yandan, İngiliz şiirinde modernizmin doruk noktasına ulaşması ise ancak T. S. Eliot'ın avangart biçimsel özellikler kullanarak hayatın anlamsızlığını, kültürel ve felsefi değerlerdeki çöküşü kaleme aldığı, 1920'lerde yayınlanan *The Waste Land* adlı eseri ile mümkün olmuştur. İngiltere'nin modernizm ile oldukça geç tanışmış olmasının sebepleri arasında Kraliçe Viktorya ve Kral VII. Edward dönemlerinde Britanya İmparatorluğu'nun kendisini siyaset, sanayileşme ve ticaret gibi alanlarda dünya lideri olarak konumlandırması öne çıkmaktadır. Ancak, Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889), Viktorya Çağı'nda yaşamış olmasına rağmen baskın söylemle

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bağ kurmakta zorlanmış ve Oxford'ta öğrenim gördüğü yıllarda Katolik inancını seçmiştir. Hopkins'in Protestanlık inancından Katolik inancına geçişi yakından incelendiğinde, bunun aslında onun yaşadığı öznellik krizinin bir göstergesi olduğu görülür. Hopkins'in yaşadığı bu kriz, onu, tinsel arayışını ve anlamdan yoksun bir evrendeki varoluşsal bunalımını irdeleyen deneysel şiirler yazmaya yöneltmiştir. Michel Foucault'nun özne ve iktidar teorisi ışığında, bu çalışmanın amacı Hopkins'in Katolik bir şair olma arzusu ile öznelliğini inşa etme mücadelesini ve onun özneleşme sürecine etki eden iktidar mekanizmalarını incelemektir. Ayrıca, bu makale Hopkins'in öznellik arayışının, yarattığı deneysel biçim ve temaların, onu nasıl İngiliz modernist şiirinin öncülerinden biri haline getirdiğini de irdelemektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Gerard Manley Hopkins, Michel Foucault, öznellik, iktidar, modernizm

INTRODUCTION

Search for a centre and the problems of subjectivity occupy a significant place in modernist poetics. As part of his analysis of the collapse of the Western metaphysics during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Michael Levenson (1999) in "Introduction" to *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, draws attention to the major characteristics of the decentred universe in which "[t]here was so much to doubt: the foundations of religion and ethics, the integrity of governments and selves, the survival of a redemptive culture" (p. 5). The consciousness of inhabiting a chaotic cosmos resulted in crisis of subjectivity and created the urge to redefine who man is. As Donald E. Hall (2004) in his work *Subjectivity* points out, subjectivity is the product of "the intersection of two lines of philosophical inquiry: epistemology" as well as "ontology" (p. 4). During the Victorian Age, the emergence and the popularisation of the theories and ideas of Charles Darwin, Frederich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud and Ferdinand de Saussure resulted in radical epistemological changes that challenged the Cartesian Ego. The primacy of the all-knowing and all commanding rational individual was undermined. Man was redefined as a primitive being who was subjected to various survival struggles, controlled by his vanity and sexual drives. Thus, man seized to be the meaning-maker who used to command language. In addition to revolutionising the way the human being was defined, these initial attacks on Cartesianism, in 1960s, inspired the theories of various poststructuralist philosophers that reduced man to a subject constructed by mechanisms like language, ideology or power. Influenced by Nietzsche, the French philosopher, Michel Foucault is one of the key names, whose ideas made a breakthrough in the study of subjectivity. In "The Subject and Power," Foucault (1982), identifies "the subject" as "the general theme of [his] research" and examines how complex power relations shape its construction (p. 778). Drawing on Foucault's theories on the subject and power, this paper aims to explore Gerard Manley Hopkins's crisis of subjectivity in the context of power relations between Protestantism and Catholicism during the Victorian era. The paper further investigates how the poet's desire to become a Catholic poet and his unresolved subjectivity crisis stimulated his innovations in both form and content, establishing him as the forerunner of modernist English poetry.

THE FOUCAULDIAN SUBJECT AND POWER

At the outset of his "The Subject and Power" Michel Foucault (1982) asserts that the primary aim of his work was to "to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (p. 777). Foucault (1982) views the subject as a construct shaped by power relationships that govern human action and explains that "[t]here are two meanings of the word 'subject': subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (p. 781). Stripped of its humanist qualities as a self-knowing rational entity, man in Foucauldian theory is reduced to a subject who loses autonomy over the formation of his own being as he is subjected to or subjugated by power. Therefore, according to Foucault (1982), "the struggle against the forms of subjection against the submission of subjectivity" represents one of the most pressing concerns of contemporary society (p. 782). After elaborating on the subject, Foucault (1982) expands on his views on power and how it is exercised. For Foucault, it is a mistake to confine power to state or a specific class because power is omnipresent and operates beyond violence or seeking consent (p. 789). In *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, Foucault (1980) says that the study of "the nature of power" should break away from traditional critique of "juridical edifice of sovereignty, the State apparatuses and [their] ideologies" (p. 102). As stated by Madan Sarup (1993) in *An Introductory Guide to Post-structuralism and Postmodernism*, Foucauldian power resists being "a commodity which may be acquired or seized" but is characterised as "a network" with "threads [that] extend everywhere" (p. 74). Since power is reconceptualised as is an invisible network of power relations that govern the subject's behaviour, subjection metamorphoses into an ongoing process involving "a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts" that construct the required subjectivity (Foucault, 1980, p. 97). Consequently, as Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace in *A Foucault Primer Discourse, Power and the Subject* (1993) argue, subjection entails the construction of the individual subject through his exposure to "to particular, historically located, disciplinary processes and concepts" (p. 3). All in all, by foregrounding the fundamental role that power plays in the construction of the subject, Foucault makes a significant contribution to the study of subjectivity.

HOPKINS AND *PASTORAL POWER*

Like many modernist poets who were driven to reconstruct their subjectivity in a world lacking a masted-signified, Hopkins was caught within a Foucauldian network of power relations as he struggled to secure his identity and restore meaning to existence. In the post-Darwinian Victorian background, Hopkins's subjectivity crisis was triggered by the tension between the Protestant and Catholic doctrines inherent in the process of subjection. With his birth into a prosperous Anglican middle-class family and as a student at Oxford University, at first glance, Hopkins could be considered as one of the fittest members in the social Darwinist environment. He was raised in a Protestant bourgeois milieu that esteemed the rational individual, who was not only "autonomous and capable of initiating action" but also "calculates means and ends" (Sarup, 1993, p. 69). According to Foucault (1982), Protestantism played a fundamental role in the construction of "a new subjectivity" that glorified the individual (p. 782). For Foucault (1982), the Reformation

marked "a great crisis of the Western experience of subjectivity" as it challenged "the pastoral power" that was exercised by the Medieval Catholic Church (p. 782). Associated with pastorate and the ecclesiastical institution, the aim of *pastoral power* was "to assure individual salvation in the next world" (Foucault 1982, p. 783). Subverting *pastoral power*, by placing the individual mind and will at the centre of religious exegesis, Marthin Luther challenged the constructed nature of the hierarchical order and reality established by the Roman Catholic Church: "Biblical truth and the truth of the self were both opened up to questioning and reinvention" (Hall, 2004, p. 14). Luther's reconciliation of mind and soul as the key elements in pursuit of salvation attacked the Church's efforts "to deny subjective (even if rational) agency in the making of meaning, and to reaffirm human dependence on divine and institutional mandate" (Hall, 2004, p. 21). Consequently, the spirit of the Renaissance and the Reformation gave rise to an "increasing awareness of the self as something that was not divinely formed and statically placed, but rather changeable and possibly cultivatable through one's own concerted activity" (Hall, 2004, p. 17).

Foucault (1982) notes that the mechanisms of *pastoral power* began to decline with the advent of the Enlightenment while some of its apparatuses were adapted by state power (p. 783). On the other hand, the resurgence of *pastoral power* was stimulated by the Catholic Church of England in the Victorian era. Motivated by a concealed political agenda, to restore Catholicism by the end of the century in England, the Catholic Church conducted significant conversion missions among students at Oxford (Muller, 2003, p. 3). As one of those students, Hopkins experienced difficulty in identifying with bourgeois discourse and the High Church of England. According to Catherine Philips (2010), Hopkins's Oxford was going through an "intellectual turmoil" taking place between "the agnostic Fellows" who were introducing "new-historical" critiques of Biblical truth and the Oxford Movement's Catholic preachings (p. 677). Stimulated by such religious strife, the poet's quest for subjectivity was brought to daylight as he resolved to convert to Catholicism in 1866. At this stage, as Muller (2003) observes, Hopkins's conversion represented a young idealist's "act of self-definition through dissent," characterised by an "individualistic rejection of religious tradition, national identity, and paternal authority" (p. 2). As a convert, Hopkins renounced his former identity, which was rooted in Protestant liberal politics and progressive ideology, in order to construct a new subjectivity codified by *pastoral power*. Therefore, he not only broke his bond with "the Anglican artistic circles of his childhood" but also strived to integrate with "the social subset of middle-class converts, landed Catholic families and the swelling numbers of impoverished Catholic immigrants" (Philips, 2010, pp. 677-678). He even chose to romanticise himself as a Catholic subject who was embarking on a chivalric quest by participating in "the vanguard of Catholic efforts to win back his native land to her ancient faith" and composing poems that would appeal to the Victorian Catholic reading public (Muller, 2003, p. 3, 5).

In the initial stages, the process of Hopkin's new subjection and his subsequent admission to the Jesuit community offered a fleeting resolution to his existential crisis. According to William Henry Gardner (1967) in the "Introduction to the Fourth Edition" of *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, Hopkins could harmonise religious worship and poetry and experienced no "tension between the free creative personality of the artist and the acquired, dedicated character of the Jesuit

priest" (p. xxxv). Moreover, Gardner (1967) argues that thanks to his power to fuse the spiritual with the matter, in his poems Hopkins "combined a mystical insight into nature with a profound humanity" (p. xxxv).

In contrast to Gardner's claim, a closer examination of both Hopkins's life and work displays that his conversion marked the beginning of a difficult process of subjugation, which intensified his subjectivity crisis and increased his sense of alienation in the new religious milieu. Foucault (1982) defines power as "[a]set of actions upon other actions" which requires the subject to maintain control over his actions and "modify" them (Foucault, 1982, p. 789; p. 788). Similarly, in the construction of his Catholic subjectivity, *pastoral power* required Hopkins to prioritise the communal interests and needs by making sacrifices "for the life and salvation of the flock" (Foucault, 1982, p. 783). Because of its associations with his former Protestant bourgeoise identity, one of the actions expected of Hopkins was to renounce poetry for faith. Hopkins was to appreciate that in the realm where *pastoral power* relations operate there was no room for individualism and chivalric idealism. As Bernard Bergonzi (1977) points out being "a Jesuit priest in Victorian England" implied being "removed from the mainstream of national life and culture" (p. xi). In the same manner, Jill Muller (2003) in *Gerard Manley Hopkins and Victorian Catholicism: A Heart in Hiding,* observes that Hopkins was one of the numerous "English converts" to acknowledge that "the independent and self-assertive qualities of mind that had facilitated their religious change were a real impediment to obedience in their new faith" (p. 2). As his letter to Watson Dixon displays, *pastoral power* demanded Hopkins to sacrifice his poetic self and destroy all his work: "What I had written I burnt before I became a jesuit and resolved to write no more, as not belonging to my profession" (Hopkins, 1990, p. 107). Therefore, the strife between poetry and faith signified his inability to fully ally himself with Catholic ontological doctrines regarding man's pursuits in life. In Foucauldian sense the destruction of his work also exemplified how power disciplines subjects to ensure their obedience (Foucault, 1982, p. 788). Although it conflicted with his dream of preaching through poetry, Hopkins complied with the mechanisms of *pastoral power* and consented to sever ties with his Protestant past, as part of the constitution of his Catholic subjectivity. As a result, "for seven years," Hopkins repressed his unique poetic drive, which was allowed to return only upon "the wish of [his] superiors" who imposed their control on the poetic content: "two or three little presentation pieces which occasion called for" (Hopkins, 1990, p. 107).

HOPKINS, A CATHOLIC POET

In the early phases of the construction of his Catholic subjectivity, Hopkins's idealistic urge to be a Catholic subject prevented him from questioning his submission to the mechanisms of *pastoral power*. However, it is observed that when the poetic impulse could no longer be kept under control, Hopkins developed several forms of the Foucauldian "strategy of struggle" (Foucault, 1982, p. 794). As Foucault (1982) suggests, because "[p]ower is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free" Hopkins felt free to seek the ways to compromise and to fuse the poetic and spiritual impulses (p. 790). Being one of the Oxford converts that "grapple[d] all their lives with efforts to reconcile their religious and national identities," Hopkins tried to give expression to the "Victorian

Catholic dilemma" (Muller, 2003, p. 2). Hopkins strived to assert his will with the composition of the poem "The Wreck of Deutschland," about the catastrophic death of the five Franciscan nuns, who were exiled from Germany. Encouraged by the rector's wish that "someone would write a poem on the subject," Hopkins thought that the disaster was the right occasion to resume poetry with a content that would be appreciated by the members of Jesuit community (Hopkins, 1990, p. 107). Furthermore, this adaptation of content also raised Hopkins's hopes about demonstrating the formal experimentations he was engaged in regarding "a new rhythm" (Hopkins, 1990, p. 107). Inspired by the accentual meter of Old English alliterative verse, Hopkins created "'sprung rhythm'," which was based on "scanning by accents or stresses alone, without any account of the number of syllables, so that a foot may be but one strong syllable or it may be many light and one strong" (Hopkins, 1990, p. 107). What is more, sprung rhythm could be considered as the manifestation of Hopkin's Catholic subjection for it sought to eliminate "the Elizabethan statutes in poetry as well as religion" (Muller, 2003, p. 3). As Gerald Roberts (1990) in "Introduction" to *Selected Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins* observes, "The Wreck of Deutschland" restored Hopkins's faith in himself as a gifted poet to serve God, which symbolised the "revolutionary change in its author's feelings about his vocation as a poet" (p. 6). Nevertheless, the renewed optimism that "through poetry as in the priesthood" he could serve God and "that the two vocations were not, after all, mutually exclusive" soon vanished (Roberts, 1990, p. 6). Due to its "strange scansion marks," and "a style that would have disconcerted most Victorian editors, let alone a Jesuit one" the poem's publication was rejected by *Month*, the Jesuit magazine (Roberts, 1990, p. 6). Consequently, the reconciliatory strategy that encouraged the poet to feel "free to compose" deepened his identity crisis since he "cannot find it in [his] conscience to spend time" working on the poem and says: "I have done little and shall do less" (Hopkins, 1990, p. 108). Although formal experimental techniques like sprung rhythm would be the defining characteristics of pre-war avant-gardist and high modernist, they were dismissed by *pastoral power*, which tries to discipline and impose its own system of surveillance by making "each person … his or her own overseer" (Sarup, 1993, p. 67) According to Rainer Emig (1996), this demonstrates how within the Catholic "system of belief that sees man merely as the tool of a Divine plan" such ventures of "artistic originality would be impossible or even blasphemous" (p. 3). Thus, reflecting his unresolved subjectivity crisis, Hopkins's innovative style can be taken as a sign for his inherent Protestant uniqueness promoting originality rooted in the belief "that man is autonomous from supreme schemes outside his domain" (Emig, 1996, p. 3).

The philosophy of John Duns Scotus occupies a fundamental place among Hopkins's efforts to construct his Catholic poet subjectivity within the domain of *pastoral power*. As observed by Glenn Hughes (2011), Hopkins's studies of "the founder of the Jesuit order, St. Ignatius of Loyola, and the thirteenth-century Scholastic theologian and philosopher John Duns Scotus" as "two theological authorities" indicated his attempts to compromise the love for God with the love of poetry (p. 45). He poeticised his discovery of Scotus's philosophy and its impact on his subjectivity as a poet-priest in "Duns Scotus's Oxford" with the line, "who of all men most sways [his] spirits to peace" (Hopkins, 1967, p. 79, line 11). By offering the philosophical and theological foundations for the strategy of

reconciliation, Scotus's ideas provided a fleeting resolution to his crisis of subjectivity by stimulating "the ontological, aesthetic, and moral significance of inscape and instress" (Gardner, 1967, p. xxi). His journal entry indicates the epiphanic relief which sparkled "a new stroke of enthusiasm" in the poet to overcome the conflict between his divided selves (Hopkins, 1980, p. 56). Despite the uncertainty that "[i]t may come to nothing or it may be a mercy from God," he highlighted that "any inscape of the sky or sea" reminded him of Scotus (Hopkins, 1980, p. 56). Scotian "theory of *synchronic contingency*," which offers "an ontology of individuals," was among the major ideas that appealed to Hopkins (Vos, 2006, p. 397). In *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus* Antonie Vos (2006) mentions that this theory foregrounds individualism as the essence of all beings and it is regarded both as an extension and a manifestation of God's will and his goodness: "if something is good, it is good, because God wills it so" (p. 397, 414). Therefore, in Scotus's philosophy "the Will" of a man metamorphoses into "the active principle" to celebrate the "'individuality' or *haecceitas* (thisness)" that signifies "the 'final perfection' of any creature" (as cited in Gardner, 1967, p. xxi). Hopkins was also inspired by Scotian "'theory of knowledge'" that undermined Cartesianism by declaring that it was possible for a man to appreciate "the 'final perfection' of any creature" through "the intellect in union with the senses" (as cited in Gardner, 1967, p. xxi). Consequently, by reconceptualising poetic composition as the medium for representing God's will and goodness, Hopkins regained faith in himself as Catholic poet, who could assert his own will to perceive and express the "*individual natures (haecceities)*" of each being created by God (Vos, 2006, p. 400). As a Catholic poet, he strived to capture "the inscape of other beings in an act [of] instress," which involved "the apprehension of an object in an intense trust of energy toward it" that called for the glorification of "its specific distinctiveness" (Abrams, 1993, p. 1545). Therefore, in Hopkins's poetry, while *inscape* denotes the uniqueness of each being, *instress* conveys "the stress of God's Will in and through all things" (Gardner, 1967, p. xxi). The ideas of Duns Scotus encouraged Hopkins to embrace his subjectivity as a Catholic poet and become conscious of his "competence for having a feeling, a passively active and actively passive susceptibility" for the representation of *inscape* and evoking *instress* in his work (Llewelyn, 2015, p. 46). Scotian philosophy offered Hopkins not only the opportunity to realise his youthful, chivalric dream but also the means to celebrate his subjectivity as a Catholic poet.

PROJECTIONS OF MODERNISM

Hopkins devoted much of his life and poetry to reviving the style and the spirit of an idealised past. However, it is ironic that the series of experiments in form and subject matter he undertook to resolve his crisis of subjectivity ultimately positioned him as the precursor of modernist poetry. As he grappled with *pastoral power* and developed strategies to overcome his crisis of subjectivity in pursuit of achieving his dream to be a Catholic poet, Hopkins evolved into a vanguard of modernist experimental form and content. The reconciliatory function that Scotian philosophy assumed in Hopkins's poetry prepared the ground for the celebration of spirituality and the mythical past as the master signified in the poems of later poets like W.B. Yeats and T. S. Eliot. Hopkins's formal experimental techniques regarding sprung rhythm, his theories on *inscape* and *instress* and his urge to go beyond mimesis were also groundbreaking innovations for his successors. Although he

received harsh criticism concerning his formal experimentations, as a forerunner of modernist poetry he developed his unique style by adapting his theories on *inscape* and *instress* to the structure of his poems in order to overcome the old polarity between content and form. In his letter to Robert Bridges, despite admitting that his "poetry errs on the side of oddness," he elaborates on how *inscape* gives inspiration to the poem's unique form (Hopkins, 1990, p. 117):

> But as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern or what I am in the habit of calling 'inscape' is what I above all aim at in poetry. Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or inscape to be distinctive and it is the virtue of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped" (Hopkins, 1990, p. 117).

After discovering of the essential religious basis for his poetry in Scotian philosophy, and drawing inspiration from the Welsh landscape, Hopkins composed his famous mature poems uniquely structured with "an octave of freshly observed natural description" which "is often followed by a sestet that uncovers its religious dimension" (Philips, 2010, p. 681). "The Windhover" stands out as a sonnet in which the octave elaborates on the unique design, the *inscape* of a bird, the windhover, while the sestet stands out as the *instress* and dwells on the speaker's admiration of the bird, which eventually paves the way for the celebration of the glory of Christ. In addition to expressing his reverence for the beauty of the natural phenomena, Hopkins also expressed his grief for man's failure to grasp *inscape* and enjoy *instress*. In the poem, "God's Grandeur" the speaker regrets the way human beings have been ravaging nature: "Generations have trod, have trod, have trod" (Hopkins, 1967, p. 66, line 5). He is especially hostile to the greed for material things among the bourgeois which led to industrialisation and eventually the destruction of nature where "the soil / Is bare now" (Hopkins, 1967, p. 66, lines 7-8) As pointed out by Emig (1996), Hopkins's "reverence for natural phenomena untainted by human interference is linked with an almost aggressive condemnation of the effects of industrialization" (p. 12). Challenging dualism and the reduction of nature into a passive object to satisfy the needs of man, the master, the speaker urges people to realize that despite the damage caused, "the world is charged with the grandeur of God" which is ready to "flame out like shinning from shook foil" (Hopkins, 1967, p. 66, lines 1, 2). Thus, at this stage of his poetic carrier, through his theories on *inscape* and *instress*, as a Catholic poet, Hopkins achieved a fusion between the world of matter and spirit as a celebration of "the Christocentric vision" which "gives significance to the natural elements, [by] binding them into a large, metaphysical scheme" (Philips, 2010, p. 681).

At first glance, Hopkins's pursuit of sublimity in nature as a realm with transcendental dimension may lead to mistaken associations with Romanticism. However, as a poet living in a post-Darwinian era, he dissociated himself from his romantic predecessors who could rely on language to convey his spiritual insight. Different from Wordsworthian lyric I, which relies on language to convey the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth, 2008, p. 175), Hopkins's speakers feel confined by not having "the right word" in their effort to create *instress* (Hopkins, 1980, p. 50). Despite bearing the Romantic traits of a poet as a "lone genius who follows his (or occasionally her) own inspiration and disregards the tenants and rules of art," language for Hopkins lost its function as a referential tool to give expression to the poet's inner visionary reality (Lewis, 2007, pp. 7, 10). As a result, his experimentation with form and technique along with his will to go beyond

mimetic language positioned Hopkins within the realm of "no man's land of modernism" (Emig, 1996, p. 12). Because each poem with its experimental form and language was created as an *inscape*, that strived to give expression to the divine order, Hopkins coined "compounds to represent the unique interlocking of the characteristics of an object" (Abrams, 1993, p. 1545). He also resumed the formal ventures in "The Wreck of Deutschland" and explored internal rhymes by elaborating on "*cynghanedd*," the "patterns of alliteration and assonance" in Welsh poetry (Philips, 2010, p. 680). Challenging traditional lineation, Hopkins also employed "'outrides', loops strategically placed below a few syllables," which gave him the opportunity to "swell the length of line while notionally still adhering to their meter" (Philips, 2010 p.681). Hence, his trials with sentence structure result in "the often radically inverted and condensed syntax" which "turns the poems into almost illegible formal knots" (Emig, 1996, p. 13). The poem, "Pied Beauty" stands out as a striking example for the unconventional syntax and sentence structure. Depicting the *inscape* of God's glory, the ideas in first stanza evolve from the verb "*be*" that appears in the first line, "Glory be to God" (Hopkins, 1967, p. 69, line 1). Following this evocation, the poetic persona continues depicting the *inscape* for God's magnificence by offering a list of the stunning revelations of God's unique creations. Hopkins asserts his experimental style through the splendour of "dappled things" in nature such as "skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow" or "rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim" which he expresses in a single breathtaking sentence that runs across six lines (Hopkins, 1967, p. 69, lines 1, 2, 3). Moreover, the *inscape*, signifying the essential uniqueness of each being, is highlighted through the poet's use of compound words which are often coined by transforming verbs into nouns as exemplified in "[f]resh-firecoal," "chestnut-falls" (Hopkins, 1967, p. 69, line 4).

Scotian philosophy stimulated the subtlety of Hopkins's formal innovations and his fusion of the spiritual with the material in his mature poems. However, this compromise with *pastoral power* was short-lived as Hopkins's struggle to be recognised as Catholic poet eventually hindered his ability to attain his full status within the Jesuit order. Muller (2003) maintains that Hopkins's retreat into the splendour of the Welsh nature signified his failure "to find spiritual nourishment in Catholic, and specifically Jesuit, institutions" (p. 51). To pursue a career as a Jesuit priest in 1877, Hopkins was required to pass his final examination at St. Beuno's, Wales, which he ultimately failed (Muller, 2003, p. 70). His failure not only revealed Hopkins's incompatibility with *pastoral power* as a Catholic subject but also obstructed his future career advancement since, as noted by Bernard Bergonzi (1977), "Father Hopkins did not achieve distinction" (p. xi). Moreover, Hopkins was frustrated to realise that in spite of all his efforts, he could not rise beyond the status of a Catholic subject. According to Bergonzi (1977), despite his commitment both "as pastor and teacher," the authorities failed to "make effective use of his outstanding intellectual qualities, which had been so finely trained at Oxford" (p. xi). Consequently, for the rest of his life, Hopkins was appointed to "unfulfilling positions that would culminate in his final, disastrous posting to Dublin" (Muller, 2003, p. 70).

The Foucauldian analysis of Hopkins's life in Ireland suggests that he eventually abandoned developing strategies to construct his subjectivity according to the norms dictated by pastoral power. Thus, he no longer demonstrated the will to reconcile Catholicism with his poetic self as he

gave up dreaming of being a Catholic poet. Hopkins's marginalisation within the Catholic Church's power network in Ireland, combined with the turbulent Irish political climate drove him to resist subjection and submission (Foucault, 1982, p. 781). As a result, Hopkins felt mentally tormented and was subjected to several Foucauldian power processes such as: "enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment" (Foucault, 1982, p. 787). Gerald Roberts (1990) draws attention to his alienation both within the university context and his life in Ireland. The conservative and demanding environment at college triggered the sense of incompatibility regarding his position as a scholar and a priest as he felt that could not live up to the expectations of his superiors (Roberts, 1990, pp. 10-11). What is more, despite being a convert, Hopkins could not identify with the Irish for he was "a sincere patriot believing in the ideal of English imperialism" and was against Home Rule (Roberts, 1990, p.10). Similarly, Muller (2003) characterises the poet's life in Dublin as a form of exile caused by both "a dreary teaching job" and by being the target of "Irish Catholic prejudice against effete Oxford converts" (2003, p. 6). Ireland was a Catholic country; yet, it functioned like a prison, where Hopkins was caught in a network of oppressive *pastoral power* relations that "operate[d] on the mind rather than merely on the body" (Sarup, 1993, p. 60). Norman H. MacKenzie (1981), in *A Reader's Guide to Gerard Manley Hopkins*, points out that in addition to being overworked, Hopkins was subjected to the open contempt of his students and had to endure "the active sympathy shown those rebelling against England by Irish Catholic priests and bishops" (p. 172). Another letter to Bridges that was written in Ireland on May 17, in 1885, revealed that he was going through a serious spiritual and psychological breakdown: "I think that my fits of sadness, though they do not affect my judgment, resemble madness" (Hopkins, 1990, p. 210). As Gardner (1967) maintains, even the reward of becoming a professor of Greek Literature at University College, Dublin in 1884 metamorphosed into a punishment for Hopkins, who was "aggravated by bodily weakness," as well as "deep spiritual unrest" (p. xxv).

The dissolution of his former ideals and the unresolved crisis of subjectivity, along with the accompanying mental and psychological breakdowns, ironically contributed to Hopkins's emergence as a precursor of modernist poetry. Feeling entrapped by his conversion, Hopkins could not realise himself as a Catholic subject. What remained at the end of his futile struggle was the Oxford convert, who could achieve neither his dream of becoming the ideal poet nor that of being the Jesuit priest he aspired. As MacKenzie (1981) puts it, because "God has moved beyond earshot, or remain[ed] incomprehensibly deaf to his prayers and vows," life for Hopkins was meaningless and he lost motivation to seek refuge in anything that previously consoled him (p. 173). Different from his mature work, his later poetry was devoid of the relief that was inflamed by Scotian philosophy. Losing confidence that, as Catholic poet, he could partake in God's will and goodness and represent the "'individuality' or *haecceitas* (thisness)" of beings through the creation *inscape* and the invocation of *instress*, Hopkins composed poems imbued with modernist themes such as futility and depression (Gardner, 1967, p. xxi). As a result, the frustration of a life devoid of meaning stimulated the composition of poems with darker themes and very experimental form. "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" is one of these poems in which the hollowness of life and the attack on the referentiality of language is at peak. As pointed out by Emig (1996), this sonnet "is concerned with

language and its influence on the perception of reality on all its levels" (p. 20). The poet's failure to perceive the "'individuality' or *haecceitas* (thisness)" of things around him is expressed through the speaker's lost connection with the divine and his entrapment within language (Gardner, 1967, p. xxi). As a forerunner of modernist poetry, long before the publication of Eliot's high modernist epic, *The Waste Land*, with the epigraph on the Cumaean Sibyl's loss of prophetic vision and the attack on the ability of language to give expression to reality, Hopkins (1967) created a highly fragmentary and allusive poem on "Our tale, O our oracle" (p. 89, line 10). Signifying the lack of causality in life and the speaker's inability to find meaning in his observation of nature, the descent of the evening, which naturally announces the arrival of night, is associated with death and void. The sonnet problematises the relationship between language and mimesis as it opens with a juxtaposition of numerous allusive adjectives and adjectival phrases that "EARNEST, earthless, equal, attuneable, I vaulty, voluminous, . . . stupendous" invite the reader into the speaker's dismal mental and psychological state (Hopkins, 1967, p. 97, line 1). Associating evening with "time's vast, womb-of-all, home-of-all, / hears-of-all-night,"   the speaker expresses his grief because it involves the "[d]isremembering, dismembering," "self in self" as "[o]ur evening is over us; our night whelms, whelmes, / and will end us" (Hopkins, 1967, p. 97, lines 2, 7, 6, 8). Because, as a poet, Hopkins ceased to regard himself as the mediator of God's will and goodness, the sestet lacks *instress* and avoids providing a resolution to the futile human existence, which is defined by dualities, "two folds – black, white; right, / wrong" (Hopkins, 1967, p. 98, line 12). Therefore, the poem ends with the desolate speaker, who is tormented by the fact that dualism consumes life's vitality: "but these I two tell, each /off the other; of a rack / Where, selfwrung, selfstrung, sheathe- and shelterless, thoughts against thoughts in groans grind" (Hopkins, 1967, p. 98, lines 13-14). The representation of fragmentary universe which is devoid of "the comforting presence of God or Holy Ghost" indicates the poet's inability to resolve his ontological crisis in "a world governed by remorseless moral laws which make man's life a misery" (Roberts, 1994, p. 128).

Depression and the bitter consciousness of a life lacking spirituality were among Hopkins's major concerns in his last sonnets, likely composed around 1885. As pointed out by Gardner (1967), these poems were called as "[t]he sonnets of desolation" and include the poems from 64 to 69 (p. xlvii). According to Philips (2010), foreshadowing post-World War I trauma, with a deep sense "of isolation, despair an ennui so intense … [that] seems to pervade the world," these "dark sonnets" paved the way for "Hopkins's posthumous reputation" and his introduction "into the Modern world" (p. 683). Compared to "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves," Hopkins's "sonnets of desolation" are less experimental in terms of language. However, they represent the culmination of the poet's unresolved crisis of subjectivity. The poem "Carrion Comfort" echoes Charles Baudelaire's interest in the ugly in "Carrion," published in *Flowers of Evil* in 1857. Moreover, "Carrion Comfort" explores the modernist concern with loss of hope and faith: "NOT, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee" (Hopkins, 1967, p. 99, line 1). The "weary" speaker who can "cry … *no more*" expresses his grief by defining life as "[t]hat night, that year / Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God" (Hopkins, 1967, p. 100, lines 13-14). Another late poem, "I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day," is considered to be one of the poems Hopkins (1990) mentioned in his letter to

Robert Bridges written on May 17, 1885: "I have after long silence written two sonnets, … if ever anything was written in blood" (p. 212). With its octave, the poem foregrounds darkness and hopelessness by delving into "the psychological loneliness of the speaker" (Philips, 2010, p. 683). Mourning for the absence of light and meaning in his life, the persona is addressing his own heart: "What hours, O what black hours we have spent / This night! What sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!" (Hopkins, 1967, p.101, lines 2-3). Far from offering a remedy, the sestet, on the other hand, reveals how faith in God fails to function as the centrepiece in Hopkins's life since he still torments himself for being fallen: "I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree / Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;" (Hopkins, 1967, p.101, lines 9-10). Similarly, his loss of patience and inability to turn to God is treated in "PATIENCE, hard thing! the hard thing but to pray" (Hopkins, 1967, p.102, line 1). As the last "sonnet of desolation," "MY own heart let me more have pity on" draws attention to the speaker's weariness of unresolved subjectivity crisis and his desperate call for peace. Challenging the Cartesian duality between mind/body, the speaker yearns for a unified subjectivity. Addressing his "heart" to be "Charitable" and his "Soul" to "leave comfort root-room; let joy size," he wants "not live this tormented mind / With this tormented mind tormenting yet" (Hopkins, 1967, p. 102-3, lines 1, 3, 9, 11, 3-4).

Hopkins died of typhoid in 1889 without overcoming his crisis of subjectivity and attaining a rewarding resolution to the conflict between poetry and faith, which was rooted in the power struggle between Protestantism and Catholicism the process of subjection. However, in his letter to Bridges on 15th of February, 1879, Hopkins shared his intention of compiling all his poems and expressed his wish that he "should be partly, though not altogether, glad" if one day, after he dies, someone organises the publication of his work (Hopkins, 1990 p. 76). Throughout his life, Hopkins experienced marginalisation across various contexts such as "Victorian England, Oxford, the Catholic Church, the Jesuit order" and was subjected to conflicting power processes that prevented him from embracing the unique and creative aspects of his identity that were essential for the constitution of his subjectivity (Bergonzi, 1977, p. xiii). Consequently, he was labelled as "far too original, even eccentric, to fit smoothly into any of these contexts" (Bergonzi, 1977, p. xiii). Although the posthumous publication of his poems initiated the long-lasting debate whether "he was a modern poet born before his time" or that he "was really just another Victorian poet," due to his crisis of subjectivity, his experimentation with form and content as well as his challenge to the referentiality of language, Hopkins stands out as a precursor of modernist English poetry (Bergonzi, 1977, p. xiii).

CONCLUSION

To conclude, in light of Foucauldian theory on the subject and power, the discussion above demonstrates that Hopkins underwent a long and arduous process of subjection. Hopkins's crisis of subjectivity first emerged during his time as an Oxford student, when he chose to convert to Catholicism because of his inability to identify with dominant Protestant-liberal discourse. However, instead of providing relief, his new faith intensified his crisis of subjectivity as Hopkins had difficulty in adapting to the mechanism of *pastoral power* in the Catholic Church of England.

Hopkins was frustrated to realise that the construction of a Catholic subjectivity entailed the sacrifice of his poetic self due to its ties with the Protestant individualism of his former life. Complying with *pastoral power*, Hopkins prioritized salvation and faith and demonstrated his consent to be a Catholic subject by destroying all his work. However, Hopkins strove to develop Foucauldian strategies of struggle since the urge to become a Catholic poet through the fusion of his Protestant past with his Catholic present could not be extinguished. One such strategy was Hopkins's discovery of Duns Scotus's philosophy which offered a passing reconciliation between poetry and faith. Inspired by Scotus, Hopkins achieved his dream of being a Catholic poet and composed his mature poems in which through the creation of *inscape* and *instress* he managed to adapt his content and form to Catholic religious doctrines. This short-term resolution of the crisis of subjectivity was undermined by the fact that Hopkins was ineligible to become a Jesuit priest after failing in the final examination. Apart from intensifying his subjectivity crisis, Hopkins's failure also destabilised his position in the *pastoral power* domain as he was appointed to insignificant positions. His life in Ireland was the stage when the crisis reached its peak. As an Oxford convert, he felt entrapped by Irish politics and the power dynamics in the Catholic Church of Ireland and lost the motivation to continue constituting himself as a Catholic subject defined by *pastoral power*. The unresolved subjectivity crisis paved the way for the composition of poetry in which the former reconciliatory spirit expressed by *inscape* and *instress* vanished. Throughout his life Hopkins's experimental form and content was condemned and he received little appreciation as a Catholic poet. Nevertheless, Hopkins's crisis of subjectivity contributed to his emergence as a precursor of modernist poetry as he sought spirituality in both his life and work by transcending the referential function of language. The analysis of his later poems and the "sonnets of desolation," displayed that they were the products of a poetic self whose life was devoid of meaning. In the absence of a master signified to organise his life, Hopkins's later poems were rich in formal experimentation and anticipated the thematic concerns of English modernist poets in the twentieth century.

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