

## HOPE AND HUMANITY AS POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN HOPKINS *THE WRECK OF THE DEUTSCHLAND* AND TAGORE'S *GITANJALI*

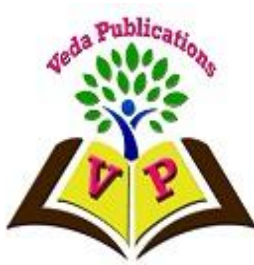
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### Abstract



The good qualities of human beings are praised and remembered by the other fellow- beings. The paper identifies the cause for writing the poem, 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' in a positive note. The poet, G M Hopkins who was a Jesuit priest brings out the presence of God and his despair when he heard the incident that the five Franciscan nuns were drowned. Hope and faith in God makes an individual more optimistic. God's presence is unseen but powerful. The undying hope of the speaker in 'Gitanjali' proves to be a reminder that God exists. The paper has examined the themes of hope and humanity by undertaking a comparative analysis. The universality of those themes represent that spirituality shows the right path in life. The paper has undertaken a case study to depict that humanity still exists.

**Keywords:** *Hope, Humanity, Spirituality.*

## Introduction

God is the most superior among all. People believe there is some powerful guiding force in all their lives. Many writers focused on spirituality, divinity, holiness, faith, etc. The writings which are more focused on describing the greatness of God prove to be a positive influence for the readers. Gerard Manley Hopkins was one such writer whose poems reflected his spirituality. He wrote about God's blessings in his life. 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' portrays the power of God on his life. The theme of hope, helpfulness, longing, etc are similar to that of 'Gitanjali' written by Rabindranath Tagore. However, G M Hopkins was influenced by Pre- Raphaelite poets, Keats and Victorian religious poetry. Tagore's poetry was initially filled with passion during his youth. He composed lyrics based on God, nature, humanity, etc.

## Methodology

The paper has adopted comparative analysis and a case study.

## Exploration of Themes

### Hope:

Hope is the only belief in which people hold on to when they are nearing death or life threatening situations. In the poem, 'The Wreck of the Deutschland', the nuns hope that Christ would come to their rescue. The innocence of the nuns is reflected in the second section of the poem. Tagore in 'Gitanjali' describes the wait for God. He knows that there should be no liking to attain materialistic desires. The speaker in 'Gitanjali' longs to be one with God. Though God doesn't appear before him during the initial stage of his worldly life, he still has hope that one day he would merge with God.

In the poem 'The Wreck of the Deutschland', the hope of the nuns comes to an end when they meet their death. However, their hope saves them. G M Hopkins makes one understand that death is another life. Thus, the nuns become one with God after death. Death is glorified in the poem. In 'Gitanjali', hope for meeting God leads the speaker to an understanding that a spiritual life i.e., by helping others would be the right path to reach God.

**Longing:**

Longing occurs when an individual tries his/her best to attain something or someone with a belief, but that might go in vain. The nuns in the 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' longs for help from Christ. Their spirit to live is clearly reflected when a nun utters, "...O Christ, Christ, come quickly" (line 191).

In 'Gitanjali' the speaker moves to the verge of weeping when he cannot meet God. "...And only I who would wait and weep and wear out my heart in vain longing?" (Verse: 41).

**Humanity:**

Humanity is a selfless act which leaves a mark in the human minds. In the poem, 'The Wreck of the Deutschland', GM Hopkins describes about a help rendered by a man. The man was killed during the act of saving the nuns. This shows the fragile nature of man, particularly human beings when compared to the storm in nature.

"He was pitched to his death at a blow," (line 124)

Humanity still exists. The incident which happened during the shipwreck can be compared to a real- incident in which an American man comes to the rescue of two Indians when they were attacked. In both the incidents, the innocent people who migrate to another country hoping that their lives would turn out to be better meet their fate.

**Comparative Analysis**

The poets, G M Hopkins and Rabindranath Tagore portray the power of God in their poems. The presence of God is felt by the readers. The divine presence of God provides an optimistic outlook towards life. The threatening situations increase one's faith in God. The poets feel joy when they realise the touch of God in their lives. In 'The Wreck of the Deutschland:

"Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?

Over again I feel thy finger and find thee."( lines 7-8)

G M Hopkins describes about the God's touch in his life which instilled him to write about his theodicy and the nuns who drowned in the shipwreck.

"....At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable."(*Gitanjali* verse: 1)

Tagore describes about his experience when he was aware of the God's presence which made him fill with joy.

The religious nature of GM Hopkins and the spirituality of Rabindranath Tagore are depicted in the poetry. Initially GM Hopkins thought that his love for writing poetry was a hindrance to devoting himself to the religion. But the writings of Duns Scotus inspired him. 'Gitanjali' covers a number of vast subjects including love, nature, God, humanity, music, etc.

### **Case study**

The theme of humanity in the poem 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' can be compared through a real- life incident. It was on the newspapers on 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2017 that a man named Srinivas Kuchibhotla, a software engineer was attacked at a sports bar in Olathe. He and his friend Alok Madasani (Indians) were shot by a US Navy veteran, Adam Purinton. He yelled the words "get out of my country". But soon a man came to their rescue. Ian Grillot, an American tried to defend those Indians. But, Srinivas died on the spot. Ian Grillot was shot in the chest during the act. Then, he was saved and was back to life after proper treatment. He was one among the "5 Heroes who gave Us Hope in 2017", honoured by the Time Magazine. Thus, the theme of hope and humanity is fulfilled by the man who committed the brave act.

### **Conclusion**

'The Wreck of the Deutschland' and 'Gitanjali' brings out the positive elements in the human lives. The existence of faith and humanity proves to be a positive outlook towards life. The poets, GM Hopkins and Tagore are unique in their writings. G M Hopkins thinks God as his master guiding him to write poetry. Whereas, Tagore in Gitanjali describes that one can merge with God by doing service to the needy and an avoidance of liking towards the worldly things. The themes of hope and humanity in 'Gitanjali' and 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' can be appreciated.

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