

**Technique and Language of Hopkins/Style/Diction with Special reference
to *The Windhover & Pied Beauty (Part-1)***

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Technically, in spite of Hopkins writing his poetry in the late 19th century, his poetry appears to be remarkable modern. Its rhythm and diction have often been compared to the post-Eliotean English poetry, though his technique is modern in a different ways. The individuality, the beauty and the power of Hopkins' poetry was derived from his own stylistic innovation. It is the important idea of 'instress' and 'inscape', his formulation of the 'sprung rhythm', and his peculiar but effective use of language which comprise the basic elements of the complex mechanism of Hopkins' poetry. Since most of the terms used to define Hopkins' poetry are abstruse to the reader uninitiated to Hopkins's poetry, these would warrant a detailed discussion.

'Inscape', a term derived from the Greek philosopher Parmenides, is the inner shape, the own special or particular identity of a thing. 'Instress', on the other hand, is the force or stress that comes from within something and which is felt by the beholder as 'stressing' it. While inscape holds a thing, it is the instress of the thing which is felt, for instress is a force. This idea is extended beyond the things of this world to something as holy as the Godhead:

His mystery must be instressed, stressed (*The Wreck of Deutschland*).

As Hopkins always lays emphasis on the centrality of God and mystery is the central instress of God, Hopkins always instresses this mystery. In *The Windhover*, the mysterious force of God, its instress, breaks out in an ordinary bird like the kestrel.

Much of Hopkins' poetic intensity and force springs from his metrical originality. The metrical pattern that has made Hopkins unique in the realm of English poetry is the much-discussed and much-analysed 'Sprung Rhythm'. Hopkins himself gave the key to this pattern when he declared, 'it consists in scanning by accents or stresses alone, without any account of the number of syllables, so that a foot may be one strong syllable or it may be many light and one strong.' This is a distinct variation from the traditional metrical pattern in English. In the existing pattern, each foot must have one strong syllable and one or two weak syllables. A strong syllable by itself cannot form a foot. On the other hand, the number of weak syllables cannot exceed two in number. Sprung rhythm obviously does not obey this traditionally rigid rule. So sprung rhythm, like natural speech, makes its own patterns of sound. The foot may be of one syllable, two syllables, three syllables or even four, known as 'paeons'. An example is *The Windhover* which Hopkins described as being in 'Falling paeonic rhythm':

'Of the rolling level/under/neath him steady/air and striding...'

In the following lines from *Pied Beauty* the sprung rhythm is used:

'Glo'-ry be to / God for / da'-ppled things.'

As far as diction is concerned, in spite of Hopkins' avowed love for plain speech ('I dearly love calling a spade a spade'), his language appears to be obscured or eclectic. But choosing of rare, unusual and striking words in preference to ordinary ones is the consequence of

trying to capture in word or phrase the exact essence or nature of something. For this purpose
he often used dialectal words, especially Irish and Lancashire expression.

...to be continued...