Meta-Biography of Modernist Hopkins Studies in Modernism



Iliazd: A Meta-Biography of a Modernist (Hopkins

Studies in Modernism) by Johanna Drucker

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Prehistory

Before he died of typhoid fever in June 1889, Gerard Manley Hopkins was virtually unknown as a poet. In the fifteen years since he had left Oxford University in 1874, he had published only a handful of poems in obscure Catholic periodicals, and only his close friends and fellow Jesuits, Robert Bridges, Richard Watson Dixon, and Alfred Edward Housman, had any sense of his literary worth. As a result, despite the long poetic career that lay behind him, Hopkins entered the twentieth century as, in W. H. Gardner's words, a 'mute, inglorious Milton'.

Hopkins's poetic silence was first broken in 1918 when Robert Bridges published a small selection of his friend's poems in the collection, simply entitled *Poems*. Bridges's edition had a limited circulation and was initially greeted with indifference. However, by the late 1920s and early 1930s it

had begun to attract critical attention, and, in 1930, Charles Williams published a groundbreaking essay on Hopkins in *The English Review* that effectively launched his 'reputation'.

Reputation

The establishment of Hopkins's 'reputation' in the early twentieth century was largely due to the efforts of a group of poets and critics associated with the modernist movement. These included T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and F. R. Leavis, all of whom praised Hopkins's technical brilliance and his originality as a religious poet. Eliot, in particular, was a strong advocate for Hopkins, and his essay, 'The Metaphysical Poets' (1921),helped to secure Hopkins's place in the canon of English literature.

By the mid-twentieth century, Hopkins was firmly established as one of the most important poets of the Victorian era. His work was widely read and studied, and he was the subject of numerous critical biographies and scholarly essays. However, despite the growing interest in his work, Hopkins's personal life remained largely unknown.

Modernist Hopkins Studies

The last half-century has witnessed a shift in focus in Hopkins studies from the poet's biography to critical work on his writing. This shift has been due in part to the influence of new critical approaches, such as new formalism, structuralism, postmodernism, and ecocriticism.

New formalism, which emerged in the 1930s, focused on the close analysis of literary texts, with particular attention to their structure and language. This approach proved to be particularly fruitful in the study of Hopkins's

poetry, which is often characterized by its complex and innovative use of language.

Structuralism, which emerged in the 1960s, focused on the underlying structures of literary texts. This approach led to a number of important insights into Hopkins's poetry, such as the importance of binary oppositions and the use of repetition and parallelism.

Postmodernism, which emerged in the 1970s, challenged the assumptions of traditional literary criticism. This approach led to a number of new ways of reading Hopkins's poetry, such as the focus on the poet's use of irony and ambiguity.

Ecocriticism, which emerged in the 1990s, focused on the relationship between literature and the environment. This approach has led to a number of new insights into Hopkins's poetry, such as the importance of nature imagery and the poet's concern for the environment.

The shift in focus from biography to critical work on the writing has led to a number of important developments in Hopkins studies. These include a greater understanding of the poet's craftsmanship, the development of new critical approaches to his work, and a renewed interest in the poet's personal life.

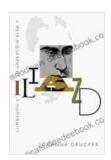
The Future of Hopkins Studies

The future of Hopkins studies is likely to be characterized by a continued interest in critical work on the writing, as well as a renewed interest in the poet's personal life. In particular, there is likely to be a growing focus on the intersection between Hopkins studies and modernist studies.

This intersection is important because Hopkins was a modernist poet in the same way that T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and James Joyce were modernist poets. He was a poet who experimented with language and form, and who was interested in the relationship between art and religion. As a result, Hopkins's work can be fruitfully studied in relation to the work of other modernist poets.

The intersection between Hopkins studies and modernist studies is also important because it can help to shed light on the development of modernism. Hopkins was one of the first poets to experiment with modernist techniques, and his work can help us to understand the origins of modernism.

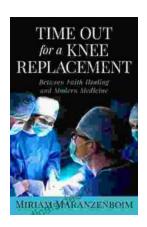
There is much work to be done in the area of Hopkins studies, and the future of the field is bright. There is a growing interest in Hopkins's work, and there are many new critical approaches that can be applied to his writing. The intersection between Hopkins studies and modernist studies is also a promising area of research. By continuing to explore the relationship between these two fields, we can gain a deeper understanding of Hopkins's work and the development of modernism.



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★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 4.5 out of 5

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