



Gerard Manley Hopkins and His Poetics of Fancy

Kumiko Tanabe

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This book explores the poetics of fancy in the works of Gerard Manley Hopkins, a term often paired with imagination in well-known Romantic poetics. It sheds new light on this concept, which is described positively in Hopkins's poetics and later becomes the essence of his idiosyncratic concept of inscape, as shown here. Chapter One discusses the influence of Coleridge and Ruskin on Hopkins's poetics of fancy, Hopkins's experiments in the language of inspiration produced by fancy before his conversion to Catholicism, his idea of inscape as revealed by fancy, and the relation between his fancy and the aesthetics of Romantic poets such as Keats and Wordsworth. Chapter Two focuses on the concept of fancy in Hopkins's predecessors, William Shakespeare and Alfred Lord Tennyson, who, along with Coleridge and Ruskin, had a major influence on the writer, leading him to pen the play *Floris in Italy* and the sonnet series *The Beginning of the End* in order to experiment with the language of inspiration which he argued only fancy could produce. This chapter also discusses Hopkins's interest in J. E. Millais and the impact of the Pre-Raphaelites in the development of his poetics of fancy, Hopkins's fancy as metalanguage, the contrast between his fancy and the impressionism of Walter Pater, and the role of fancy in Hopkins's sonnets. Chapter Three treats Hopkins's conversion to Catholicism and his views on Catholic art, including his interest in William Butterfield and the Gothic Revival, as well as the abrupt parallelism between Christ and fancy in *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. Hopkins's poetic diction is a condensed evocation of art and nature with fancy as the source of his inspiration. His metaphors are not ordinary figures expressing the attributes of things, but are autonomous and have their nature within themselves. Hopkins's poetic idiosyncrasy is generated by the parallelism between distinctive and autonomous images which repeat the surprise and ecstasy of the poet contemplating art and nature. He endeavoured to achieve the poetry of inspiration with his emphasis on fancy as the basis of his poetic diction so as to reinstate it as the source of a new Realism. Hopkins's fancy foregrounds the discontinuous nature of a new poetic diction, which demonstrates unfettered combinations between autonomous images and signs in metalanguage in advance of semiotic literary theories.

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