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1. Introduction: Literature and Cognitive Grammar

Cognitive Grammar is a detailed theory of language situated within the broader field of cognitive linguistics. It chiefly departs from 'traditional' theories of language in its contention that the way in which we produce and process language is determined, not by the 'rules' of syntax, but by the symbols evoked by linguistic units. These linguistic units include morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, sentences and whole texts, all of which are deemed inherently symbolic in nature. The way in which we join linguistic units together is also symbolic rather than rule-driven because grammar is itself 'meaningful' (Langacker 2008: 4). In claiming a direct symbolic association between linguistic form (what it terms 'phonological structure') and semantic structure, Cognitive Grammar denies the need for an organisational system to mediate between the phonological and semantic structures (i.e. syntax). Rather, as stated by Langacker, '[t]he basic tenet of CG is that nothing beyond symbolic structures need be invoked for the proper characterization of complex expressions and the patterns they instantiate' (2008: 5).

The value in adopting a Cognitive Grammar approach to literature is twofold and centres upon its consideration of the interaction between bottom-up and top-down cognitive processing. On the one hand Cognitive Grammar is concerned with how linguistic expressions encode a particular construal of the events represented; on the other it is concerned with how this interacts with the reader's 'elaborate conceptual substrate', that is, the reader's background knowledge and ability to understand an expression's 'physical, social, and linguistic content' (Langacker 2008: 4). Cognitive Grammar asserts that when we represent something linguistically, we are expressing our conceptualisation of the event/situation/object in question. To linguistically represent something in a 'prototypical' fashion is, then, to mentally construe it in a typical or prosaic manner. In the Jakobsonian tradition from which cognitive stylistics originates, literature is identified on the basis of its ability to do 'extraordinary' things with language. Investigating literature through the lens of Cognitive Grammar, the supposition is that the 'unprototypical' linguistic expression typical of literary texts directly represents an unprototypical or unusual manner of conceptually construing the event/situation/object in

question. Of the Victorian poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, the focus of this chapter's Cognitive Grammar approach to literature, Gardner remarks: 'his spontaneous, earnest writing is always the utterance of a vigorous and sensitive mind – often humorous or witty, usually searching and stimulating, *never commonplace or pedestrian*' (2008: xiv; emphasis added) .

Though largely unread during his lifetime, the deeply religious overtones, innovative formal techniques and enquiry into aesthetic cognition which characterise Gerard Manley Hopkins's (1844 – 1889) poetic output have secured him posthumous renown and much critical attention. A Roman Catholic convert and Jesuit priest, Hopkins formulated a number of concepts which are integral to the reading of his poetry. The most famous of these are the related theories of *inscape* – essentially the manner by which Hopkins endeavoured to poetically capture the intrinsic uniqueness, the 'particular energy and stress' (Mariani 1970:334) of an entity – and *instress*, the means by which this 'essence' is cognitively conveyed to the reader through its visual appearance.¹ Widely considered 'one of the few strikingly successful innovators in poetic language and rhythm' (Gardner 2008: xiii), Hopkins's work is particularly noteworthy for the phonological and rhythmic effects of what Hopkins termed 'sprung rhythm', his attempt to infuse his poetry with the patterns of Welsh and Old English prosody. In addition, his unique poetic output is notable for its 'adjective pileups, syntactical switcheroos, sentences so grammatically dense they are nearly unparseable, alliteration [and] archaisms', the result being 'gorgeous, complex, tongue-twister poetry (cited in Tsur 2010: 123).

Hopkins considered 'The Windhover' 'the best thing I ever wrote' (Letter to Rupert Bridges, 22 June 1879; cited in Mariani: 1970: 110). Mariani's description of the sonnet as "'a billion times told" bulkier than its predecessors' (1993: 110) provides some insight into why the poem has, as Holloway notes, 'been subjected to as many attempts to release meaning as there are letters in the sonnet' (1993: 206). Indeed, as Whiteford remarks, 'it is difficult to think of any English poem of comparable length that has been the subject of as much concerted explication', the result being a body of critical work which is 'as formidable as it is lacking in consensus' (2001: 617). This, of course, all raises the question as to why this sonnet has been chosen as the object of a Cognitive Grammar approach. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, as Cognitive Grammar posits a direct symbolic relationship between linguistic and semantic structure, the work of a poet known for his 'extreme condensation of thought and

¹ These definitions must be considered approximate given the huge amount of debate surrounding the meaning of the terms.

language' (as remarked upon by his friend and literary sponsor, Robert Bridges, cited in Gardner 2008: xiv) constitutes an apt object of study. The choice of 'The Windhover' over Hopkins's other poetic output is predicated on the fact that in this sonnet, as Olney notes, 'one sees all of Hopkins's technical resources on fullest display' – including sprung rhythm, end and internal rhyme, assonance and alliteration – all of which are 'handled perfectly, with great skill and to very telling effect' (1993: 83). Furthermore, and perhaps most essentially, applying a Cognitive Grammar approach to this sonnet constitutes a means of interrogating the following claim by Tsur that Hopkins's poetry cannot be interpreted without requisite specialist knowledge:

Hopkins is a difficult poet. It is almost impossible to imagine a spontaneous 'first reading' of any of his poems. It is more reasonable to assume that 'spontaneous' response to a poem by Hopkins becomes possible only after the studious internalization of research done (independently, or by reading footnotes) on his language, imagery and theological conceptions. (2010: 123)

However, Cognitive Grammar's contention that our conceptual and linguistic systems are inextricably linked challenges this claim on the basis that, if linguistic expression is truly 'intuitive', a basic understanding of all texts must be within our grasp without necessary recourse to contextual information. While cognitive linguistics does not advocate a necessarily one-to-one link between linguistic form and the conceptual domains it evokes, with background knowledge always playing a part in readerly interpretation, by positing the 'naturalness' of linguistic expression it presupposes that there are 'systematic connections between conceptualizations and observable phenomena like sounds and gestures' so that 'all valid grammatical constructs' are 'reducible to form-meaning pairings' (Langacker 2008: 6). Finally, given that cognitive stylistic approaches on the whole endeavour to make overt the cognitive processes underlying the reading of literary texts, it seems particularly shrewd to apply them to a text such as 'The Windhover' which, as Olney remarks, 'is one of those poems that seem almost miraculous in coming so far from the beginning of the poem that *one cannot see how it has been done*' (Olney 1993: 84; emphasis added).

Cognitive Grammar as an approach is centred upon the distinction in linguistic expression between figure and ground. Drawn from the field of cognitive linguistics, when applied to the visual field, this distinction endeavours to encapsulate the way in which certain elements stand out as *figures* against a background: for example, a winter landscape might act as the visual backdrop against which a bird in flight stands out or, in Cognitive Grammar terms,

is *profiled*. A bird in flight would stand out against a static background because it is in motion. If the bird was stationary but bright pink in colour, it would be the contrast between its colour and the muted almost monochromatic shades of a winter landscape which makes it stand out. On the other hand, if the bird was small, grey and stationary, it might very well fade into the background. It should be obvious in any case that certain features of an object in the visual field will make it more likely to stand out against its background. To relate this to Cognitive Grammar, ‘the prevalence of figure/ground organization in conceptual structure entails its importance for semantic and grammatical structure as well’ (Langacker 1987: 120); that is, just as figures can be cognitively distinguished from their ground in the visual field, they can also stand out in the linguistic field. As Stockwell notes, the recognition of figures and ground in reading is a ‘dynamic’ process which is constantly updated as one reads a text and different figures are thrown into relief against various grounds (2002: 14). Certain features will contribute to the ‘naturalness and likelihood’ (Langacker 1987: 120) of a particular linguistic entity being recognised or chosen by the reader as the figure which stands out against the ground. These features are those which grab the reader’s attention, typically through deviance from a background linguistic norm as evidenced in unprototypical grammatical or semantic construction. (See Stockwell (2003: 15-20) for a discussion of potential *attractors* of cognitive attention in the textual field).

In Cognitive Grammar, the figure/ground distinction is discussed in terms of how a figure stands out or is *profiled* against the ground. Profiling refers to the perceived relationship between two entities. In Cognitive Grammar, this relationship operates at a number of different levels. As noted above, at the conceptual level, profiling denotes the relationship between a *figure*, an entity which attracts your cognitive attention because it stands out in some way, and the *ground* or background against which it stands out. This reflects the way in which we cognitively interact with the world around us: in paying attention to figures in the visual, spatial and conceptual fields we take cognitive shortcuts which allow us to more effectively process and prioritise the constant stream of incoming data with which we are constantly bombarded. At the linguistic level, the figure is termed the *trajector* while the ground is called the *landmark*. At the grammatical level, within Cognitive Grammar all of the major word classes – nouns, verbs, prepositions, adjectives and adverbials – are perceived as profiling or designating different concepts. A noun, for example, ‘profiles a thing’ while a verb ‘profiles a process’ (Langacker 2008: 151); in both cases they do so by participating in an unprofiled relation to another entity. For example, *mother* is obviously a noun as it profiles a thing, but the ‘definition’ of *mother* is based upon and activates an additional entity which is understood but

not profiled. To be a mother entails being the mother of someone; therefore, the term *mother* ‘activates’ not only a *relationship* between two conceptual entities (mother and offspring) but also the entity which it is the mother of. Neither the relationship nor the offspring are mentioned in the word *mother*, as such they are unprofiled; but in order to understand the term we must have an awareness of these unprofiled entities. All expressions (other than referring noun phrases) are comprised of these two layers: the *profile* is the term itself (which stands out as a trajector) but it invokes an unprofiled *base* against which it is understood (which acts as the landmark). Relational profiles can be sub-categorised according to what is referred to in ‘traditional’ accounts of grammar as tense and aspect. Verbs designate temporal relations, that is, encoded within a verb’s profile is a temporal element which denotes a specified span of time (akin to the traditional grammatical notion of tense). There are two kinds of temporal relations. The first is stative, that is, the temporal relation profiled is presented as unchanging; this is called a simple temporal relation. The second is dynamic, that is, the temporal relation profiled is presented as changing, as denoting a change in the relation between trajector and landmark; this is a complex temporal relation.

Finally, it is important that a clear distinction is drawn between the many labels that have been introduced thus far. Conceptually, we profile entities as *figures* (against an unprofiled *ground*) while linguistically we profile entities as *trajectors* (against an unprofiled *landmark(s)*). In profiling entities as trajectors, we must identify their semantic roles in the utterance in question; Cognitive Grammar does so by conceptualising the events depicted at the level of the clause in terms of an *action chain* which centres on the way in which entities participate in the process being profiled. In endeavouring to describe the prototypical process of a prediction or ‘dynamic situation’, Langacker employs a metaphor of energy transfer (Langacker 1991: 283). Each of the various participants (usually designated by a noun phrase) in a clause perform different roles as designated by the predication or relational profile of the clause; these roles are based upon *cognitive archetypes*. Prototypically, at least one participant in a clause will act as *agent*, that is, the ‘doer’ of an action. The participant which is the recipient of this action (the ‘done unto’) – and is altered in some way as a result of the action – is called the *patient*. If a participant in the clause is utilised in any way by the agent, this participant is labelled the *instrument*. A prototypical ‘dynamic situation’ would hence be represented as follows:

Jo closed the door with her foot

Jo is the agent, the door is the patient and her foot constitutes the instrument. Prototypically then, the predicative ‘energy’ is transferred from agent to patient through an instrument. The agent is hence highest on this dynamic chain which Langacker calls an *action chain*, the patient is second highest and the instrument comes last, as in the above example. If the dynamic process encoded in the clause represents a cognitive process, the participant which is the locus of this cognitive or perceptual operation – that is, an entity in which processes such as thinking, feeling or seeing occur – is termed an *experiencer*. Finally, a *mover* is the term accorded to a participant who relocates to another physical space. In English, the agent, experiencer and mover roles are prototypically represented by the grammatical subject and as such are conceptualised as having control over the represented predication. Clausal elements do not always participate in the predication process. For example, in *the cat is on the table* the cat constitutes a *zero participant* as it simply exists without ‘doing’ anything while the table does not participate in any way and hence constitutes part of the background *setting*. The zero position is also, as Stockwell notes, the default role for all participants in a clause as ‘all participants begin fundamentally with existence and attributes’ (2002: 64).

2. Profiling Hopkins’s ‘The Windhover’

For the purposes of the current analysis, I will focus on the sonnet’s relational profiles and associated participants. Despite the huge volume of critical writing on ‘The Windhover’ – which focuses on many prominent features of the sonnet including its phonological patterning,² its use of religious allegories and motifs,³ and its lexical ‘ambiguities’ – little has been done on its use of verbs, or, as Tsur notes, its ‘lack of verbs used as verbs’ (2010: 129).⁴ Indeed, in the whole sonnet, there are only 11 verbs which actually function as verbs, the remainder predominantly functioning as nouns. Given Hopkins’s conviction that the *inscape* or essential

² See Scott, C. T. (1974) Towards a Formal Poetics: Metrical Patterning in ‘The Windhover’. *Language and Style*, 7, pp. 91-107; Rudanko, J. (1982) On One NP of ‘The Windhover’: A Phonological Approach. *Language and Style*, 15 (4), pp. 277-282.

³ See, for example: Cosgrove, P. (2004) Hopkins’s ‘The Windhover’: Not Ideas about the Thing but the Thing Itself. *Poetics Today*, 25(3), pp. 437-464; Gallet, R. (1991) ‘The Windhover’ and God’s First Intention Ad Extra. In P. Bottalla, G. Marra & F. Marucci (eds.) *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Tradition and Innovation*. Ravenna: Longo Editore, pp. 55-68; Rehder, R. (1992). Inside Out: Omnipotence and the Hidden Heart in ‘The Windhover’. In A. Mortimer (ed.), *The Authentic Cadence: Centennial Essays on Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Fribourg: UP Fribourg, pp. 169-199; Cervo, N. (1981) Catholic Humanism in ‘The Windhover’ and ‘God’s Grandeur’. *The Hopkins Quarterly*, 8(1): pp. 33-40.

⁴ Recent research by Tsur (2010) constitutes one of the few exceptions.

essence of all entities was dynamic in nature, that 'all is in act, all is in flux' (Holloway 1993: 207), this is surprising, particularly as dynamism is often encoded in verb use.

Consideration of the relational profiles in 'The Windhover' reveals interesting patterns in terms of the ways in which processes and their associated participants are profiled and thereby elucidates the cognitive processes by which the reader arrives at poetic interpretation. This is not to suggest that there is one definitive interpretation of 'The Windhover': this fact is evident from the number of published critiques of the sonnet which grapple with its metaphoric constructions, its innovative phonological patterning and its idiosyncratic use of syntax. Whilst the allegorical nature of the poem renders it impossible to fully unravel the 'literal' meaning from the 'figurative', this analysis will focus on what would be perceived as the 'literal' meaning, for two reasons. Firstly, it does so in the belief that, and following Hopkins critic Paul Mariani, 'a literal reading [of this sonnet] must come first' (1970: 111). Mariani goes on to remark: 'The religious significance in this sonnet is so continually bursting through the natural scene that many commentators have spent most of their time on the secondary meaning without grounding it in the perceptual world' (1970: 111). Secondly, it does so in the current context as Cognitive Grammar does not make a distinction between literal and figurative language; rather, it treats figurative language as 'a natural, expected phenomenon rather than a special, problematic one' (Langacker 1987: 1) and therefore 'accommodates' it 'as an integral facet of linguistic organization, one that can be expected to interact with grammatical processes' (Langacker 1987: 38). In short, given that Cognitive Grammar focuses on the 'surface form' (Langacker 1987: 4) of language in the belief that all linguistic units are 'inherently symbolic and hence meaningful' (Langacker 1987: 12), such a distinction is rendered void. This analysis in no way constitutes an exhaustive account of the sonnet; such a feat, as the voluminous nature of previous critical commentary on 'The Windhover' attests, seems impossible in any case! Rather, this analysis constitutes an attempt to view this sonnet, the subject of much critical reflection and contention, through new, 'Cognitive Grammarian', eyes. The aim is not to add yet another interpretation to the dozens that have gone before, but rather to trace the cognitive pathways by which these interpretations have been arrived at.

Profiling Hopkins's 'The Windhover'

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-

dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in

his riding

Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl
and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of; the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

Downes summarises ‘The Windhover’ as ‘a redescription of the reality of total Christian love through the interpretive mediation of a richly composited sequence of metaphorical figures of Christ: cross-falcon-poet-disciple; the slicing plow and the falling ember’ (Downes 1993: 128). The fourteen lines of this sonnet are comprised of seven sentences which run over an octet and a two-part sestet. The first sentence consists of a main and complement clause, runs across six and a half lines [from ‘I caught this morning’ to ‘In his ecstasy!’] and is centred upon the main verb ‘caught’. It is interesting to consider here the grammatical profiling of the poet-speaker as subject and the falcon as object which takes place in the opening line of the sonnet. ‘Caught’ in this instance means ‘caught sight of’ and is hence intransitive;⁵ it profiles a stative process with a bounded temporal span making it is a simple temporal relation. It also profiles two participants: the ‘see-er’ (‘I’) and the ‘seen’. The ‘see-er’ is the poet-speaker, and the ‘seen’ is the bird. The prototypical grammatical profiling of the main clause of this first sentence – in which the subject is in topic or sentence-initial position – aligns with its semantic profiling; as such, ‘I’ may also be labelled the *experiencer* as it is the entity which has ‘caught sight of’ the

⁵ In a journal entry on the poem, Hopkins explains that ‘caught’ here means ‘in-scaped’, that is, in seeing the bird Hopkins divined its essential essence (see House, H. and Storey, G. eds. (1959) *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. London: Oxford University Press, p. 230, cited in Whiteford 2001: 618). While this certainly adds an additional layer of meaning, it does not preclude the more prosaic understanding of the term, especially given that the sonnet’s octet is devoted to Hopkins’s description of seeing the falcon in flight.

stimulus (the falcon). The positioning of the subject in this instance is also prototypical in terms of the empathy scale, as ‘the speaker is usually expected to be the subject of an utterance’ (Stockwell 2002: 61), as is the case here. Conceptually then, ‘I’ is the *figure* in this utterance and the falcon constitutes the *ground*.

However, as the first sentence progresses, the reader’s attention becomes drawn away from the ‘see-er’ to the ‘seen’. The poet-speaker occupies the subject and experiencer participant roles, but this grammatical profiling is soon superseded by its semantic structure which sees the falcon take over the role of trajector. This is achieved in two ways. Firstly, it may be noted that there are actually two constituents to the ‘seen’. The first is the bird itself, which is referred to, variously, as the servant or favoured one (interpretations differ) of the morning (‘morning’s minion’), the prince of the kingdom of daylight (‘king- /dom of daylight’s dauphin’), and the falcon ‘dappled’ and ‘drawn’ upon by the emerging rays of the sun (‘dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon’). The very use of apposition cognitively foregrounds the bird: while the grammatical subject and linguistic trajector (‘I’) is only mentioned once, the object/landmark (the falcon) is referred to thrice through apposition. Secondly, the unprototypical nature of the grammatical profiling of each of these apposite phrases draws further attention to them. The first and second nominals – ‘morning’s minion’ and ‘kingdom of daylight’s dauphin’ – are not prototypically profiled, with the subjects (‘minion’ and ‘dauphin’) relegated to the end of the phrase in each case. The third reference (‘dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon’), a noun phrase comprised of a series of three hyphenated words that premodify the noun, is grammatically profiled in a prototypical fashion in that modification is occurring before the noun; the noun acts as trajector and the premodifier acts as landmark. However, it is the premodifier which is semantically profiled through the unusual elliptical manner in which the three words have been conjoined. The whole noun phrase has been interpreted in a number of ways. Some readings conceptualise ‘drawn’ as a relational profile meaning ‘to attract’, with two participants profiled – the attractor and the attracted; hence the dawn is perceived as attracting the falcon with its dappled light. Another potential interpretation is that the dawn acts as an agent which ‘draws’ upon the falcon with its dappled light thereby rendering it more visible to the watcher. However, its syntactical ambiguity allows for both interpretations to co-exist simultaneously. The second stimulus ‘seen’ by the poet-speaker in the first sentence is, more specifically, the *flight* of the bird as depicted in the sentence’s complement clause (‘in his riding / Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding / High there). The relational profile of ‘seeing’ therefore has two direct objects; the first – the bird itself – is the *primary* stimulus and the second – the bird’s flight – is the *secondary* stimulus. Indeed, the bird’s flight is itself

linguistically profiled through the use of two separate but interrelated gerunds: ‘riding’ and ‘striding’. While ‘riding’ and ‘striding’ are technically functioning as nouns, the dynamism of their related verb forms mean they still profile a relational process of sorts. The overall consequence of this presence of nominal apposition and co-stimuli is that the reader’s attention shifts from the experiencer to the stimulus.

The complement clause in the first sentence (‘how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing / In his ecstasy!’) is centred upon the verb ‘rung’. Grammatically, ‘rung’ operates here in a transitive sense and profiles two participants: the ringer and what is rung. Consideration of the interaction between grammatical and semantic profiling continues to be of interest here. Grammatically, the subject of this complement clause is the falcon: it is the agent while the patient is the falcon’s ‘wimpling wing’. However, the fact that this clause is a complement clause and hence relative to the main clause is highlighted through the use of the conjunction ‘how’. Semantically, the presence of this conjunction functions to reinstate the participant role of the falcon to that of an object ‘seen’ by the poet (despite its ‘upgrade’ to the agent role in the relative clause). The participants profiled by the use of the verb ‘rung’ are the falcon and the falcon’s ‘wimpling wing’; the former acts as agent while the latter is the patient in what is a metonymic representation. The image evoked by this construction is of the falcon’s ‘spiralling upward movement’ (Holloway 1993: 207). The nominal profile of the word ‘rein’ draws upon a base domain with equestrian schematic links; hence, this image of the falcon also evokes the manner in which a horse is ‘reined’ or exercised in a ring. Here it is the falcon who acts as agent participant, that is, it is the falcon that is ‘ringing’ upon the reins, effectively acting as ‘rider’. This image constitutes the first in a series of linguistic expressions which symbolically link the falcon to Christ, the ‘chevalier’.⁶

The next sentence (‘then off, off forth on swing / As a skate’s heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding / Rebuffed the big wind’) commences with a main clause conspicuously lacking in a relational profile. It is only in the relative clause that a verb is employed; the verb ‘sweeps’ profiles a complex temporal relation as it denotes a dynamic action which is on-going. The relational profile is intransitive in this instance and has one participant, the ‘skate’s heel’, which acts as agent. Effectively the heel of the skate is sweeping on a trajectory round a bend. Here the grammatical and semantic profiling accord with the conceptual image evoked: the skate’s heel is the linguistic trajector on a metaphorically evoked

⁶ This is latently profiled earlier in the poem in the reference to ‘riding’ but it is probably not until the reader encounters the words ‘rein’ and ‘chevalier’ that the semantic links are activated.

trajectory. Following a colon, the line recommences with ‘the hurl and gliding / Rebuffed the big wind’. ‘Rebuffed’ is used here transitively and profiles two participants: the ‘rebuffer’ and the ‘rebuffed’. The ‘rebuffer’, that is, the agent of the process of ‘rebuffing’, is the falcon, metonymically represented here as ‘the hurl and gliding’, two linguistic elements constructed from the nominalisation of their respective verb forms. The patient profiled by this relation is ‘the big wind’; the relation itself is a complex temporal relation as it profiles a dynamic process which takes place over a certain span of time. This is the second instance in which the falcon acts as agent, but on this occasion its agency is not tethered in any way to the poet-speaker. Grammatically and semantically, the falcon is becoming ‘freer’. The increasing dynamism of the relational profiles of which the bird is agent further reinforces the sense of its growing freedom: it has progressed from ‘ringing’ or ‘riding’ upon its own wings to ‘rebuffing’ the very elements.

In the third sentence – the last in the octet – the poet-speaker exclaims the significance of the event witnessed (‘My heart in hiding / Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of; the mastery of the thing!’). Again, there is the elision of a verb; in this case a form of the verb ‘to be’ is absent from the phrase ‘My heart [which is] in hiding’. This absence does not affect the reader’s ability to conceptualise the utterance but rather pushes the reader on to the relational process which is at the literal and metaphorical heart of the exclamation. ‘Stirred’ is used intransitively and only profiles one participant: the ‘stirred’, that is, the poet’s ‘heart’, while the cause of the ‘stirring’ is ‘the bird’. Any potential confusion as to the cause of the ‘stirring’ profiled by the use of the preposition ‘for [the bird]’ rather than ‘by’ is soon cleared up as the line progresses to specify that it is ‘the achieve of; the mastery of the thing’ which acts as agent. The use of apposition here (‘the achieve of; the mastery of the thing’) serves to highlight exactly what it was that caused the poet’s emotional reaction.

If this circumstance was syntactically represented in a prototypical manner, it would be represented as ‘the bird stirred my heart’, with the agent acting as subject and topic in sentence-initial position. In Hopkins’s poem, use of the preposition ‘for’ partially disguises what is effectively a passive construction: as such, ‘my heart’ denotes the object which has been ‘stirred’ and ‘the bird’ denotes the entity which has done the ‘stirring’. However, Cognitive Grammar is, as Langacker notes (1987: 46-7) concerned with ‘surface grammatical form’, that is, it is solely concerned with the surface linguistic representations of an utterance. He asserts that ‘[s]urface grammatical form does not conceal a ‘truer’, deeper level of grammatical organization; rather, it itself embodies the conventional means a language employs for the structuring and symbolization of semantic content’ (Langacker 1987: 46–7).

As such, in Cognitive Grammar terms, this line in the sonnet is cognitively processed on the basis of its current linguistic construction: ‘My heart in hiding / Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of; the mastery of the thing!’. This is because, in Cognitive Grammar, the way in which an event is linguistically represented is symbolic of the way in which that event has been construed. What would be the patient in a prototypical (active) construction of this utterance (‘my heart’) is here linguistically represented as the *figure*, while the agent (the bird) is the *ground*. This accords with the role of the poet-speaker in the sonnet thus far: the poet has been grammatically profiled as agent throughout the octet and maintains that position through this figure/ground reversal. Yet, the poet-speaker is referred to metonymically in terms of his ‘heart’; this results in a metaphorical ‘shrinking’ of the poetic persona which is further reinforced by the fact that his heart is barely present, is actually ‘in hiding’. While the poet-speaker’s participant role of experiencer is again semantically profiled, on this occasion however, passive ‘seeing’ is displaced by the active ‘stirring’ of his heart when faced with the ‘achieve of; the mastery of the thing!’.

As Edgecombe notes, while ‘the octave of the sonnet has proved much less difficult to construe’, ‘the ambiguities in the sestet ... have elicited screeds of commentary and debate’ (1994: 357). This is partially because of the heavily ellipsed nature of the syntax, with so many linguistic elements absent that it is difficult to recover meaning from what remains. But it is also the result of the ambiguities in the meaning of certain words. The first tercet commences with what is probably the most heavily scrutinised and debated sentence in the whole sonnet (‘Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here / Buckle!’). It pivots upon the single verb ‘buckle’, ‘the word that has become a famous crux in the poem’ (Olney 1993: 83) and one which has generated ‘a variety of interpretations’ (Whiteford 2001: 617). If interpreted to mean ‘submit’, it could be issued as an imperative (an interpretation reinforced by its status as an exclamatory or what is known in Cognitive Grammar as an *expressive*), in which case it acts transitively, profiling all of the preceding nominals (‘Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume’) as participants cumulatively acting as patient of the relation profiled. This is at odds with the grammatical profiling which pushes the nominals to the fore as co-subjects placed before the verb. The same meaning of the verb may also be used as indicative and intransitive, in the sense that all of the nominals profiled ‘do buckle’ (see Easthope 1985: 328). Other interpretations of ‘buckle’ include ‘prepare for action’, ‘fasten together’ and ‘crumple up’ (see Gardner & Mackenzie 1967) and all can similarly function as imperatives or indicatives. In any case, its use profiles a complex temporal relation as the various

interpretations of ‘buckle’ are all dynamic. Despite the continuing lack of consensus surrounding the term’s meaning, cognitively, however, there is little doubt that ‘Buckle!’ is the trajector in this linguistic expression, standing out, not only as an expressive pushed through enjambment to the start of a new line, but also on the basis of its ambiguity. The reader’s inability to easily process the meaning of ‘buckle’ in its context ensures that it captures and maintains attention; effectively it stands out as a figure against the ground of both its immediate syntactical environment and of the sonnet as a whole. The entire meaning of the sonnet appears to hinge upon this word; indeed the *volta* or ‘turn’ which typically occurs at the end of the octet of a Petrarchan sonnet – usually signified by a note of ‘contrariness’ – is here centred upon this single word which marks the poet’s epiphany. Essentially then, the precise nature of Hopkins’s epiphany does not necessarily matter; the ambiguity ensures that each reader will experience their own version.

The sixth sentence makes up the second half of the tercet. The verb ‘breaks’ – used here in the sense of ‘breaking out’ – is embedded in another relative clause (‘that breaks from thee then’) which acts as subject complement. Two participants are relationally profiled: the ‘fire’ which acts as agent of the process of ‘breaking out’ and ‘thee’ – that is, Christ who is directly addressed at the end of the line through the vocative ‘O my chevalier!’ – is the object from which the fire has broken out. The fire is profiled by the verb use as linguistic trajector and its image dominates the remainder of the poem. The profiling of Christ as the patient is interesting here and conveys the intensely personal tone of the poem. The use of both the formal second person singular accusative pronoun (‘thee’) and the vocative suggest that Christ has been the addressee throughout.

The final tercet contains four relational profiles: ‘make (shine)’, ‘fall’, ‘gall’ and ‘gash’ (‘No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion / Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear, / Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion’). ‘Make shine’ as a relational profile is transitive and profiles the ‘maker’ and the ‘made’: the ‘maker’ here is ‘shéer plód’ but the varying interpretations of the line hinge upon how one construes the second participant, that is, the ‘made’. The suggestion is that the plodding activity of ploughing (‘shéer plód’) either makes the plough itself shine as it cuts through the soil and comes up clean, or, that it makes the ‘sillion’ – the thick slice of soil turned over by the plough – ‘shine’. In either case, ‘shéer plód’ is the agent of the action, a semantic role which is similarly profiled grammatically. The structure of this first clause is paralleled by the second one which is joined to it by co-ordination. In the second clause ‘blue-bleak embers’ are grammatically profiled as the subject of three different relational profiles: ‘falling’, ‘galling’ and ‘gashing’ (‘and blue-bleak embers,

ah my dear, / Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion'). 'Fall' is used intransitively, with the sole participant being that which falls, that is, the 'blue-bleak embers', which act as mover in this process. 'Gall' means to 'hurt'; it is transitive and used reflexively ('gall themselves') so the 'blue-bleak embers' are simultaneously profiled as both agent and patient of the process. The use of 'gash' is interesting as grammatically it could be acting as either a verb or a noun; however, I think *conceptually* a relational process is being profiled. The whole sense of the final tercet is both predicated upon and echoes that laid down in the preceding tercet: that appearances can be deceptive. Just as the plough can be 'made to shine' by the dirty soil or the dirty soil can be made to shine by the plough, so too the 'bleak' embers in a fireplace can break apart to reveal the beautiful 'golden-red' sparks within.

Overall, a pattern can be discerned in the ways in which processes are profiled throughout 'The Windhover'; this is predominantly achieved through verb use but the dynamism suggested by the three gerunds ('riding' 'striding', and 'gliding') also cognitively encodes the related processes. Of the eleven verbs which actually function as verbs in the sonnet, only the very first – 'caught' – profiles a cognitive process, with the poet acting as experiencer and the falcon as stimulus. As Taylor notes (2002: 422), cognitive processes do not lend themselves as well to the energy-transfer metaphor encoded in action chains, which profile dynamic processes. Nevertheless, degrees of agency can be detected: for example, to 'see' an entity is rather less agentive than to 'watch' it. As such, the poet-speaker is profiled as a passive agent-experiencer; the poetic persona, though grammatically profiled throughout much of the octet, is nevertheless conceptually overshadowed by the dynamism accorded to the other participants in the relational processes profiled in the sonnet. In the octet, while the poet-speaker merely 'sees', the falcon 'rides', 'strides', 'glides', 'rings', 'sweeps' and 'rebuffs'. And, though the poet is not grammatically profiled in the sestet, the conversational register invoked by the use of 'thee' and the vocatives 'O my chevalier' and 'ah my dear' foreground his presence. Yet once again, the poetic persona is inactive while abstract nouns 'buckle' and even inanimate embers 'fall', 'gall' and 'gash' themselves. The whole octet may be said to effectively encode an action chain in which the falcon's dynamism results in a metaphysical transfer of energy from the bird to the poet whose heart 'stirs' for 'the achieve of; the mastery of the thing!'. Energy continues to be expended in the sestet: once again, it comes not from the poet but from the now profiled figure of Christ. The depiction in the octet of the falcon as 'riding' and being 'rung' activated a conceptual blending of the bird with Christ which is now fully realised through Christ being addressed in the sestet as a 'chevalier' – a blend which Downes recognises as a 'semantic tension between bird and knight' (1993: 128). The result is

a pervasive image of the falcon-Christ *moving* across the *whole* sonnet. Langacker notes that '[m]otion is a highly influential factor' in determining which entity is likely to stand out against a ground: 'If it is possible to construe one entity in a scene as changing position vis-à-vis the rest (which have constant relationships to one another), that entity is normally chosen as the figure and interpreted as moving against the backdrop provided by the others' (Langacker 1987: 120). Throughout the sonnet, then, the nature of the relational profiling coupled with the associated participant roles secure for the falcon-Christ the role of trajector profiled against landmark. This accords with the striking visual image profiled throughout the sonnet: that of the *figure* of the falcon in motion profiled against the *background* sky.

As this analysis's approach to the ambiguities in 'The Windhover' has demonstrated, there is nothing to be gained by being grammatically or semantically prescriptive with this poem. Fortunately, in emphasising the direct symbolic association between linguistic and semantic structure, Cognitive Grammar offers a means of investigating the origins of the sonnet's heavily 'imagistic' style without the necessity of first endeavouring to unravel its syntactical complexities, a feat as yet unaccomplished by critics. To seek singular definitive interpretations of 'The Windhover' is to ignore not only its polysemy but its personality. As Noel Lees notes, interpretations of this sonnet are 'obtained by inference, not directly from the words' (1950: 36); this 'inference' is often multi-faceted, with varying interpretations existing simultaneously. Gardner remarks upon Hopkins's ability to 'give to a living, developing language its peculiar tang, colour, range, and expressiveness' (2008: xiv). The purpose of this Cognitive Grammar approach to 'The Windhover' has not been to generate new or alternate interpretations but to trace the cognitive pathways by which such linguistic 'tang, colour, range, and expressiveness' evokes existing interpretations. It is the poem's very ability to generate multiple meanings and activate manifold cognitive domains through its innovative linguistic expression that makes it such an interesting object of study. To pin the poem down is to capture the bird in full flight.

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