

**THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN THE POEMS
OF HOPKINS**

CHAPTER IVTHE HUMAN ELEMENT IN HOPKINS'S POETRY

Humanism has played an important part in the history of civilization. The term humanism is derived from the word 'humanista' (Italian) or teacher of the studies of humanists or humanism¹. Humanism recognizes the importance and dignity of man. It places man at the centre of all things. It gives man the supremacy and the great power of measuring things in life.

Hopkins observed that man's life—long struggle for peace and happiness never ends. It was also observed by him that man was tired of living on this planet earth and wanted to escape. He has a solution for this tribulation that mankind goes through. He states his ~~found~~ solution through his poetry. He leads mankind to an assurance of a place where peace and happiness are permanent.

Hopkins's poetry makes one aware that he really cared for the 'dear dogged man'. He had an unusual sense of human condition and its predicament. His concern for man is

reflected in his poetry which makes him a humanist. His poetry touches the core of ones sensitive heart due to the sensitivity with which he expresses his feelings for a human being in words.

Hopkins lived in an age when the Victorians visualized themselves with a particular self-consciousness, though there was a flair for swaying moods. This self consciousness made the person aware of the society behind the self. Hopkins too was conscious of the way people were being defrauded. He wrote to Bridges defending the poor " It is a dreadful thing for the greatest and most necessary part of a very rich nation to live a hard life without dignity, knowledge, comfort, delight, or hopes in the midst of plenty.²

Hopkins was deeply moved by the ugliness and the injustice of the late Victorian England. In his sonnet " Gods Grandeur" he

pours down his concern and pity for man:

Generations have trod have trod, have
trod:

And all is seared with trade, bleard
smeard' with toil

And wears man's smudge and shares
mans smell; the soil.³

Hopkins states that generations of mankind have toiled and suffered ages working with their hardships. There seems to be no end to this. Adam the first man was cursed, so was all mankind thrown into that 'low of generation' which has been passed on till the present. Hopkins is hurt, filled with compassion and love for mankind's slogging till the 'soil smells' the man. The sensitiveness of the poet about the suffering of common man is clear. The dulloddity of industrialization in Victorian England is embodied in the vision of Hopkins the Victorian Humanist shared the pity, sympathy and goal will particularly with the sufferings of helpless people such as women, children and inferior classes. Along with Ruskin Hopkins was anxious to see the ancient

chivalric values blended with sturdy morality sifting up from the lower classes. Hopkins saw that the moral standards, the spiritual patrimony was wasted away from England. Hence the making of an 'Ideal Gentleman' was necessary. Hopkins's lamentation time and again on mans private conflicts and public outrages were for improving humanity in civilization. He found that unless man did not get rid of his self, the taste would be bitter. He yearned to shed the 'selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours.'⁴ The self yeast meant the free will of man which crushed him to his doom. Only moral education would prevent the dough spirit from being seared. Hopkins wished that every Englishman should be morally awakened so that humanity would make a:

'happier world wherin
to wend and meet no sin'⁵

The world would definitely be a happier place to live in once the mankind becomes sinless. Now the concept of sin brings in the element of 'fall'. Hopkins wants to say that unless we do not get rid of sin we can never be happy. Now Hopkins found out the solution that unless

people did not succumb to their 'self' and make places for 'New Nazareths', the inevitable change would remain as it is. To Hopkins 'New Nazareths' meant pursuing to live a clean pure life as Jesus lived. In making of a 'Christian gentleman' virtue was the foremost quality. With the same spirit and trend Hopkins wrote his most read and beautiful poems, apotypic in their appeal and rational in their representation. They are words of medicine to the sick and slothful spirits of the world—the man. All this is a golden advice to last for a life time. Human beings are but form of dust. A human heart is 'like a carrier' i.e. pigeons who fly as per their instinct. The Heart is indeed wild and 'self instresed'. Do not get carried away with your carrier, Hopkins warns a well mannered heart. It means that a personality of a person depends more on his character than on his handsome physique. In a letter to Bridges written on Oct.25th 1879, he wrote: "And more beautiful than the beauty of the mind is beauty of character, the handsome heart".⁶

Hopkins in "To what serves Mortal Beauty" almost reveals the theme. He finds no other benefit from the mortal beauty of man ~~expect~~ for the danger of being pulled down morally. He beauty of English boys for sale as slaves. And the pope though that it would be worth converting a pagan English to Catholicism. This possibility of salvation is the good fortune which Hopkins calls "that day's dear chance".⁷

Hopkins's mature poetry bears the tension of beauty in humanity. One of his finest poems, "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo", dramatically enacts this sense of the fragility of beauty:

Nor can you long be, what
you now are called fair.⁸

Here Hopkins realizes that physical beauty is not permanent at all. It is indeed ephemeral. He views beauty as a normal human being without any religious influence. It would be false to be proud of ones beauty. He had come to a conclusion that human physical beauty distracts

a person from ones moral values than attracts. so he wants all those who read hispoetry never to get swayed away by beauty of ones handsome face but rather to look at this handsome heart. In this poem "Handsome Heart" he clearly says :

"Heart mannerly is more than handsome face".⁹

A genuine humanitarian spell is felt in this line. The poet believes beauty is not the worthiest. If is the 'men's selves that are the world's loveliest object. Now for men to be at their best in their selves they needs God grace which is better than beauty. Hopkins concerned is about people getting attracted by mortal beauty. He fills that it is destruction rather than attraction. His concerned is about a human-being's 'nature, bad base', that is mortal beauty is "dangerous ;thus set dancing blood".¹⁰ 'Dancing blood' predicts immoral tendencies aroused in a human being on the holding mortal beauty, which lowers the human beings from their moral values. "So Hopkins advises all mankind to wish for God's better beauty grace".¹¹ Because for Hopkins the

humanitarian, man is invaluable and he should curb himself from falling prey to immoral things which will leave him frustrated. He wishes the best for mankind. So here Hopkins refers to Grace as beauty of the actions of speech, thought and behavior. And how do they come but by relying completely on God?

Hopkins was a preacher and priest so there was an inborn tendency to share the better with others. His humanistic ideas are relevant to all times since though the surrounding has changed with the innovations of technology computers and rockets, man is the same always finding fault in others, so in "The Candle Indoors", Hopkins brings the 'self' of a man to realization. He persuades man to be introspective before pointing out the faults of others. He brings to remembrance that one should be less critical of others. he asks a commanding question:

What hinders? Are you beam blind yet to a
fault

In a neighbor deft-handed? Are you that
liar.¹²

Hopkins knew that Man is an egoist. He always finds his 'self' to be just perfect. But then he always gives a blind eye to his own faults while criticizing the faults of others. This critical approach of man is what Hopkins pinpoints and asks the speculator to burn a candle indoors' i.e. see his own faults inside him in him in the light of humanistic ideals.

Hopkins was also a patriot. In his poem "what shall I do for the Land that bred me" he says:

Where is the field I must play the man on?
 O welcome there steel or cannon
 Immortal beauty is death with duty.¹³

Hopkins has signified the importance of duty and the extent to which a man is supposed to do his duty till his 'death'. There lies 'immortal beauty' in the poet's eyes. All people are not made of the same stuff. Hence they differ, so also the surroundings of each person differ. He ought to discern his field and fight there his battle until he wins it, in the sense, until he finishes it. " On the Portrait of Two Beautiful

Young People" a Brother and Sister", is another professional poem about the man's self and its consequences He says :

Man lives that list, that
 leaning in the will.
 No wis-dom can forecast
 by gauge or guess.
 The selfless self of self,
 most strange, most still.¹⁴

Hopkins points to mans tendency on relying on his will for everything in life. But Hopkins paints out that there is Humanistic victory if man denies his self and emerges out as a 'self' out of selfless self. This Victorious self will than realize that beauty leads to damnation and only good which only come from God earns eternal Salvation, which is the best for humanity.

In "Horace Odi profnum Volgus et arcero" Hopkins gages with a rare insight the attitude of two human personalities, the rich and the poor which are the part and parcel of

every society. 'Horace - odiperfanum volgus et upon the true human value and the joy of a human being. He has beautifully pictured the approach of the rich to seek peace. He says :

But fears, fore-motions of the mind
Climb quits : one boards the master
there.¹⁵

Hopkins views that the rich who are full of anxiety, are in conflict with themselves. Their spirit and mind are at tussle. And so in order to escape this anxiety the mind of the human being with its limited human reasoning takes this richman to find comfort and solace in luxury, pomp and glory. The 'Falernian-grown' the best of wines and 'oils of shushan' a type of expensive Persian Balsam comfort him not. On the other hand the working hands, the countryman finds no need to sway his mind to some materialistic things. The 'Country bidder sleeps without any worry. Hopkins is at the humanistic peak of reasoning when he says :

Why should I change ..
For wealth as wide as weariness. ¹⁶

This is the practical understanding of a Jesuit Priest. The weariness that comes with wealth is better to be neglected, according to Hopkins.

Paine is one of the virtues. Hopkins finds it to be a hard thing. In 'Patience, hard thing' he says :

Patience who asks
wants war, wants wounds;
weary his times, his tasks.¹⁷

According to Hopkins no one asks for patience. Mankind is running a race without destination. There is going on a race for power and authority. And in this chaos Hopkins says that none cares for patience. Mankind prefers to 'great their hearts'. Hopkins means to say that human physic has no time to wait. He is in the least botheration of waiting patiently while taking life's important decisions. Mankind's 'rebellious wills' is falsely providing itself to be accurate. This is what Hopkins says that man is bruising himself. He ought to seek patience from someone greater than him that is God. He himself cannot achieve patience on his

own merit so he has to go to God asking for patience, ultimately. Even though it seems to be a defeat it is a victory to man, as he emerges in his self out of the selfless self totally depending on the super-natural source i.e. God.

In "To seem the stranger lies my lot, my life". Hopkins senses the lonely self and so in 'I wake and feel Hopkins speaks of man having spent years struggling in the darkest hours of life's night and in 'No Worst' Hopkins says the 'Pitched last pitch of grief of life' ends in depth, The ultimatum of Human Life. But Hopkins doesn't echo the same wailing cry for all Humanity. He has a message of Hope and Faith, which he has expressed in "He hath abolished the old drouth". This poem is a direct outcome of genuine human feelings on the fact of man. Man is always uncertain about his future and his destiny. though man lives for today everything that he does today is related with his tomorrow. And then one day he dies for that is the rule. Is there a future in his death ? It is certainly there according to

Hopkins He says :

That I shall live, I shall
not die,
But I shall when the shackles
are stored see the salvation
of the Lord.¹⁸

This is Hopkins's faith in eternal life. He shares it with all human beings in his humanity. He knows well the miserable self of man and his toil, and stress and ultimately death. His faith is, If man is saved he shall be resurrected when Jesus Christ comes to judge the living and the dead. Hopkins's faith is strong about his being saved. What is the rule to be saved? Hopkins wants to every man to confess that Jesus above died for our sins and God rose from the dead and he will come to judge the living and the dead. A deep spiritual love for mankind runs in Hopkins's veins. He isn't selfish about his faith in everlasting life but he shares it with all mankind. This is indeed a humanistic attitude.

NOTES AND REFERENCES.

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