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## “God’s Grandeur” by Gerard Manley Hopkins. A Poetic Path into the Depths of Contemplation

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## Abstract

„God’s Grandeur” by Gerard Manley Hopkins—A Poetic Path into the Depths of Contemplation

The present paper concerns the question of how Christian contemplation, in the sense of a simple loving gaze on God and His works, could be prepared and supported by poetry by using the properties of poetic speech in the field of semantics, syntax as well as sound effects. The object is God’s Grandeur, a brilliant sonnet by Gerard Manley Hopkins, a poet, priest, Jesuit, a man of spiritual passion. Its analysis along with interpretation, in terms of both poetics and spiritual theology, will allow us to see how aesthetic contemplation works and could bear fruit for a contemporary man’s relation to himself or herself, to the world as well as most importantly to God, the source of created goodness.

**Keywords:** poetic speech, acquired contemplation, aesthetic contemplation, nature, man, God

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## Abstrakt

„God’s Grandeur” Gerarda Manley Hopkinsa. Poetycka ścieżka w głąb kontemplacji

Poniższe studium dotyczy kwestii, w jaki sposób chrześcijańska kontemplacja w znaczeniu prostego oglądu Boga i Jego dzieł może być przygotowana oraz podtrzymywana przez poezję na skutek zastosowania właściwości mowy poetyckiej w zakresie semantyki, syntaktyki oraz instrumentacji dźwiękowej. Przedmiotem badania jest tutaj sonet *God’s Grandeur* Gerarda Manleya Hopkinsa, poety, kapłana, jezuity i człowieka o wielkiej duchowej pasji. Analiza dzieła wraz z interpretacją, dokonana w ramach zarówno poetyki, jak i teologii duchowości, pozwoli zobaczyć, jak estetyczna kontemplacja funkcjonuje i przynosi owoce dla relacji współczesnego człowieka do samego siebie, świata, a przede wszystkim do Boga, źródła dobroci bytów stworzonych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** mowa poetycka, nabyta kontemplacja, estetyczna kontemplacja, natura, człowiek, Bóg

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Speaking about the issue of Contemplation Today it is the thing of great importance as it can evoke the intermediary role of the creation, but in some special manner. Obviously, such an idea of contemplating God through His deeds is rooted in the Bible as well as Church tradition. There are a number of biblical voices that can be heard, like a Psalmist ending his meditation on the world with the exclamation: “may The Lord be glad in His works” (Ps. 104:31)<sup>1</sup>. Also the way of *theoria physike*, represented by St. Maximus, the Confessor († 665), shows how sensual sensitivity perfected by spiritual insight into the essence of a thing (*logos*) enables contemplating God through the Cosmos<sup>2</sup>. Within this broad approach a special place is taken by a poetic gaze on the world, when a man uses the properties of artistic speech to express his or her share in the reality of God alone and of what is coming from God. A poem becomes a path introducing and leading into the depth of prayer. However, the principal role of God’s grace in spiritual life, the grace cooperating with human free will, must essentially be taken into consideration<sup>3</sup>.

The particular aim of this paper is to set out the contemplative potential of poetry, which by its properties brings the reader beyond superficial aesthetic excitement to an area of spiritual aesthetic contemplation and furthermore to the pure enjoyment in the Beloved. In some respect this consideration continues the author’s examination of poetry as a contemplative way<sup>4</sup>. The object of the present work is a famous sonnet *God’s Grandeur* by Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889), an eminent English poet and priest (Jesuit) with a great passion for spirituality<sup>5</sup>.

1 Biblical quotations after: New American Bible (Revised Edition) NABRE; <https://www.biblegateway.com/> (22.06.2022).

2 Cf. T. Merton, *Mistyka chrześcijańska. Trzyście spotkań ze słynnym trapistą*, transl. G. Gomola. A. Gomola, Poznań 2019, p. 114–122.

3 Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 154–155, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_\\_\\_PX.HTM](https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/___PX.HTM) (28.06.2022).

4 M. Godawa, *Imaginative Contemplation based on “The Starlight Night” by Gerard Manley Hopkins*, “Bogoslovní Vestník” 80 (2020) no. 3, p. 565–574, <https://doi.org/10.34291/BV2020/03/Godawa>.

5 Cf. B. Leithauser, *Preface to the Vintage Spiritual Classics Edition*, in: *Mortal Beauty, God’s Grace. Major Poems and Spiritual Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, eds. J. F. Thornton, S. B. Varenne, New York 2003, p. 15–31; *Chronology of the Life of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, in: *Mortal Beauty, God’s Grace*, p. 33–46; S. Barańczak, *Nieśmiertelny diament*, in: G. M. Hopkins, *33 wiersze*, ed. S. Barańczak, Kraków 1992, p. 7–22;

The analysis of Hopkins' verse will lead to a proposition of interpretation and a concluding comprehension of the main issue in the field of poetics and spiritual theology.

## 1. God's Grandeur

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  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And, for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastwards, springs—  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings<sup>6</sup>.

Starting from the opening line it is important to draw the structure of the composition. The poem is divided into three parts of which the first one (lines 1–4) includes the vision of the nature supported by God, the second one (4–8) breaks this order by the opposite presentation of human presence to be closed by the third great vision (9–14) in which the

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D. E. Anderson, *The Grandeur of God and the Life of a Poet*, "Religion and Ethics Newsweekly", 20.03.2009, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2009/03/20/march-20-2009-gerard-manley-hopkins/2478/> (02.07.2022); R. V. Young, *Song of A Soul: A Hundred Years Later, Gerard Manley Hopkins; Poetry Seems More Urgent And Haunting Than Ever*, "Crisis Magazine. A Voice for the Faithful Catholic Laity", 01.11.1989, <https://www.crisismagazine.com/1989/song-of-a-soul-a-hundred-years-later-gerard-manley-hopkins-poetry-seems-more-urgent-and-haunting-than-ever> (01.07.2022).

6 G. M. Hopkins, *God's Grandeur*, in: *Mortal Beauty, God's Grace*, p. 21; G. M. Hopkins, 33 wiersze, p. 54.

topic of the nature and God returns more evident. This order could be depicted in the sequence: A–B–A1 which leads the course of the analysis.

## 2. Harmony Broken

As already stated, the first and positive part is opened by the formula of a great importance. It recalls two crucial, though unequal, concepts (God, the world) and uncovers their mutual relation: the world is full of God’s grandeur that means the sacred and revealing character of the world, which reflects St. Ignatius’ postulate to live for the greater glory of God<sup>7</sup>. In terms of theology Hopkins’ “grandeur” stands for God’s glory—an external manifestation of His nature<sup>8</sup>. The description consists of two parallel sentences of structure: it..., like...:

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil / Crushed.

These two parallels have been mutually contrasted since the first one expresses a movement outward (“it will flame out”), whereas the second one— an action going inward (“it gathers”). Respectively, two dimensions of God’s grandeur are captured here, namely the *potential* one which in the present simple tense accumulates itself within the world (3) and the *actual* one which in the future will rapidly go out from there to be manifested. Two accompanying comparisons by virtue of sound effects, i.e. instrumentation (syllable orders: “f-m-sh” as well as “g-r-s”)<sup>9</sup>

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7 Cf. Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, no. 23, New York 1914, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/ignatius/exercises.titlepage.html>, p. 31 (27.06.2022). The notation used here is additionally accompanied by numbers according to the generally accepted division of *The Spiritual Exercises*.

8 Cf. W. Słomka, *Chwała Boża*, w: *Leksykon duchowości katolickiej*, red. M. Chmielewski, Lublin–Kraków 2002, p. 130–133. Obviously, filling “the world” with “God’s grandeur” as well as the motive of the Holy Ghost, put later, removes a possible suggestion of pantheism.

9 Sound instrumentation (e.g. alliteration) plays the very important role in English poetry. It makes the concentrated appeal to the reader (cf. P. Mroczkowski, *Postłowie*, in: W. Langland, *Widzenie o Piotrze Oraczu*, ed. P. Mroczkowski, Kraków 1983, p. 149). For the meaning of Hopkins’ sonic inventions see: B. Leithauser, *Preface to the Vintage Spiritual Classics Edition*, p. 28–29.

and the rhyme (“foil” – “oil”), enhance the sensual valor of the pictures, testifying to Hopkins’ sensitivity<sup>10</sup>. The enjambment “oil / crushed” is excellent for making the illusion of pressing olives. Here a place for contemplation of the world filled with God’s glory is clearly shown<sup>11</sup>. However, being successfully suggested by poetical means it is crossed at the same time. Suddenly the poet’s speech in line 4 is disturbed with the question: “Why do men then now not reckon his rod?” The harmony seems to be broken and the first, very positive tension between the potential and actual dimensions of God’s glory is contrasted now with the second, negative tension between the world and people.

Human attitude is rendered by the negative form of the archaic-English verb “reck”<sup>12</sup> which means that people are not concerned with God’s rod. This statement refers to the well-established figure of God (Jesus), the Good Shepherd (Ps. 23, Is. 40:11, Jn. 10:1–21, Lk. 15:4–7) as well as to the belief in God’s Providence. This question remains unanswered, but sin, consisting in disobedience, is sufficiently evoked. Instead of moral high ground Hopkins proposes the brief bitter image of humanity (5–8). The most repetitious verse no. 5 shows people passing with no aim. The triple-repeated “have trod”, corresponding to the plural of “generations”, draws the wide vision of pointless activity in the course of history. It is conveyed by providing the noun “all” standing *implicite* for “the world”, with the relevant order of terms. At first two similar expressions occur, that is “all is seared with trade” and “bleared, smeared with toil” (6). The nouns (trade, toil) meaning human intensive work are denounced by the participles breaking aesthetic sense (seared, bleared, smeared). The use of syllables: “s” with “-ear-” in the participles and “t” in the nouns stresses this state. The characteristic continues in the next expression saying that “all [...] wears man’s smudge” and “shares man’s smell” which – through the resemblance of both nouns (smudge, smell) – enhances the very pessimistic opinion about human influence

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<sup>10</sup> These lines are great examples of Hopkins’ idea of *inscape*, the accuracy in a distinctive view of the thing (Cf. B. Leithauser, *Preface to the Vintage Spiritual Classics Edition*, p. 25–26; *Chronology of the Life of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, p. 37).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. B. Leithauser, *Preface to the Vintage Spiritual Classics Edition*, p. 25–26.

<sup>12</sup> RECK, in: *The Penguin English Dictionary*, ed. R. Allen, London 2007, p. 1069; cf. Old English *reccan*.

on the world. This poetic amplification (congeries<sup>13</sup>) of human dirty debt radically contrasts the amplification of God’s pure glory. Hopkins characterizes this place with the picture of “the bare soil” which cannot be felt by man’s foot. “Being shod” symbolises both human indifference to the nature along with God, because the motif of shoes connotes separation from the earth—as well as their destructive impact because wearing shoes produces “smudge” and makes the soil “bare”. This picture presented by Hopkins effectively expounds human self-alienation and presents severe criticism reminding the later verses of *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot<sup>14</sup>.

The contrast between the two parts (1–4; 5–8) is strengthened with the rhyme structure. The pair “God” – “rod”, embracing the inner pictures linked by rhymes “foil” – “oil”, shows the vision of harmony while the pair “trod” – “shod” along with the inner rhymes “toil” – “soil” points out to the distraction. Through the use of nouns the shape of the sonnet becomes more concrete.

### 3. Harmony Recaptured

The conflict between two images from the first stanza finds its solution in the great vision of the second part of the poem. The answer reveals itself in the sentence: “nature is never spent” with its sound-repetition of “n-r” strengthening the steadiness of nature. Nature, that is “the world”, appears as a *good greater than evil*, since it is “never spent”. It corresponds to the Biblical ground, for instance: “where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more” (Rom. 5:20) as well as to the Catholic doctrine of evil which is merely the lack of proper good and therefore, of necessity, good is stronger than evil<sup>15</sup>. Hopkins draws the same conclusion when presenting the created nature as a winner not through violence but the

<sup>13</sup> Cf. J. Ziomek, *Retoryka opisowa*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1990, p. 117, 203.

<sup>14</sup> T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in: T. S. Eliot, *Poezje wybrane*, Warszawa 1988, p. 76–80.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Jan Paweł II, *Pamięć i tożsamość. Rozmowy na przełomie tysięcy*, Kraków 2005, p. 11–37; M. Godawa, *Teologiczna oferta wolności w nauczaniu i doświadczeniu duchowym Jana Pawła II*, in: *Oblicza wolności*, ed. R. Łętocha, Oświęcim 2010, p. 29–44.

pure power of good made by the Holy Ghost. Thus, God's *Grandeur* is also a strong and meaningful voice for true ecology<sup>16</sup>.

With reference to the first line, the author develops, up to the end of his verse, the crucial idea of the metaphysical value of the world as coming from God's assistance. At first he announces that all things are based upon "the dearest freshness". This background, recalling the concept of substance (*sub-stare, stand-under*), means the nature revitalised by God. The words "dearest" and "never" suggest that this kind of freshness is proper to God only, that is directly confirmed slightly later. God's presence manifests itself through "dearest freshness" therefore nature is "never spent". Hopkins amazingly presents the truth of Divine Providence pointing his work to the image of the Holy Ghost to state who is the real maker of goodness of the world. The Holy Ghost produces the morning rising from the East (cf. Lk 1:78-79) against the western blackness over the world. The morning arises "because" of the action of God: "[the Holy Ghost] over the bent / World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings". Thus, His brooding over the world turns out to be a source of goodness, expressed by "morning" and "dearest freshness". This relation is established by the common connotation of light in the words "morning", "bright wings" and also by rhyming the Ghost's "wings" with "[the morning] springs", by which the actions of the Holy Ghost ("broods") and of a day ("springs") are linked.

The picture of the Holy Ghost as a bird has been artistically refreshed by singling out two motifs of a "warm breast" and "bright wings". By appealing to the sensual impressions Hopkins composes the effect of intimacy and beauty which by correspondence to the word "dearest" characterises God's presence. Remembering the meaning of sound-instrumentation in Hopkins' language the achievement of the last line cannot be omitted. A pair of dominating sounds "w" as well as "br" emerges in three sets of words, namely "world broods" – "warm breast" – "bright

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16 Hopkins' poem reminds the later Francis, the Pope's teaching on the role of some spiritual, mystical experience in an ecological attitude towards the world (*Encyclical Letter Laudato si' of the Holy Father Francis On Care for Our Common Home*, no. 216, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html) (21.06.2022)). Such an ecological interpretation of Hopkins' verses seems to be a very interesting task.



wings". This consequent regularity ties the words up and underlines by repentance the figure of the Holy Ghost so that each of those sets is like a mini-epiphany of the same divine reality. Also their expressive resonance evokes harmony and beauty. The exceptional composition of the last line: "World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings", consisting of ten monosyllabic words, gives an impression of a flutter, whilst putting the key nouns ("breast", "wings") respectively in the middle and in the end of the line stresses the "substance" of the image. Then the exclamation "ah!" conveys the speaker's reaction, which could be explained as admiration. All the elements are harmonized in one great image of the Holy Ghost. The mystery of God is experienced by a spiritual multisensory message: the impression of sight ("bright wings", "morning") is connected with the rich sound-instrumentation as well as the touch of God ("warm breast"). In the frame of Christian spirituality these motifs are signs of love since God is love (1 Jn 4:8).

Following the structure of the sonnet it can be said that the world, both potentially and actually full of God's glory, is being violated by human, but in the end this conflict finds its solution in the image of the Holy Ghost, depicted expressively as a bright and warm bird. His never ceased presence provides living power to the world and is a starting point for a man searching for sense of being. His or her alienation from the world and God could be overcome by sharing the warm union of nature and the Holy Ghost. This state of harmony (9–14) contrasts the previous picture of the destruction in respect of touch ("brooding" with "warm breast" versus the separation between man and the soil) as well as clearness ("bright wings", "morning" versus the ugliness of all "seared", "bleared", "smeared"). A very interesting idea is conveyed by the verb "to brood" in the last line of the poem. Attached to the Holy Spirit, in the meaning "to hover above the ground"<sup>17</sup>, this verb signifies His loving creating presence over the world—with reference to "a mighty wind sweeping over the waters (Gen 1:2)". This relation is confirmed by another possible connotation because "to brood" stands also for "to sit on eggs in order to hatch them"<sup>18</sup>. Thus, the whole world, like an egg, is tucked in the "warm breast" of the Holy Ghost. Here, the intimacy of God and

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Brood, in: PWN Oxford English-Polish Dictionary, Warszawa 2002, p. 147.

<sup>18</sup> Brood, in: The Penguin English Dictionary, p. 160.

the world (a man) is culminated, constituting the inspiring matter for contemplation<sup>19</sup>.

#### 4. Contemplative Meaning

The analytical outcome can be interpreted now in terms of spiritual theology. Hopkins' work is here a kind of contemplation<sup>20</sup>, which generally means a *simple gaze on the truth*<sup>21</sup>. The poetic simplification of the issue *nature-man-God*, consisting in the suggestive images instead of broad rational argumentation, enables the simple, but deep act of contemplation. More exactly, the expressive imagery, achieved by poetical means, can inspire to the *acquired* contemplation, which means "a simple and loving knowledge of God and of His works, which is the fruit of our personal activity aided by grace"<sup>22</sup>. Hopkins' poetic simplification and amplification of selected motifs incline the reader to pay a simple attention to the truth portrayed in the poem. His or her contemplative reaction could be better captured by comparison to people who on account of attentive listening to a sermon "taste the great truth of faith which they see in its radiation"<sup>23</sup>, that is they contemplate. Reading poems, including Hopkin's works, may produce the same radiative effect. The inner composed process of reading terminates in such a simple looking

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19 In addition, "to brood" signifies meditating on something (PWN Oxford English-Polish Dictionary, p. 147), that depicts the Holy Ghost as if He was meditating over the world, and provokes echoing of human meditation. But this meaning, as often defined by "gloom", "worry", must be eliminated by the poetical connotations of warmth and light in God's *Grandeur*.

20 Hopkins' poetry is intrinsically addressed to Jesus. That is stated in calling Christ "The only just judge, the only just literary critic [...] who prizes, is proud of, and admires, more than any man, more than the receiver himself can, the gifts of his own making" (G. M. Hopkins, *A Letter to R. W. Dixon*, 13–15.06.1878), in: R. V. Young, *Song of A Soul*). This view of Jesus contemplating His deeds also underlines the contemplative foundation of poetry: the poet's contemplation follows Christ's admiration. It is also meaningful that in Hopkins' sonnet, *The Windhover*, this is Christ who is depicted as a bird, by using the other set of connotations.

21 Cf. St. Thomas of Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II–II, 180, 3, ad 1, <https://www.newadvent.org/summa/3180.htm#article3> (27.06.2022).

22 R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life. Prelude of Eternal Life*, vol. 2, Rockford Illinois 1989, p. 309.

23 R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, p. 309.

at the truth. Also the fact that the object of contemplation is God and His works, finds brilliant realisation in *God's Grandeur*.

The author's talent and professional work form a loving knowledge in the reader. Hopkins does it through his whole work, a number of operations on language, artistry connected with exceptional sensitivity. His sonnet is thematic since its motifs are diligently selected and put in order to form the clear structure A–B–A1. The motifs, mutually and semantically consistent, constitute the dominating images of *nature-human impact-the vision of God*. Here, the thematic property of the *Spiritual Exercises* could be seen in the poem by Hopkins, a spiritual son of St. Ignatius. This topicality, avoiding distraction, turns attention in one direction, easing a contemplative gaze. The elements mostly come from the real order of things, so that metonymy and synecdoche prevail, e.g. foot being shod, the bared soil as well as morning are parts of the reality. The key image of the Holy Ghost as a bird can be treated as a metaphor, in which, by similarity<sup>24</sup>, some dominating connotations of a figure (*determinans*, the bird) are transferred to an object (*determinandum*, the Holy Ghost)<sup>25</sup> in order to trigger off a loving knowledge of God. Thanks to the motifs of "bright wings" or "warm breast" the reader's spiritual sensitivity is being awakened up to the desire for tasting and enjoying God. The connotations become a warp of prayer. The other, but very important, poetical means is the sound-instrumentation by which, as it has been widely shown above, the consistency of the poem is strengthened and the effectiveness of image is underlined. The different sets of syllables sustain, by repetition, the ideas of the poem and support their expression. Like in a well-composed chant the sonic dimension is combined with the semantic lines. Moreover, the thematic consistency of *God's Grandeur* has been built on the basis of syntax and prosody. The order of thought is apprehended by the two-stanza structure of a sonnet<sup>26</sup>,

24 Nota bene, Hopkins does not concretise the species of the bird, but points out the dominating connotations (*tertium comparationis*, cf. J. Ziomek, *Retoryka opisowa*, p. 159–189). The topic of the Holy Ghost represented by a dove, following the Bible (cf. Mt 3:16, Mk 1:10, Lk 3:22, Jn 1:32), may be suggested, though in the Bible a dove as an explicit sign of the Holy Ghost emerges in direct relation to Jesus, not to the world as such.

25 Cf. J. Ziomek, *Retoryka opisowa*, p. 174–175.

26 For Hopkins' understanding of a sonnet see: J. Fenton, *An Introduction to English Poetry*, New York 2002, p. 79–80; G. M. Hopkins, *A Letter to R. W. Dixon* (12.10.1881), in:

along with the strongly accentuated monosyllabic rhymes pointing out the important elements of the sentences<sup>27</sup>.

From the theological perspective, a key meaning in the sonnet is attributed to this whole embracing consistent gravitation towards its final image. In this way the reader's attention is being consequently directed to the gaze on the Holy Ghost. If he or she rests simply and lovingly upon Him, then the contemplation is effectuated and an abundance of spiritual fruit is shared. Thus, the semantic and syntactic structure of the poem appeals to contemplation.

The contemplative property of the poem may be considered in the context of infused, mystical contemplation, which, being also "a simple and loving knowledge of God and His works", differs from the acquired prayer by the fact of being produced by "a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost"<sup>28</sup> and includes a man's direct experience of God made on the basis of their resemblance in love<sup>29</sup>. In this light the poem may get close to this mystical ideal, preparing the mind for it, however, as distinct from mystical reality, it remains an indirect act. Hopkins' work represents "aesthetic contemplation", that is looking at God and His works by means of art<sup>30</sup>. The poet's taste for words pulls the reader's attention so that he or she is ready to be brought by grace to enjoy God's presence<sup>31</sup>.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it ought to be stated that Hopkin's sonnet *God's Grandeur* and similar kinds of poetry can be interpreted as a stimulus for contemplation of God and His works. Its poetic capacity is strictly connected with religious and spiritual issues. Three dominating images portray

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*Mortal Beauty, God's Grace*, p. 96–98.

27 Cf. B. Leithauser, *Preface to the Vintage Spiritual Classics Edition*, p. 26–29.

28 R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, p. 310.

29 It must be underlined that a spiritual way terminates in the direct personal union of both a soul and Jesus, as it has been eminently exposed by St. John of the Cross in his *A Spiritual Canticle* (stanzas 6–11).

30 Cf. M. Godawa, *Imaginative Contemplation based on "The Starlight Night" by Gerard Manley Hopkins*, "Bogoslovni Vestnik" 80 (2020) no. 3, p. 566, 572.

31 Cf. M. Godawa, *Imaginative Contemplation based on "The Starlight Night" by Gerard Manley Hopkins*, "Bogoslovni Vestnik" 80 (2020) no. 3, p. 571–572.

the harmony of God and the world, violated by human mindless and sinful activity but recaptured in the final vision which especially makes room for contemplation. This contemplative attention, a simple gaze on God and His works, is supported by semantic, sonic and syntactic properties of poetic speech. The particular role is played by the gravitation of the poem towards the final image, where the Holy Ghost is depicted as a warm and bright bird brooding over the world. Consequent sound instrumentation underlines semantics of the poem and expressiveness of its images, through which the mind is being attached to God. This type of poetry represents acquired contemplation, an indirect look on God through artistic sensibility. The present consideration endeavours to show how aesthetic need, characterizing a contemporary man, can, by its bond with Christian spiritual life, serve his or her true good in the world.

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