CONCLUSION

The foregoing discussion shows that Hopkins had evolved a carefully formulated theory of poetry. This theory of poetry was intimately connected with his theory of language. The crux of his theory of poetry was 'inscape'. The word 'inscape' is also synonymous with 'design' or 'pattern'. Words are the tools of the artist. So 'inscape' means organisation and arrangement of words into definite 'shape' or 'structure'. This shape or structure was the soul of poetry. If a poem had everything but was without structure or 'inscape', it was not a poem worth its name. In this respect Hopkins's theory of poetry ran counter to most nineteenth century theories of poetry, like poetry is the 'spontaneous overflow of powerful emotion' or 'poetry is criticism of life'. In fact Hopkins was not interested in the effect poetry produces in the mind of the readers. Rather he thought deeply about what the poet does with his artistic material i.e., words. In this respect, Hopkins holds that the poet's business ends with the organisation of his artistic material. The poet is 'lonely as God' in the sense that his duty finishes with organisation of words into 'inscape' or verbal structure. What effect this structure produces in the mind of the readers is not the poet's concern. The beauty of a poem is, therefore, the beauty of 'inscape'. The beauty of a poem does not consist in the thought or idea.
that it embodies. 'inscape' or organisation of words into definite structures is the chief beauty of poetry.

Upto this point, Hopkins's idea, although far ahead of his age, is traditional in the sense that it is deeply rooted in the European tradition. But where he broke with others was that Hopkins thought that poetry could be structures of words-as-sound instead of words-as-meaning. This subtle distinction between words-as-meaning and words-as-sound has been overlooked by critics. Whenever we think of words, we think of meaning. Meaning always inheres in words. In fact, words could not be detergently cleansed of meaning. Hopkins thought that it was the structure of words-as-sound which chiefly mattered. It did not matter if meaning had to be sacrificed for it. The achievement of a structure of words-as-sound being the poet's principal concern, the poet could neglect the content of meaning. The beauty of Hopkins's mature poetry is the beauty of words-as-sound. To attain this beauty Hopkins violently wrenched the language. It had to be made supple and malleable. Towards this end Hopkins made new coinages, drew words from obsolete and archaic sources, forged new compounds, and warped the normal word-order of English. Meaning occasionally suffered as a result of these manipulations. But Hopkins did not care. He went on forging new patterns or 'inscapes' out of words.
Hopkins's insistence on sound at the expense of their meaning had a deeper significance. Unlike other nineteenth century poets, Hopkins had thought deeply about language. He was fascinated by the wonder of language. His diaries and Journals are full of jottings about various aspects of language, which show what loving interest Hopkins took in the phenomenon of language. He came to the conclusion that language had a life of its own which was independent of the rules of grammar and syntax. Rules were man-made and therefore superimposed. Language, in this respect, was like an organism with growth, decay and mutation. Or it was like some 'energy' like water, light or electricity. It is in the very nature of energy to be continuously in a state of flux. Language was like the created Universe of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* which constantly changes. Language is thus highly resistant to human effort to tame it into structure, to 'cage' it, in the words Archibald MacLeish. The whole poetic effort, according to Hopkins, is to bring this ever-changing language into as close an approximation to a shape or form, as it is possible for the poet. When this effort becomes successful, 'inscape' is achieved. In a world where everything is shifting continually, it is the pattern or design which endures. It was the poet's chief duty to create 'inscape' or 'pattern' or 'design'. Language is always in a state of flux; meaning is elusive. So, in writing a poem a poet should not start with meaning. In reading a poem, too,
meaning must not be the reader's first concern. Sounds endure; patterns of sounds are more enduring. So creating patterns of sound should be the poet's primary duty and to appreciate the various designs of sound which constitute poetry, should be the reader's primary aim, too. This is how Hopkins looked at poetry. He practised what he conceived. Hopkins's mature verse, therefore, appeals to the readers at the level of music. This music is of verbal designs. Poetry is 'Inscape'. 