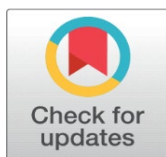
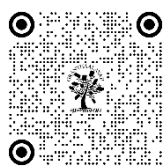


EXPLORING G.M. HOPKINS AS A RELIGIOUS POET WITH AN ECOLOGICAL AESTHETICS

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ABSTRACT

Gerard Manley Hopkins, a precursor of modernist poetry, revolutionized English verse through his experimental language and innovative prosody. At the heart of his work lies a deep religious consciousness that integrates poetic expression with theological reflection. Rooted in his Jesuit faith, Hopkins' poetry elevates nature to a sacramental realm, portraying the material world as a manifestation of divine presence. His engagement with religious themes places him within the longstanding tradition of religious poetry, where literature serves as both spiritual expression and cultural critique.

This study explores the interconnections between literature and religion as cultural manifestations, emphasizing how Hopkins' poetry functions as both devotional art and a response to the challenges of his time. His work bridges theological insight with artistic innovation, reinforcing the symbiotic relationship between faith and poetic imagination. By uniting religious devotion with ecological awareness, Hopkins enriches the tradition of religious poetry and anticipates modern concerns about the sacredness of nature, positioning him as a vital voice in the discourse on spirituality and literature.

Keywords: Gerard Manley Hopkins, Religious Poetry, Literature and Religion, Cultural Manifestation, Ecological Spirituality

1. INTRODUCTION

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889) occupies a unique position in English literary tradition as both a profoundly religious poet and a poet of nature, blending the two in a seamless vision of divine immanence. His poetry is distinguished by a sustained ecological aesthetic, which, while deeply rooted in his theological convictions, serves as a powerful critique of industrialization and environmental degradation. Hopkins' response to the rapid mechanization of Victorian England is not merely an artistic lament but a theological meditation on the sacramental nature of creation—one that mourns the destruction of natural landscapes as a violation of divine order.

To fully appreciate Hopkins' ecological vision, it is necessary to first examine the intricate relationship between religion and literature, as both are deeply intertwined in shaping human perception of the world. Religious poetry has long been a defining feature of English literary tradition, serving as a medium for spiritual reflection, moral instruction, and, in Hopkins' case, environmental consciousness. His works exemplify what W. H. Gardner identifies as the three fundamental qualities of his poetic legacy: (i) Hopkins stands as one of the most profound religious poets while simultaneously ranking among the most accomplished nature poets in England; (ii) he is a master stylist, renowned for his bold innovations in poetic language and rhythm; and (iii) he advances poetic expression by grounding it in the primal

energies of linguistic and metrical experimentation (Gardner xiii). While the latter two attributes speak to his technical brilliance, the first underscores the thematic essence of his work—his engagement with both divine and natural realities.

Hopkins' ecological aesthetics emerges organically from his Jesuit worldview, where nature is not merely a passive backdrop but an active participant in divine revelation. His poetry, replete with sacramental imagery and theological symbolism, portrays nature as a manifestation of God's presence, while also lamenting the irreparable damage inflicted upon it by industrial expansion. This paper seeks to situate Hopkins within the broader discourse on religious poetry, tracing its evolution within English literary tradition, and to demonstrate how his poetic vision serves as both a spiritual testament and a prophetic warning against the relentless exploitation of nature. In doing so, it argues that Hopkins' religious consciousness and ecological concerns are inseparable, making him a forerunner of what is now recognized as ecological spirituality in literature.

2. THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN LITERATURE AND RELIGION

The intertwining of literature and religion can be traced to the origins of literary expression, where early humans grappled with profound aesthetic experiences and existential inquiries, often seeking articulation through literature. Before delving into this intricate relationship, it is essential to elucidate certain foundational terms. Religion is distinct from spirituality and mysticism; spirituality denotes a personal encounter with the divine, whereas mysticism aspires toward an experiential union with the ultimate reality. Religion, on the other hand, constitutes a communal system of beliefs in a transcendent power, encapsulated within a framework of "creed, code, and cult." As a cultural phenomenon, religion employs imagery, symbols, and myths to convey and sustain its deeper meanings.

Similarly, literature, as an artistic and intellectual pursuit, draws upon religious imagery and symbols, reinforcing its connection to religion. Barth (as cited in Singh, 2005) argues that despite evolving literary theories, religion remains integral to poetic expression. While poetry and religion are not identical, their relationship has been widely acknowledged. Views on this connection range from poetry as a medium for religious doctrine to the belief that poetry exists independently of theological or philosophical concerns. Between these extremes, poetry can express human faith and aspiration, explore moral dilemmas, and reflect the search for ultimate meaning. Additionally, Barth suggests that poetry may serve as a substitute for lost belief, offering solace in times of uncertainty (as cited in Singh, 2005, p. 141).

"Poetry," Cleanth Brooks argues, "needs religion, and that the relationship between religion and poetry is a polar relationship in something of the same sense in which we speak of the poles of an electric battery, one positive and the other negative, poles that mutually attract each other and thus generate a current of energy" (96). He asserts that it is desirable for an individual to "possess both: religion and poetry, faith and imagination, the one complementing the other, neither cramped and misshapen through being forced to substitute for something other than itself" (106). For Brooks, "poetry is a dramatization of, and thus an indirect commentary upon, characteristic human action." Since human actions are often rooted in religious beliefs, Brooks claims that poetry requires religion, just as it needs other concrete expressions of human life. He warns that replacing religion with poetry risks losing "a certain precious freedom, for its task becomes that of justifying a particular course of action—instead of contemplating imaginatively various courses of action" (104).

Religious poetry has a long and illustrious tradition in English literature. "A religious poem," observes Donald Walhout "is any poem that deals with what is conventionally regarded as a religious topic." Expanding further the scope of the definition, he adds that "a religious poem to be not just a poem that deals with a religious topic but one that has within its central purport, in whole or in part, the verbal simulation of projection of some human response important in religion" (84). The aspect of human response is preeminent when Helen Gardner describes religious poetry as those works that deal with divine revelation and human response to it (*The Faber* 7). The thematic preoccupation of a religious poem is centered on the chief object of synthesizing the various realms of human life.

John E. Smith, in "Poetry, Religion and Theology," argues that "poetry of meditation must be understood as the attempt to bring out of the conflict and chaos of ordinary life a unified self, a self at one with itself, with nature and with God." He asserts that such "unification must be achieved, in so far as it is achieved at all, through the discipline of religious meditation upon the nature of God, the things of religion and man's duty to his fellow man" (255). While religious poetry was initially associated with Christianity, it is now used to describe all kinds of religious experience. Gardner extends this view, claiming that "the religious sense of commitment to 'the awful shadow of some unseen Power' in Shelley, the

sense of dedication in the passages from *The Prelude*, and Emily Bronte's devotion to her 'God of Visions' owe nothing to the specific Christian revelation" (*The Faber* 7).

Lord David Cecil argues that the religious poet "does not say what he feels, but what he thinks he ought to feel: and speaks not in his voice but in the solemn tones that seem fitting to his solemn subject" (xiii). Poetry, as a relatively autonomous form, integrates religious experience alongside other experiences, aiming to imaginatively make sense of the complexities of human life. Ultimately, religious poetry can encompass any genuine personal encounter with metaphysical reality, provided it displays characteristics such as sincere attachment to the subject, genuine commitment to the faith, and noble simplicity in its treatment.

3. RELIGION AND LITERATURE AS CULTURAL PRODUCTS

Like literature, religion is deeply rooted in a given culture, embodying its imagery, symbols, and myths. Both religion and literature serve as profound cultural expressions that shape and reflect the values, beliefs, and ethical frameworks of societies. Religion provides a moral and spiritual foundation, while literature acts as a vessel for transmitting these foundational elements across generations. Consequently, a proper study of religious poetry necessitates a theoretical consideration of both religion and literature. Understanding their interconnectedness is crucial for a comprehensive grasp of how culture operates and evolves.

Cleanth Brooks (1974), in his essay *Religion and Literature*, asserts that "literature celebrates the health of a culture; it reveals its depth and richness, including its inwardness" (p. 106). He argues that literature serves as a diagnostic tool for cultural vitality, identifying areas of moral or spiritual decline. However, he cautions that while literature can diagnose cultural maladies, it does not inherently prescribe remedies. Instead, he acknowledges that "for a given situation there may be more than one kind of remedy" (p. 106), indicating that religion often steps in as a corrective force. The ethical dimensions of religious values, embedded within literature, can serve a therapeutic role in addressing cultural and moral crises, purging societies of their inhuman tendencies. In this way, literature becomes a conduit for moral reflection and societal transformation, reinforcing the symbiotic relationship between religion and literary expression.

Religious experiences have historically found expression through the metaphorical richness of language. As John E. Smith (1955) observes, "poetry and religion, theology and philosophy are four facets of cultural life which are almost invariably bound together in some important relationship with each other" (p. 252). He further argues that throughout history, "men and women of letters have always drawn heavily upon the religious heritage of their lands, and religion, in turn, has always expressed its deepest convictions in dramatic form and in language which can only be called poetic" (p. 252). This suggests that religious narratives, scriptures, and rituals frequently utilize poetic and literary devices to communicate profound spiritual truths, reinforcing the interplay between these two disciplines.

David Jasper (1992), Professor Emeritus of Literature and Theology at the University of Glasgow, echoes this sentiment, emphasizing the inextricable link between literature and religion. He asserts:

Literature and religion are never far apart. The greatest literary achievements of the West, from Aeschylus to Dante to Shakespeare, cut deeply into the soul of humanity and stir in us those ultimate questions of existence, truth and beauty which can only be answered, if they are ever answered at all, by religious commitment or the equally passionate rejection of theology and its speculation. (p. ix)

Jasper's observation underscores the idea that literature and religion are not merely parallel disciplines but are often engaged in a dynamic dialogue. Religious texts, such as the *Divine Comedy* or *Paradise Lost*, embody literary grandeur while exploring theological complexities. Conversely, secular literary works frequently engage with religious themes, either affirming or challenging traditional doctrines. The dialectical relationship between religion and literature, therefore, extends beyond mere coexistence; it actively shapes cultural discourse and human understanding of the sacred.

In sum, religion and literature, as cultural products, mutually reinforce each other. Religion provides literature with profound existential themes, while literature offers religion a means of artistic and intellectual expression. This interrelationship ensures that religious poetry remains a vital and evolving genre, continuously reinterpreted across historical and cultural contexts. As cultures shift and evolve, the symbiosis between religion and literature continues to inspire new artistic and theological perspectives, sustaining their relevance in an ever-changing world.

4. FROM RITUAL TO ART: THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGIOUS POETRY

The brief literary survey that follows below examines how the interconnections between religion and literature are looked at in various ages and cultures. The Greeks were the first to recognize the mutuality and interdependence of literature and religion. They thought that the poetic power was indeed divine power. R. A. Scott James, a twentieth-century British literary critic, states, “it was the glory of Greek religion and morality that it was inseparable from the sweetening influences of Greek poetry. And conversely poetry in its turn acquired the authority of religion” (27). Naturally, for the Greeks, poets were priests and vice versa. Religious aspirations walked hand in hand with poetic inspirations.

In the post-Renaissance period, Sir Philip Sidney, in *Apology for Poetry*, discusses the poet’s societal role. He argues that poetry is an art of imitation, which Aristotle calls Mimesis—representing, counterfeiting, or metaphorically, a “speaking picture,” with the purpose of teaching and delighting. Sidney notes three types of poetry, with the most significant being those that imitate the divine excellencies of God, such as the Psalms of David and Solomon’s *Song of Songs* (qtd. in Bate, 86).

The connection between religion and literature has sparked various views. Samuel Johnson was one of the first to challenge this connection. In *The Lives of the Poets*, he criticizes religious poetry, stating that “contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, cannot be poetical” because poetry’s essence lies in invention—producing something unexpected that surprises and delights. Johnson argues that religious themes are too familiar to provoke surprise or originality, offering no “novelty of sentiment” or “novelty of expression” (1. 201). He further contends that religious poetry cannot reveal anything new about the divine, since “the most simple expression is the most sublime.” Poetry loses its power when applied to something more excellent than itself, serving only to assist memory and please the ear, but not enriching the mind. The ideas of Christian theology, he suggests, are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and too grand for ornament (1. 201).

In contrast, P. B. Shelley, in *A Defence of Poetry*, asserts that poets have access to divine mysteries, enabling them to express divine truths that illuminate others. Shelley writes, “Poets... are not only authors of language and music, of the dance, and architecture, and statuary, and painting; they are the institutors of laws, and the founders of civil society, and the inventors of the arts of life, and the teachers who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and true, that partial apprehension of the agency of the invisible world which is called religion... A poet participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one; as far as relates to his conceptions, time and place and number are not” (404).

William Wordsworth noticed an “affinity between religion and poetry,” but at the same time criticized the tendency to put on the garb of religious sentimentality over poetic expressions as “the lurking incitements of kindred error; so that we shall find that no poetry has been more subject to distortion, than that species the argument and scope of which is religious; and no lovers of art have gone further astray than the pious and the devout” (qtd. in Own and Smyser 65-66).

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the Romantic poet and critic, links religion and poetry through his theory of imagination, which he views as a faculty of the soul. For Coleridge, imagination serves as a unifying force, allowing poets to express themselves through art. It penetrates the sensory world, leading to a deeper, more meaningful perception of nature. This same faculty also enables the apprehension of the divine. Coleridge asserts that imagination and God share an archetypal relation, both acting as unifying principles. While imagination unites object and subject, it goes beyond mere observation, synthesizing thesis and antithesis. Similarly, God, as the archetype, unites opposites, reconciling them without contradiction. Thus, Coleridge equates the poetic faculty with the creative faculty (167).

Matthew Arnold, the Victorian poet-critic, regards poetry as a highly esteemed practice. He argues, “we should conceive of it as capable of higher uses, and called to higher destinies, than those which in general men have assigned to it hitherto.” Arnold believes that, over time, humanity will recognize that “we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us.” He warns, “without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry” (1).

John Ruskin, the Victorian critic and art enthusiast, questions the popular notions of the time, “the so-called fine arts are merely modes of graceful recreation, and a new resource for your times of rest.” He further proposes that great arts have had, and can have, three important directions of purpose: (i) that of enforcing the religion of men; (ii) that of perfecting their ethical state; (iii) that of doing them material service (*The Relation* 1).

The relationship between religion and literature in modern times resurfaced with T. S. Eliot's 1935 essay, *Religion and Literature*. In this essay, he argues, "Literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint" (Religion 92). This stance contrasts with his earlier position. In his influential essay, *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, he described poetry as an "expression of significant emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet" (11). This apparent contradiction reflects Eliot's evolving views. Over time, he shifted from the belief that poetry is self-contained and the author's role is merely causal, to a more holistic perspective that emphasizes the "substantial unity of the soul." With this view, Eliot suggests that literature alone is insufficient and requires a supplementary element—religion—for proper appreciation. However, he stresses that while religion enhances literature, its status as literature can only be determined by literary standards: "though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only through literary standards" (Religion 92).

John J. McDonald argues that Eliot is correcting the fallacy that art is autotelic, claiming that "an activity like art can be autotelic—that it can even obviate the need for religion—it would be better to recognize immediately that such an illusion really implies the erection of art into its own religion." He also critiques Matthew Arnold and I. A. Richards, noting, "Eliot is correcting their error by reclaiming the paradox of supplementarity for the relationship between religion and literature" (63). Eliot's view challenges the tradition of evaluating literary works purely on aesthetic grounds. Many critics, especially the New Critics, rejected the idea that literature should be valued for its ethical and theological significance. However, Eliot believed that literary criticism alone was inadequate. He argued that after evaluating a work as a product of imagination, it must also be assessed from ethical and theological perspectives, especially in an age lacking consensus on such values. For Eliot, these angles are essential to fully appreciate a literary work's greatness.

5. SPIRITUAL SYMBOLISM IN HOPKINS' POETRY

The religious nuances of Hopkins' poems are widely held in high esteem. John L. Mahoney observes, "Religion and literature intersect powerfully in the borderline poems of doubt and faith of Gerard Manley Hopkins" (158). From the very beginning of his poetic career, Hopkins was deemed to be a religious poet. Though a few of his devotional poems had been published in various anthologies prior to the publication of his *Poems* in 1918, they hardly won him any public acclaim. The early readers of Hopkins, an overwhelmingly Catholic audience, read them to be purely devotional. Robert Bridges, editor of Hopkins' *Poems*, observes that his friend's poetic efforts were unique in English literature owing to his "very different sort of style . . . so full of experiments in rhythm and diction." Besides, he identifies that "most of his poems are religious, and marked with catholic theology, and almost all are injured by a natural eccentricity, a love for subtlety and uncommonness" (41).

From a Christian perspective, "incarnation, and its interpretation as the consecration of the sensory world, forms the ultimate ground upon which any symbol can be validly used by a religious poet" (Smith, 254). Hopkins adapted Duns Scotus' interpretation of the Incarnational principle to frame the sensory world as divinely infused. This allowed him to see God's glory in even the simplest natural beauty: "The sun and the stars shining glorify God. They stand where he placed them, they move where they bid them. The heavens declare the glory of God" (The Sermons, 239). In "God's Grandeur," Hopkins writes that "the world is charged with the grandeur of God" (1). In "Hurrahing in Harvest," he elevates this awareness to practical living, recognizing the divine radiance in nature: "I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes, / Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our glory" (5-6). Philip A. Ballinger observes that Hopkins saw beauty as a self-expression of the divine, using it "as theological cipher throughout the writings" (The Poem, 151). This led him, as in "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo," to sing in gratitude: "Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, beauty, back to God, beauty's self and beauty's giver" (40). For Hopkins, poetry became a divine act of praise for God's gifts, as expressed earnestly in "Pied Beauty": "He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change: Praise him" (10).

Hopkins' ecological aesthetics—a blend of theological commitment, scientific understanding, and concern for environmental decline—made his poems challenging and sometimes obscure. Herbert Read notes that "the terrible sincerity of the process of Hopkins' thought inevitably led him to an originality of expression which rejected the ready-made counters of contemporary poetics." Hopkins' contributions, particularly in meter, "prevent more than anything else the appreciation of his poetry" (105).

Modern critics, however, have found freshness in Hopkins' style and themes. I. A. Richards, calling him "the most obscure of English verse writers," praises Hopkins' style, arguing that obscurity invites active reader participation and repeated readings to fully grasp the poem's meaning. "The state of intellectual enquiry...passes away once its task is completed, and the reader is likely to be left with a far secure grasp of the whole poem" (70). Richards also appreciates

Hopkins for his audacity in expressing personal experience directly, acknowledging that doing so invites “the charge of oddity, of playfulness, of whimsical eccentricity and wantonness” (77).

Edward Sapir sympathizes with Hopkins, asserting that “To a certain extent Hopkins undoubtedly loved difficulty, even obscurity for its own sake. He may have found in it a symbolic reflection of the tumult that raged in his soul” (66). Sapir suggests that Hopkins was torn between spiritual love and a love for sensuous beauty, making his work difficult to understand: “the real Hopkins is a passionate soul unendingly in conflict. The consuming mysticism, the intense religious faith are unreconciled with a basic sensuality that leaves the poet no peace.” The challenge for readers stems from the tension in Hopkins’ heart between these two pulls: “He is longing to give up the loveliness of the world for that greater loveliness of the spirit that all but descends to envelope like a mother; but he is too poignantly aware of all sensuous beauty, too insistently haunted by the allurements of the flesh” (Sapir 68).

T. S. Eliot, in “After Strange Gods,” recognizes Hopkins as a skilled religious poet, noting, “Hopkins is a fine poet, to be sure; . . . His innovations certainly were good, but like the mind of their author, they operate only within a narrow range, and are easily imitated though not adaptable for many purposes” (107). Eliot argues that the religious nature of Hopkins’ poetry limits his creative scope: “to be a devotional poet is a limitation: a saint limits himself by writing poetry, and a poet who confines himself to even this subject matter is limiting himself too” (After 107-108). Eliot adds, “The religious poet,” he says, “is not a poet who is treating the whole subject matter of poetry in a religious spirit, but a poet who is dealing with a confined part of the subject matter: who is leaving out what men consider their major passions and thereby confessing his ignorance of them” (Religion 99).

Hopkins’ poems, letters, and journals reveal his deep religiosity, with faith at the core of his life and purpose. His best works stem from his belief in God, reflecting a religious attitude towards God, humans, and nature. His faith helped him see the grandeur of nature as God’s own:

The world is charged with the grandeur of God
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil. (“God’s Grandeur” 1-2)

As Noel Barber notes in *Studies: The Irish Quarterly Review*, “everything was bathed in the light of faith and he interpreted all life in that light. His was a burning conviction that God was indeed observed in nature, touched in others and experienced in one’s own joys and sorrows.” He understood that “nature, other people and his own inner life were symbols or sacraments of God bearing testimony to and rendering God present to us in this world” (98). Hopkins’ “In the Valley of the Elwy” exemplifies this belief in the divine presence in nature: “Lovely the woods, waters, meadows, combs, vales, / All the air things wear that build this world of Wales” (8-9). After discussing Hopkins’ personal relationship with faith and its influence on his religious themes, Joseph J. Feeney affirms, “Hopkins is a religious poet of great religious variety of piety, sin and guilt, of escape from and love of the world, of Christ and the Trinity, of the Eucharist, scripture, and the sacraments, of morality and of the spiritual life” (Hopkins 122).

Metaphysical poetry was a precursor to Religious poetry in English literary tradition. Linking Hopkins’ penchant for religiosity to an earlier tradition of Metaphysical poets, Joanna Stolarek notes:

Hopkins, being a profoundly religious poet, remained under the great influence of Metaphysical poetry which was filled with spirituality, mannerism, philosophy and which had elements of sensual violence and intensity of feelings. Using all these features and constituents the artist paid homage to God and strived to comprehend his magnitude and to explore the mystery of creation, nature and its relation with man. (107)

Amidst the characteristic religiosity, it is his aesthetic approach that makes Hopkins’ poems different. Hopkins’ experience, notes John L Mahoney, as a Victorian going through the “ravages of industrialism, the desecration of nature, and the worship of the Great God Mammon,” find beautiful expression in his poems. Despite the imposing threat of such social, moral and religious degeneration, he refuses to adopt “the posture of the all-knowing preacher but the vision of an artist infused with the Sacramental theology of the Roman Catholic Church” (158). The crafty blend of religious spirit with a deep concern for nature made Hopkins’ poems distinctive. Terming Hopkins’ poetry a “passionate science,” Geoffrey Grigson notes, “like other poets and like painters of his era, this poet delighted in the observation and grasping of nature.” He further adds that “with the greatest delicacy, strength, and intelligence he possessed his environment, making it the intimate vehicle for the passionate praises of his belief” (143).

Hopkins succeeded in infusing the profane with the power of the divine and puts across a strong message of creatureliness of humanity from a Christian perspective. "His vision of reality focused most clearly on the operation of Christ's life stemming from the centre of the Trinity, divinizing the hearts of acquiescent humans, reaching even to animals, birds, trees, the good earth itself" (Boyle xi). So, as in "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo," Hopkins always gave importance to the question: "How to keep . . . beauty . . . from vanishing away" (1-2), and to "Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, back to God, beauty's self and beauty's giver" (34-35).

6. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Gerard Manley Hopkins' poetry is rooted in a religious consciousness that integrates an ecological aesthetic, offering a unique perspective on the relationship between divinity, nature, and humanity. His poetic vision, shaped by his Jesuit faith, elevates nature to a sacramental plane, viewing the material world as a manifestation of God's grandeur. Hopkins aligns with the tradition of religious poetry in English literature but distinguishes himself through his linguistic innovation, sensitivity to the environment, and critique of industrialization's impact on nature.

By situating Hopkins within religious poetry, this paper traces the connection between religion and literature, showing how poetry serves as both spiritual expression and cultural critique. Hopkins' work resonates with literary and theological scholars who recognize the interdependence of poetic imagination and religious belief. His poetry reflects what W. H. Gardner identifies as his legacy: his role as a religious and nature poet, his poetic innovation, and his commitment to preserving the primal energy of language.

Moreover, Hopkins' ecological aesthetics is an urgent theological and moral response to the environmental devastation caused by industrial expansion. His poetry mourns the loss of pristine landscapes, critiques nature's commodification, and calls for reverence for creation. In this sense, Hopkins anticipates contemporary ecological thought, offering a model of environmental spirituality that remains relevant today.

Ultimately, this study reaffirms that Hopkins' religious poetry is deeply engaged with the pressing concerns of his time—concerns that continue to resonate today. His vision of nature as both a divine gift and a fragile entity threatened by human recklessness positions him as a poet of enduring significance. By merging religious devotion with ecological awareness, Hopkins enriches religious poetry and serves as a prophetic voice in the ongoing discourse on environmental ethics and spiritual ecology.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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