Chapter - I

Hopkins - the least understood poet of the late Victorian Era.

Retrospectively the year 1918 marks a major watershed in the history of English poetry; in that year was brought out by Dr. Robert Bridges The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins. The book has been hailed by Professor Abbott and others as "a masterpiece of editing". No major poems of Hopkins were published during his life-time. The manuscript copies of the poems were preserved with loving care by Bridges and published about thirty years after the poet's death. Bridges had withheld from the readers the poems of Hopkins for so long a period because he felt that time had not become opportune for the publication of Hopkins's poetry. He had, of course, introduced Hopkins earlier to the reading public by incorporating a few of his poems in the Spirit of Man and Poets and Poetry of the XIXth Century. But the first complete anthology of Hopkins's major poems was not published before 1918.

The English reading public was totally caught unawares by Bridges's volume. The English people had been brought up so long on the fare provided by Tennyson, Morris, Swinburne and Rossetti. To them Bridges gave something radically different. Indeed Hopkins's poetry was very much unlike anything the English people had read so long. So the initial reaction was
one of bafflement and confusion. Sometimes it was positively hostile to the poet. W.H. Gardner's scholarly Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy in Relation to Poetic Tradition is sprinkled with generous extracts from contemporary periodicals which indicate the critical reception of Hopkins's poetry. Chicago Post of May 30, 1924 wrote "Hopkins is one of the most unpopular poets and destined always to be". In the same spirit Middleton Murry had written in The Athenaeum, as early as June 6, 1919: "He must remain a poet's poet". Hopkins was a converted Roman Catholic. His poetry is religious in nature. The theme of his poetry occasionally gave rise to hostile criticism but it was the language of his poetry that came under the heaviest fire. Thus Studies, June 1919, wrote:

"Hopkins had an exquisitely refined literary sense, but it permitted him to lapse into nearly every literary fault. He was a cultivated scholar, but this did not stay him from fantastic misuse of the English language."

In the same vein The New Statesman wrote:

"His adjectives not only at first reading but also at the tenth or twentieth, distract the mind altogether from their meaning by their strangeness. 'Silk-sack clouds', 'azurous hung hills', 'majestic-as-a-stallion-stalwart', 'very-violet-sweet', 'mild night's Hear-all
black' and the like are traps for attention, not aids to visualisation."

The *Time's Literary Supplement* was on the whole sympathetic towards Hopkins but came down on him for his play on sound:

"His worst trick is that of passing from one word to another .... merely because they are alike in sound. This at its worst produces the effect almost of idiocy, of speech without sense and prolonged merely by echoes .... a bad habit, like shuttering, except that he did not strive against it."

It was, of course, Bridges who had cast the first stone.

In his "Preface to Notes" in the *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* Bridges accused Hopkins of "oddity and obscurity". Bridges felt that the obscurity of Hopkins's poetry resulted from the poet's use of ellipses and "habitual omission of the relative pronoun"¹. He thought Hopkins "banished these purely constructional syllables from his verse because they took up room which he thought he could not afford them; he needed in his scheme all his space for his poetical words, and he wished to crowd cut every merely grammatical colourless or toneless element ...."².

Bridges also remarked that in aiming at condensation Hopkins used words that were "grammatically ambiguous."³. To quote Bridges fully:
"English swarms with words that have one identical form for substantive, adjective, and verb; and such a word should never be so placed as to allow of any doubt as to what parts of speech it is used for; because such ambiguity or momentary uncertainty destroys the force of the sentence. Now our author not only neglects this essential propriety but he would seem even to welcome and seek artistic effect in the consequent confusion; and he will sometimes so arrange such words that a reader looking for a verb may find that he has two or three ambiguous monosyllables from which to select, and must be in doubt as to which promises best to give any meaning that he can welcome, and then after his choice is made, he may be left with some homeless monosyllable still on his hands."  

Bridges criticised Hopkins for his indiscriminate use of homophone and bad rhymes. He also let the readers of Hopkins be known:  

"It was idiosyncrasy of this student's mind to push everything to its logical extreme, and take pleasure in a paradoxical result, as may be seen in his prosody where a simple theory seems to be used only as a basis for unexpected liberty."  

This very individualistic use of language was a source of continual
bafflement to Hopkins's first readers who included, besides Bridges, R.H. Dixon and Coventry Patmore. Bridges had destroyed his own side of the correspondences. But from Hopkins's letters to Bridges we come to know, that he could not often 'construe' Hopkins's poetry and consequently refused to read them. Now although Hopkins never thought of publishing his poetry, in his loneliness he badly needed praise and encouragement. In a letter written to Bridges he said,

"You say you wd. not for any money read my poem again. Nevertheless I beg you will. Besides money, you know, there is love."^6

He would write long letters to Bridges patiently explaining the meaning of individual words and turns of phrases:

"How are hearts of oak furled? Well, in sand and sea water. The image comes out true under the circumstances, otherwise it could not hold together. You are to suppose a stroke or, blast in a forest of 'hearts of oak' (= ad propositum, sound oak timber) which at one blow both lays them low and buries them in broken earth. Bunting (ferule is a blunder for furl, I think) is proper when said of sticks and staves. So too of hole, I don't see your objection here at all. It is not only used by poets but seems technical and proper and in the mouth of the timber merchants and so forth."^7
The reference is obviously to The Loss of the Eurydice where occurs the lines:

One stroke
Felled and furled them, the hearths of Oak!

Again,

"Sake is a word I find it convenient to use. I did not know where I did so first that it is common in German, in the form sach. It is the sake of 'For the sake of', forsake, namesake, keepsake ......

Wuthering is a North country word for the noise and rush of wind; hence, Emily Bronte's 'Wuthering Heights'. By moon marks I mean crescent shaped markings on the quill feathers, either in the colouring of the feather or made by the overlapping of one on another."  

Sometimes Bridges would be so baffled by the poems of Hopkins that the poet had to give him whole prose synopses of his poems, as he did in case of his poem Henry Purcell.

R.W. Dixon, on the other hand, expressed whole-hearted praise and admiration for Hopkins's poetry. He approached Hopkins's poetry with "delight, astonishment and admiration".
He called them "amazingly original" and urged the poet to publish them.

As Dr. Gardener justly says, "the third of Hopkins's poet-friends, Coventry Patmore, was typical of that class of critics who feel the underlying power of Hopkins's poetry, and even sense the beauty, but reject the style on the a priori grounds." 9

The following extract from one of Patmore's letter best sums up his attitude towards Hopkins's poetry -

"I have read your poems, most of them several times - and find my first impression confirmed with each reading. It seems to me that the thought and feeling of these poems, if expressed without any obscuring novelty of mode, are such as often to require the whole attention to apprehend and digest them; and are therefore of a kind to appeal only to a few. But to the already sufficiently arduous character of such poetry you seem to me to have added the difficulty following several entirely novel and simultaneous experiments in verification and construction, together with an altogether unprecedented system of alliteration and compound words; - any one of which novelties would be startling and
productive of distraction from the poetic matter to be expressed."

"Systems and learned theory are manifest in all these experiments; but they seem to me to be too manifest. To me they often darken the thought and feeling which all arts and artifices of languages should only illustrate; and I often find it as hard to follow you as I have found it to follow the darkest parts of Browning - who, however, has not an equal excuse of philosophic system."

"'Thoughts that voluntarily move in harmonious numbers' is, I suppose, the best definition of poetry that ever was spoken. Whenever your thoughts forget your theories they do so move, and no one who knows what poetry is can mistake them for anything but poetry. 'The Blessed Virgin compared to Air we breathe' and a few other pieces are exquisite to my mind, but, in these, you have attained to move almost unconsciously in your self-imposed shackles, and consequently the ear follows you without much interruption from the surprise of such novelties; and I can conceive that, after a while, they would become additional delights. But I do not think that I could ever become sufficiently accustomed to your favourite poem, 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' to reconcile me to its strangeness."
The linguistic audacity of Hopkins remains something of a marvel even today. Although the poets of the thirties came under his influence and tried to assimilate the linguistic experiments, Hopkins remains even today a 'dead-end' for English poets:

And the sea flint-flake, black-backed in the regular blow
Sitting Eastnortheast, in curse quarter, the wind;
Wiry and white-fiery and whirlwind-swivelled snow
Spins to the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps

(The Windhover)

I admire thee, master of the tides,
Of the Yore-flood, of the year's fall;
The recurb and the recovery of the gulf's sides,
The girth of it and the wharf of it and the wall,
Stanching, quenching ocean of motionable mind;

(The Windhover)
How to keep - is there any any, is there none such
nowhere
known some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace,
latch or catch or key to keep
Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty .... from
vanishing away?
(The Leaden Echo And the Golden Echo)

Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable, vaulty,
voluminous,
.... stupendous
Evening strains to be time's vast womb-of-all,
home-of-all
hearse-of-all night.
Her fond yellow hornlight wound to be west
her wild
hollow
hoarlight hung to the height
Waste; her earliest stars, earlstars stars principal
overbend
us,
Fire - featuring heaven ....
(Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves)
Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows flount
forth, then
chevy on an air -
built thorough fare; heaven-roysterers, in gay-gangs!
they throng; they glitter in marches.
Down roughcast, down dazzling whitewash, where an elm arches,
Shivelights and shadow tackle in long lashes lace, lance, and pair.

(That Nature is a Heraclizean Fire)

The vocabulary of Hopkins's poetry is something unique in English literature.

His mystery must be instressed, stressed;
(The Wreck of the Deutschland)

But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall Feels or flanks of the voel, a vein ........
(The Wreck of the Deutschland)

The rash smart slogan brine.
(The Wreck of the Deutschland)

.... the window-making unchilding unfathering deeps
(The Wreck of the Deutschland)

.... sheer plod makes plough down sillion
(The Windhover)
Or to-fro tender trambeam truckle at the eye.
(The Candle Indoors)

.... self in self
steeped and pashed - quite.
Disremembering dismembering all now.
(Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves).

Keats is commonly thought to be the greatest inventor of compound words. But Hopkins went farthest in this direction:

Kiss my hand to the dappled - with-damson west
(The Wreck of the Deutschland)

The heaven-flung, heart-flashed, maiden-furled
Miracle-in-Mary-of flame,
(The Wreck of the Deutschland)

dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon
(The Windhover)

.... the Wimpled-water-dimples, not-by-morning Matched face
(The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo)

...... womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night
(Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves).
The syntactic inversions of Hopkins have few equals in English literature:

...... the hurl of thee
trod
Hard down with a horror or height:
(The Wreck of the Deutschland)

The goal was a shoal, of a fourth the doom to be drowned;
(The Wreck of the Deutschland)

When will you ever, Peace, wild wooddove, shy wings shut,
Your round me roaming end, and under be my boughs?

(Peace)

...... why wouldst thou rude on me
Thy wring-world right foot rock?

(Carrion Comfort).

My own heart let me more have pity on; ......

(Poem 69)

only what word
Wisest my heart breeds dark heaven's baffling ban
Bars or hell's spell thwarts.

(Poem 66)
Hopkins's *verbless or incomplete sentences* have been a source of much ambiguity:

O unteachably after evil, but uttering truth,
Why, tears! is it? tears; such a melting, a madrigal start.

(The Wreck of the Deutschland)

But how shall I ..... make me room there:
Reach me a ..... Fancy, come faster –
Strike you the sight of it?

(The Wreck of the Deutschland)

His idiosyncratic use of genetive case in *The Wreck of the Deutschland* has been variously commented upon by critics:

Our heart's charity's heart's fire, our thought's chivalry's throng's Lord.

His piling up of epithets in *Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves* Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable vaulty, voluminous

...... stupendous

Evening

and use of verb as substantive:

- the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

(The Windhover).

and substantive as noun:
are instances of daring linguistic experiments which have few parallels in English poetry.

Indeed the first impression that a reader of Hopkins has is that this poet takes the utmost liberty with rules of grammar and language. Critics have been baffled and confused by such deviation from established norms of usage. They could not dismiss off-hand the poetry of Hopkins because in spite of strangeness and novelty of the texture of Hopkins's poetry, it has sheer beauty. Moreover, Hopkins was a formidable classical scholar with some knowledge of Welsh. Again Bridges downward every critic has recognised that here was a poet who was always serious. So the position of the critics has been all along very delicate. Whereas the early critics of Hopkins dubbed him 'odd', 'obscure' and 'eccentric', the later critics endeavoured to justify the linguistic novelties of Hopkins. What seemed blemishes to earlier critics, became beauties to the later critics of Hopkins. But the critics of Hopkins had all along tried to justify the very personal use of Hopkins's language from the point of view of communications. They assumed that it was urgency, rush and obscurity of idea in Hopkins's

... this to hoard unheard,
Heard unheed leaves me a lonely began.
(Poem 66)

......
poetry which gave birth to the obscurity of his language. Some of the critics sought to justify the linguistic novelties of Hopkins in the light of contemporary aesthetic and psychological theories. In other cases the poet's religion was held responsible for the peculiar use of language.

It will be the endeavour of this thesis to show that Hopkins used his language deliberately in the way he did. And in so doing he was departing from the practice of common English poets. Poets use language primarily for the purpose of communicating thoughts and ideas. But Hopkins was not after it. In writing poetry his primary concern was not the communication of ideas. Hopkins was fascinated by the beauty and wonder of language. His letters, note-books and journals bear enough evidence to his fascination for language. The language is a thing by itself. It has a life of its own - growth, decay and change. Hopkins regarded poetry as the exploration of the possibilities of languages. For Hopkins language is an end in itself and poetry is language patterned, designed and ordered. Now in patterning and ordering language Hopkins did not primarily concern himself with the meaning of the words. Pattern itself became his chief concern. Now language is made up of words and words are not plastic material like pigments or marbles. So poems which are made up of words
cannot be entirely abstracted from meaning. Poetry, therefore, must have a structure of meaning. But that, according to Hopkins, is not a poet’s primary concern. A poet’s primary concern is the right patterning, ordering and designing of words-as-words. Meaning is necessary only so far as to hold up the verbal pattern. Looked at in this way much of Hopkins’s poetry becomes easier for us. Its beauty too becomes more apparent than ever.

With this end in view we have endeavoured in the foregoing pages to examine the critical tenets of some of Hopkins’s early critics and reviewers and determine their relevance to and validity for Hopkins’s poetry. Consequently the rest of this Chapter is devoted to examining the critical positions of some of the most remarkable critics of Hopkins.

The first thing that strikes a reader is the sharp change that has taken place in the critical minds from thirties onward. This significant change is noticed when in 1930 the Oxford University Press published the second edition of the poems of Hopkins edited by Charter Williams. Todd K. Bender has given a fine account of the changed attitude of the critics and reviewers that greeted the second edition of Hopkins’s Poems. But before speaking about the changed attitude of the critics towards Hopkins, it may not be out of place here to
say a word or two about Sturge Moore, a critic and verse writer, who felt dissatisfied with Hopkins's poetry and sought to improve it in his own way. F.R. Leavis in his New Bearings in English Poetry has given us an account of the efforts of Sturge Moore. Hopkins's The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo begins this way:

How to keep — is there any way, is there none
such nowhere

known some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace,
latch or catch or key to keep,
back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty ......
from vanish-

ing away?

Sturge Moore offered to improve it in The Criterion, July 30, in the following manner:

How to keep beauty? is there any way?
Is there nowhere any means to have it stay?
Will no bow or brooch or braid
Brace or lace
Latch or catch
Or key to lock the door lend aid
Before beauty vanishes away?

Moore's attempt to re-write Hopkins's poem reflects the
attitude of critics common in those days. It shows how they were baffled by the language of Hopkins's poetry and wished they had something simple, easy and lucid in the Victorian tradition.

A pained Mr. Leavis noted, "No reader of The Criterion, apparently protested".

But the wind of change is noticed in The Times. Literary Supplement, December 25, 1930, which hailed Hopkins as "another major poet". The reviewer declared "......, Hopkins is full of strange powers (and an unexhausted technical prowess) which every modern poet feels he must assimilate and possess". He also highly praised Hopkins for his metrical innovations.

Todd K. Bender has given an extract from a review by Isidor Schneider which appeared on the pages of the The Nation, April 16, 1930. We insert the full extract as it will throw much light on the changed response to Hopkins's poems:

"The elements of Hopkins' originality are bewildering. He is astonishingly bold with words and with forms of speech; he is free with ellipses, coins new words, breaks them into two, transfers the parts of combined words, as when 'brimful in a flash' becomes 'brim in a
flashful'; rhymes internally, alliterates, omits that's and which's to have every word dynamic and displaces prepositions so that their movement in the sentence adds to their force; combines words to sharpen their rhythm, quicken their meaning, and harmonize their sound ..... If these innovations strike us at first we must remember that it is the major poetry heightened by them that is his greatest contribution. Beyond question Hopkins belongs among the great poets of English Literature. The experiments may be taken as evidence of the subtlety and diversity of one of the greatest minds to express itself in poetry in his generation."

We also quote extracts from The Saturday Review of Literature, August 9, 1930 and New Republic, February 4, 1931, both given by Mr. Bender. In the first-named journal H.L. Binsse wrote -

"In his day English poetry had reached what seems to many of us an impasse. It was not truly manly, truly living ..... Here at last modern poetry can find the rationale, the convention of freedom it had been seeking"

And here is Hildegard Flanner in New Republic:

"There has been no modern poetry attaining to the amazing
effect of lines in Hopkins ....... He can halt a sentence, a verse, retard it with broken preposition, then set it spinning with a participle, to gather its own momentum it collects its own climax .... Verbal indulgences, so easily faults of diffuseness, are here less faults than a curious, purposive colliding and jamming an overlapping and telescoping of images and words in an effort toward sustained music and sense."

Thus what were to Bridges blemishes and defects becomes points of beauty and sign of boldness to later critics. But admirable as is the change in critical outlook, it should be borne in mind that these reviewers were trying to fit Hopkins into their pre-set idea of what modern poetry ought to be. They did not try to examine how far Hopkins's practice squared with his own theory of poetry, and language.

This fact will be clear if we examine the critical position of the critics who contributed utmost towards the phenomenal rise of Hopkins to fame - I.A. Richards, William Empson and Herbert Read. I.A. Richards defended the oddity, obscurity, ambiguity and paradox of Hopkins's poetry in his famous article in The Dial, September, 1926. Dr. Richard's contention is that obscurity and oddity have their place in poetry. Poetry which is celebral, which demands more attention
from the reader may have some slight obscurity superior to poetry which is 'simple, sensuous and passionate'. He opens his article in this way:

"Modern verse is perhaps more often too lucid than too obscure. It passes through the mind (or the mind passes over it) with too little friction and too swiftly for the development of the response. Poets who can compel slow reading have thus an initial advantage. The effort, the heightened attention, may brace the reader, and that peculiar intellectual thrill which celebrates the step-by-step conquest of understanding may irradiate and awaken other mental activities more essential to poetry."\(^{11}\)

"Few poets", according to Richards, "illustrate this thesis better than Gerard Manley Hopkins, who may be described, without opposition, as the most obscure of English verse writers."\(^{12}\)

Thus obscurity becomes not a blemish Bridges thought, but a virtue. In this way Richards defends the oddity of Hopkins - "The more the poems are studied, the clearer it becomes that their oddities are deliberate. They are aberrations, they are not blemishes. It is easier to see this today..."
since some of his (Hopkins) most daring innovations have been, in part, attempted independently by later poets. 13

With the publication of Dr. Richards's article the wheel had come full circle. The blemishes of Bridges had become the beauties of Richards. Richards's brilliant article certainly helped Hopkins to rise to fame. But the point is — is Richards successful in accounting for the oddity and obscurity of Hopkins? To our mind not. At the back of this article lay Richards's theory of aesthetics enumerated most fully in his Principles of Literary Criticism. Richards believed that it was the business of the artist to order what is most disorganised in his mind - the conflicting feelings and impulses. He thought that ambiguity in arts results from the conflicting nature of the impulses in the artist's mind. So ambiguity is not a vice, rather it is a virtue which we should welcome. Richards analysed in The Dial the Windhover and a few other poems of Hopkins and later in Practical Criticism made Hopkins's Spring and Fall the subject for a set of protocols. While Richards's article in The Dial and his analysis of the Spring and Fall are important, the former particularly, for the close reading of a number of Hopkins's poems, Richards's approach is inadequate because he does not take into considerati Hopkins' own theory about his poetry but tries to fit Hopkins into his pre-conceived theory. In Practical Criticisms in
particular Richards' whole endeavour was to divert his critical interest from what goes on in the mind of the poet to what goes on in the mind of the reader as he reads a poem. So in a way Richards diverts the focus of a critical attention from the poet to the reader. And precisely because of this Richards' approach is inadequate.

Another dimension was given to Hopkins's criticism by William Empson in his *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. With the publication of this book the poetry of Hopkins becomes the happy hunting ground for ambiguity hunting. For Empson, *The Windhover* illustrates "a clear sense of the Freudian use of the opposites, where two things thought of as incompatible but desired intensely by different systems of judgement" are brought into conjunction and "forced into open conflict before the readers". Empson was a disciple of Richards and his theory is a direct extension of Richards and is unsatisfactory for the same reason.

Herbert Read is another important critic of Hopkins and sought to justify the originality of Hopkins in the light of his own theory of poetry. Herber Read was strongly influenced by T.E. Hulme whose *Speculations* he edited in 1924. T.E. Hulme on his part was deeply influenced by Bergson. Hulme distinguished between two faculties of the mind - "the
ordinary logical faculty" which is mechanical in nature, and the other and more important faculty intuition. Hulme calls the two extensive and intensive manifolds respectively. Intensive manifold "defies logical analysis" and reveals.

Read, as we have said, was profoundly influenced by this theory of Hulme and proceeds to interpret Hopkins's poetry with his Hulme in mind. The history of modern poetry, according to Read, is a history of "revolt" against inane and effete forms. The revolt that was started by Wordsworth culminates in Hopkins. He then distinguishes between character and personality. Here it should be kept in mind that Read was also deeply influenced by Freud and accepts the Freudian division of the human mind into conscious, subconscious and unconscious. Character implies 'inhibition and repression of certain instincts' which are in conflict with the smooth conduct of life. "Personality, on the other hand, is the full complex of conscious, preconscious, and unconscious - repressed elements in the mind." Art results only when personality gets the better of character. So a sort of conflict is at the root of all artisitic creation. A corollary of Read's theory of aesthetics is that art is intuitive in its origin.

Herbert Read's belief that artistic activity is
primarily the result of a conflict of 'sensibility' and 'belief' prompted him to suggest that Hopkins's Jesuit allegiance had a deep influence on his poetry. Read was of the mind the Hopkins's poetry "gained more than it" lost from such conflicting emotions of sensibility and spirituality. Read elaborated this theory in his book *Form in Modern Poetry*. But important as Read's theory is, its validity for Hopkins poetry is questionable because it is difficult to prove conclusively whether there was really any conflict in the mind of Hopkins between the poet and the priest. It is also untenable because it implies that Hopkins's art is intuitive in nature. It will be one of our chief efforts in this thesis to show that 'obscenity' of Hopkins was not intuitive, it resulted from his very individual theory of poetry.

In one respect C. Day-Lewis has affinity with Herbert Read. Like Read he thinks that Hopkins's poems were intuitive in origin. In his *A Hope for Poetry* C.Day-Lewis calls Hopkins "a naif poet" whom it is difficult to connect with anything past. While Cecil Day-Lewis is to be commended in so far as he shows the originality of Hopkins, he is unsatisfactory in so far as he is convinced of the absence of any deliberate artistic effort on the part of Hopkins.
In 1932 appeared another book which was perhaps more influential than those of Richards, Empson and Read. In his *New Bearings in English Poetry* F.R. Leavis made "the first thorough-going defence of Hopkins's style." In this book Leavis declared emphatically: "He (Hopkins) is likely to prove, for our time and the future, the only influential poet of the Victorian age, and he seems to me the greatest".16 Hopkins, according to Leavis "was one of the most remarkable technical inventors who ever wrote, and he was a major poet."17 Leavis analysed thoroughly a large number of poems of Hopkins and commended everything that Bridges had blamed — "What Dr. Dridges calls blemishes are essential to Hopkins's aim and achievement."18 Leavis felt that Hopkins was "a master in exploiting the resources and potentialities of English as a living language".19 Leavis equated Hopkins with "Shakespeare, Donne, Eliot and later Yeats"20 and placed in antithesis to Spenser, Milton and Tennyson. "He (Hopkins)", Leavis asserted, "departs very widely from current idiom as Shakespeare did, but nevertheless current idiom is, as it were, presiding spirit in his dialect, and he uses his medium not as a literary but as a spoken one".21 But in extolling the virtues of Hopkins, Leavis erred in the direction of Richards and others – Hopkins’s devices are important; they are capable of use for expressing complexities of feeling, the movement of consciousness, difficult and urgent states of mind. According to Leavis, in comparison
with Hopkins's - "any other poetry of the nineteenth century is seen to be using only a very small part of the resources of the English language. His words seem to have substance. Their potencies are correspondingly greater from subtle and delicate communication". As will be evident from the pages of the later chapters of this thesis "subtle and delicate communication" was furthest from Hopkins' mind.

In the middle of thirties were published The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges and The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon, Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins and The Note Books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Abbott, the editor of Hopkins's letters made certain unsympathetic comments on Hopkins. One of them is - "It is our good fortune that his name belongs to literature and not to hagiography" and the other is, "But what is possible to the resolved will of Milton the heretic was beyond the power of Hopkins the priest." Armed with the new evidence of Letters and Note Book and Papers of Hopkins and provoked by such remarks as Abbott made critics formed themselves into two groups. Battle-lines were drawn and both sides strove to prove the poet and not the priest was greater in Hopkins and vice versa. In the absence of first hand material we have to depend on the estimate of John Pick as given in his article G.M. Hopkins : A History of Criticism which
is incorporated in the book *The Victorian Poets; A Guide to Research*, edited by Frederic E. Faverty. As John Pick has said, the storm centered around the question "did his (Hopkins's) Jesuit life killed the poet in him or did it enrich his poetry?" On the one side was C. Day-Lewis who in *New Republic* 1935 dismissed the problem bluntly: "His religious vocation puts a wall between his life and ours only reminiscent of the wall of madhouse". On the other side were G.W. Stonier and Egerton Clarke who asserted that religion did not stiffle Hopkins's poetry but enriched it. John Gould Fletcher, according to Pick, is "the most trenchant voice of opposition" to the views expressed by Stonier and Clarke. But this sort of controversy leads us nowhere as they fail to account for the peculiarities of Hopkins's style. It is easier to assert that a dichotomy between the poet and priest caused the tension which resulted in the crabbed and disjointed sentences of Hopkins. But it is difficult to prove why it so happens. The problem becomes all the more difficult when it is shown by other critics equally strongly that no such tension ever existed in Hopkins.

John Pick's own book on Hopkins is *Gerard Manley Hopkins; Priest and Poet* was published in 1942. The book tries to resolve the old controversy about the alleged conflict between Hopkins's vocation and creativity. The book traces the development of Hopkins's mind from his school days and shows how from
boyhood Hopkins was inclined towards asceticism which later culminated in his embracing Catholicism and Jesuit Order.

The book is particularly important in so far as it shows the importance of *The Spiritual Exercises* which shaped Hopkins's mind and which gave, according to the author, body to Hopkins's verse. But the book altogether shuns any discussion of Hopkins's poetic style. While many dark passages become clearer to us in the light of the author's interpretation, communication of doctrinal religious ideas was only a part of Hopkins's poetic intention.

The book is, on the whole, unsatisfactory because it fails to show why the religious or otherwise ideas was expressed by Hopkins in so convoluted a language.

In the centenary year of Hopkins was brought out a book, which, according to Pick, is "the most definitive work on Hopkins". The author was W.H. Gardner and the book was entitled *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy in Relation to Poetic Tradition*. Volume One appeared in England in 1944 and in America in 1948 and the Volume Two in both countries in 1949.

A look at contents will at once reveal the range and compass of the book - 'The Two Vocations', 'Sonnet Morphology', 'Diction And Syntax', 'Theme And Imagery', 'Critics And Reviewers', 'Hopkins And Modern Poetry', 'Hopkins And His Background', 'Tradition And Innovation', 'The New Rhythm'. The author minutely discusses every bit of Hopkins's poetry and assigns a
special chapter to *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. Gardner's scholarship is formidable and turning over the pages of the two volumes one is aware of the labour and the care that went into the production of the book. The chief value of Gardner's book is that it emphasises the fact that although Hopkins at first sight is odd and eccentric, he is deeply rooted in European tradition. The critic did not fail to take into account the cultural, artistic, political and religious background of Hopkins's life. It also deals with influences of *The Spiritual Exercises* and Duns Scotus on Hopkins's poem. The book although a treatise on Hopkins's poetry, provides enough biographical material. Since the publication of the book it remains a landmark in Hopkins criticism and no student of Hopkins can afford to ignore or overlook it. But in this respect the words W.A.M. Peters are worth quoting: "Dr. Gardner registers various devices, deviations from normal grammar and syntax but the ultimate why and wherefore is not explained."

W.A.M. Peters sought to explain the "Why and wherefore" of Hopkins's poetry that he found lacking in Gardner's book. The book is important in the history of Hopkins criticism because it was the first major attempt to explain the strangeness of the language of Hopkins's poetry. The influence of Loyola and Duns Scotus on Hopkins's poetry had earlier been demonstrated. John Fick had shown the importance of and
relevance to the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola in the poetry of Hopkins. Christopher Devlin had written a number of articles on the relevance of Duns Scotus to the poetry of Hopkins. Devlin's *Gerard Manley Hopkins and Duns Scotus* and *An Essay on Scotus* and W.H. Gardner's *A Note on Hopkins and Duns Scotus* and *Duns Scotus* had thrown light on a hitherto dark recess in the poetry of Hopkins. Peter wrote a full-length book to trace the all-pervading influence of Duns Scotus on Hopkins's poetry. Peters was the first to stress with adequate strength the importance of the term 'inscape' in Hopkins's poetry. But Peters interprets the term wholly in theological terms. The 'Oddities and Obscurities' of Hopkins's language are traceable to 'inscape' by Peters. Although Peters overlooks important aspects of Hopkins's poetry, his book is important because here was the first major attempt to probe peculiarities of Hopkins's language.

Here mention should also be made of David A. Downes's book *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of His Ignatius Spirit*. "The growing importance" of Ignatius had early been traced by earlier critics. Downes traces more thoroughly this influence. He even looks upon Hopkins's early poetry as an anticipation of Ignatian doctrine. Hopkins's later poetry is almost wholly analysed in terms of Ignatian spiritual methods. Downes's contention is that Ignatian doctrine not only provided theme for Hopkins's poetry, it also determined the structure of his poetry.
Norman Mackenzie's book Hopkins was published in 1968. It contains a small chapter on the life of Hopkins. Chapter II, III and IV are devoted to a discussion of the poems of Hopkins. The critic analyses the poems thematically but there is no attempt to elucidate 'inscape' or to relate it to Hopkins's poetry. In short, there is no attempt to probe why Hopkins chose to make his poetry so difficult. The book is important, however, as containing a chapter on Hopkins's use of dialect words and another chapter on his "Sprung Rhythm". Mackenzie tries to explain much of the 'oddity' of Hopkins's verse by pointing out numerous dialect words that Hopkins uses in his poetry.

Alan Heuser's The Shaping Vision of Gerard Manley Hopkins traces the various influences that shaped Hopkins's poetry. Heuser shows not only Ignation and Scotist influences on Hopkins but also influences of the Pre-Raphaelities and early Greek philosophers like Pythagoras. He also traces the influence of Platonic influence on Hopkins. Heuser demonstrated how one influence replaced another in various stages of Hopkins's life and concluded that the most remarkable was the influence of the Pre-Raphaelities. Heuser's is a thin volume in which he has compressed a large mass of materials. Hence utmost concentration is needed to follow Heuser's thoughts ranging over short fifteen chapters. While throwing new and unexpected light on Hopkins's
poetry, Heuser's book is inadequate to our needs since he does not show why the large assortment of influences that he mentioned acquired the highly individual expression in Hopkins's poetry. The book falls through in the same respect as Downes's *Gerard Manley Hopkins : A Study of His Ignatian Spirit*.

In the religious-philosophical category also belongs Robert Andreach's book *Studies in Structure : The Stages in the Spiritual Life in Four modern Authors*. The author shows the link that lies in the poetry of various stages and interprets Hopkins's poetry as illumination and purgation. No attempt is made to trace the linguistic development in Hopkins's poetry or show its significance.

Here mention must be made of a book written by John Wain entitled *Gerard Manley Hopkins : An Idiom of Desperation*. The book offers an ingenious explanation of the novelty of Hopkins's language. John Wain equates Hopkins with fathers of Modern French poetry like Baudelaire, Verlaine etc. and concludes that it was Hopkins's isolation from society which contributed to his vital style. Wain juxtaposes Bridges's *London Snow* and Hopkins's *Felix Randal* and shows the superiority of the latter. Bridges was part of the contemporary literary scene and took part in the give and take of the society which dissipated and
diluted his art. But Hopkins was 'lonely as God' as demanded by Flaubert. Wain concludes "What Baudelaire and Verlaine accomplished by vice and squalor, Hopkins accomplished by being a priest." Wain makes a genuine attempt to perceive the novelty of Hopkins style and shows deep understanding. We shall have occasion to speak about his book in our later chapter.

Todd K. Bender in his *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Classical Background and Critical Reception of His Work* looks at the problem of language from another angle. Gardner and others had already showed how Hopkins was rooted in European tradition. Bender further explains Hopkins's indebtedness to classical literature. Hopkins was a close reader of classical poetry and according to Bender much of the oddity and obscurity of Hopkins is the result of his close reading of classical poetry. Bender thinks that Hopkins's distinctive diction, his disjointed syntax, ambiguity, far-fetched imagery and unlogical pattern of hyperbation is a creative transmutation of what he read in classical Greek and Latin poetry. Needless to say Hopkins's interest in 'underthought' and 'overthought' was also the result of his readings in classical poetry. Bender's importance is that he made an attempt to account for the disjointed and convoluted language of Hopkins's poetry. While his thesis is freshly innovative, it is inadequate because of the fact that it takes no account of Hopkins's interest in 'Inscape'. 'Inscape',
according to Hopkins, is the soul of poetry. But Bender is strangely silent on this aspect of Hopkins's poetry.

Critics who have been attracted by Hopkins' language, have sometimes noted certain features of Hopkins' with Metaphysical pacts, particularly with Donne. Thus David Morris in his The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins and T.S. Elliot in the Donne Tradition has minutely tabulated the similarities between Hopkins and Donne in their respective use of language. Hopkins in his writings mentions Herbert but there is nowhere in his writing any mention of Donne. In any case, analysis of accidental similarities of two poets in the use of certain linguistic technique leads us nowhere.

An important book appeared in 1977. In his Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins James Milroy has endeavoured to explain Hopkins's syntactic conventions, use of compound words, omission of articles, compression and ambiguity in the light of current linguistic theory. Milroy is a student of Prague School of Linguistics and has sought to justify Hopkins's use of language by discussing what is known as the "Theory of Foregrounding". In a letter of Bridges Hopkins wrote in 1879, "It seems to me that the poetical language of an age should be the current language heightened ...." Milroy takes this sentence as the starting point of his thesis. According to Milroy the basis of Hopkins's
language is speech and not prose. The strangeness of Hopkins's language is the result of fore-grounding which Hopkins called 'heightening'. Milroy also explores Hopkins's interest in the resources of English language and the general enthusiasm of the Victorians in language. The defect of Milroy's Thesis is that his 'Theory of Foregrounding' could very well be applied to the poetry of other poet, most profitably to Donne. It fails to show where the uniqueness of Hopkins lies.

In 1978 was published a new critical study of Hopkins's poetry by John Robinson. In his In Extremity Robinson looked at the poems of Hopkins from a new angle and interpreted the terms 'Spring Rhythm' and 'Inscape' afresh. Mr. Robinson weighs both sides of the debate about whether the Jesuits were responsible "for making or maiming" Hopkins, and argues that the debate is one which disregards the impulse of the man's own zeal and directing power of contemporary values 28. Hopkins, according to Mr. Robinson, strongly believed in values and pursued them determinedly, intensely and with keen exactitude. Hopkins's poetry, according to Mr. Robinson, has been shaped by the intensity, the determination and by the exactitude with which he pursued his values. In the pursuit of his values or virtues Hopkins "took the whole of his life to extremity" and the consequences are evident in his poetry, in joy and in anguish.

The book is important as carrying a chapter on the
language of Hopkins's poetry. In Chapter 3 entitled "Purging the Language" Mr. Robinson tries to account for the distinctiveness of Hopkins's language the following manner:

Hopkins was dissatisfied with the lengthy and diffusive poetry of nineteenth century and wished to impart rigour into the language of his poetry, which characterise his spiritual life. With this aim, he combined an interest in poetry on a spoken thing. But there is a "Conflict of interest between the two that Hopkins did not sufficiently recognise." Hopkins's verbal difficulties arose from this inherent conflict in interests of the poet. The author believes that the 'laws' or the 'rules' which Hopkins speaks of in his letters do not always explain his poetry. They are "his means of reaching behind contemporary poetry - the poetry of Swinburne, Tennyson, and the rondeliers - in attempting to give himself definition with relation to officially great poetry, that of Milton and Shakespeare." While superficially plausible, Mr. Robinson's view is untenable as it fails to see that Hopkins looked upon poetry as "inscapes of spoken sound" and all his verbal difficulties and complexities arise from effort to forge new patterns or designs with words.
In 1981 was brought out by Ohio University Press a book on the religious aspect of Hopkins's poetry. The book is called *Send My Roots Rain: A Study of Religious Experience in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins* and is written by Donald Walhout. The author is not a professor of literature but a professor of philosophy. The work is in the tradition of the works of John Pick, David Downes and J. Hillis Miller. Donald Walhout's work is a study of the structure of the religious experience in Hopkins's poetry. Hopkins's whole body of poetry is seen by the author as an expression of an experience which can be termed desolation and recovery from it. It is a three-stage experience, the stages being called encagement (a term derived from *The Caged Skylark*), naturation and grace. While the work is freshly penetrating in exploring the religious experience embodied in Hopkins's poetry, it says not a word about why such an experience was expressed in so individualistic a language.

From the contour of Hopkins criticism given above it is clear that critics have failed to account for the Hopkins's most distinctive use of language. Most of the critics have interested themselves in the theological-philosophical interpretation of Hopkins's poetry. Others have debated over the respective superiority of the poet and
priest in Hopkins. Still others have pointed out Hopkins's indebtedness to European tradition. From I.A. Richards started the trend of identifying Hopkins as a modern poet. Reacting against this some critics have exhibited the 'Victorian temper' of Hopkins's poetry.

Chronologically, Hopkins, of course, belonged to the Victorian Age. But was he Victorian in spirit as well? Was Hopkins a Modern or a Victorian in his approach to life? The question has haunted the critical minds and critics are sharply divided among themselves. As stated earlier the trend of looking upon Hopkins as a Modern started with I.A. Richards. John Wain also holds that Hopkins was a poet born before his time and a Modern in every sense of the term. Wendell Stacy Johnson in his *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The poet as Victorian*, however, traces Victorian elements in Hopkins's poetry. Mr. Johnson says, "He (Hopkins) is a Christian poet, a poet of nature, and a Victorian poet. The last point has been made least often and least well". Mr. Johnson endeavours to do what he thinks has been imperfectly done by others. The author argues that Hopkins is out and out a Victorian poet primarily in two respects: first, his poems reflect the "self-probing and self-masking" so common with other prominent Victorian poets; second, there is the same "curiously ambivalent attitude towards natural, temporal world"
in Hopkins as other Victorians. The author analyses Hopkins's major poems and lays bare their Victorian tone and concludes: "Hopkins is much more than a technician or a versifying intellectual priest .... in fact he belongs with Tennyson, Browning Arnold, to the highest rank of the Victorian poets". In the same vein Prof. Alison G. Sulloway in her *Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper*, places Hopkins 'in the centre of the Victorian Tradition'. Prof. Sulloway believes that Hopkins was very much a part of the Victorian ethos and sensibility. She looks upon Hopkins's poetry as an expression of moral and psychological analysis of self in Victorian society. It is, according to her, typical of Victorian temper. While the work is certainly important as showing Hopkins as a part of a tradition which includes Ruskin, Carlyce, Thomas Arnold and Pater, it is inadequate, as it has nothing to say about Hopkins's style or, rather the peculiarity of his style. It is true that no poet can be completely immune from the influence of his age and Hopkins was no exception. Hopkins's greatness, however, lies in not how he followed the Victorian tradition but in how he broke away from them. His chief greatness lies in the experiments he made in the language of poetry. But neither in Mr. Johnson's book nor in Prof. Sulloway's there is any attempt to find out the reason of the linguistic novelty of Hopkins's poetry.
For the same reason we have made no comment on biographies of Hopkins and on the numerous explications of Hopkins's poetry. Hopkins's poetry, 'The Windhover' in particular, is a favourite ground of ambiguity-hunters. Consequently, it has lent itself to various, sometimes, diametrically opposite interpretations at the hands of the critics. Numerous articles have also been written on them. The most famous collection of such articles were first published in Kenyon Review which devoted an entire issue to the discussion of Hopkins's poetry. Gerard Manley Hopkins by the Kenyon critics, besides containing the articles, notably the one by F.R. Leavis, incorporates a short biographical sketch of Hopkins by Austin Warren. The articles are important in so far as they show that Hopkins has occupied a permanent place in English Letters. Another such important anthology of articles is Hopkins : A Collection of Critical Essays which is edited by Geoffrey H. Hartman. The collection contains a number of valuable articles which deal with various aspects of Hopkins's poetry. But except for John Wain's An Idiom of Desperation none of them is relevant to our need. So, we refrain from commenting on them. John Wain's article has been commented on earlier. It has become a cliché of criticism to say that poems are made of words and not of ideas. But the paucity of writings on Hopkins's use of language is striking. This is particularly so in respect of Hopkins who is almost wholly 'verbal'. 
Here special mention should be made of an article by Donald McC Chesney, entitled 'The Meaning of Inscape'. Published in The Month, new series, Vol. 40, it has been reprinted in G.M. Hopkins's Poems: A Case Book edited by M. Bottaral. Donald McC Chesney was the first to stress that Hopkins's verses were inscapes or designs of words-as-sounds and they were verbal patterns or designs which had independent life besides their meaning. McC Chesney is the only critic of Hopkins who recognises this important fact about Hopkins's poetry. McC Chesney argues that Hopkins saw order or pattern everywhere in Nature. He wanted to transfer them to his poetry. The critic contends that the strange beauty of the language of Hopkins's verse is the result of his wrestling 'vicariously' to 're-create' the 'inexpressible thiness' of his experience. Sketchy as Donald McC Chesney's article is, it is nevertheless important in that, it recognises that 'inscape' was 'central to Hopkins's thinking' and a 'key-word' in respect of his poetry. McC Chesney does not interpret the term 'inscape' in theological terms like Peters, John Pick, Donald Wahout and recognises that there could be poetry independent of meaning. The author, of course, makes no attempt to connect 'inscape' with Hopkins's notion of the seminal fluidity of language. Brief and sketchy as the article is, the article throws much light into many hitherto dark recesses of Hopkins's poetry.
In 1980 was published an interesting book on Hopkins's poetry. "A Counterpoint of Dissonance" : The Aesthetics of and Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins by Michael Sprinker is important in the sense that it breaks new grounds in the history of Hopkins criticism. Sprinker's chief credit is that he has constructed Hopkins's aesthetics and his theory of language from his letters, Journals and papers. So far as Hopkins's aesthetics is concerned, the critic argues, it resembles those of Roman Jacobson, the Russian Formalists and the American New Critics. They all believed that poetry differed from the ordinary use of language in their structure or artifice. In Hopkins's case, this structure was parallelism. While Hopkins thus looked forward to moderns in reducing poetry to parallelism (structure), he also has much affinity with the proponents of French symbolism. The author argues that Hopkins resembles Mallarme and Valery in a variety of ways. Coming to Hopkins's theory of language, the critic argues that Hopkins assumed "the existence of an original language that was more in harmony with nature than the artificial language of modern times". Hopkins shared with Rousseau, Vico, Herder and Max Muller the existence of this original language. Speech is natural while writing is artificial. That is why Hopkins's insistence on speech in poetry. "For Hopkins poetry is structuration of language and language is structured
by laws and regulations that are intrinsic to itself. Poetry mimics language ..... and language mimics itself. The most interesting point of the book is the author's fresh interpretation of poems like The Windhover, The Wreck of the Deutschland and Hopkins' latter poems. The author look upon The Windhover as 'an allegory of the writing of poetry' and The Wreck of the Deutschland as "autobiographical poem about the birth of the poet". The later poems of Hopkins are interpreted in terms of 'self' which, according to the author, is 'textural'. While the book is freshly innovative and important as looking at Hopkins's poetry from non-traditional angle, it overlooks the fact why Hopkins chose to use the language in the strange way he did.

The analysis of Hopkins criticism given in the foregoing pages shows the undulations, turns and twists of critical insight. Another immediate purpose for undertaking such an attempt is to show where the focus of critical attentions have been fixed. As we have already said that the beauty of Hopkins's poetry is almost wholly the beauty of its language. Hopkins had a strange fascination for the resources of language. He felt that language has a beauty of its own which is independent of the beauty of meaning. He wrote his poems, particularly, his major poems, in obedience to a theory of poetry. The nature of that theory must be understood for a
proper appreciation of his poetry. We take stock of Hopkins's intention we shall know that Hopkins is really very unique in English letters. He has no affinity with other English poets. In his introductory chapter W.A.M. Peters has minutely discussed how critics have tried to identify Hopkins with other poets. Peters concludes that Hopkins is unique in the history of English poetry. We concur with Peters although for a different reason. To quote Peter more fully:

"It is now-a-days the fashion to detect literary echoes and on their strength to relate a poet to other poets most like him in a certain respect. This appears to have been a favourite method with critics of Hopkins. Thus Hopkins is most like Shelley, according to Middleton Murray and akin to Milton according to Charles Williams; Miss E.E. Phare is of the opinion that he has some affinity among others to Wordsworth and she agrees with Babette Deutsch he was also very close to Keats. But T.S. Eliot's view that he 'should be compared with ...... minor poet nearest contemporary to him and most like him : George Meredith'. According to Walter de la Mare and Osbert Burdett, Hopkins reminds us of John Donne. He has much in common with the Metaphysicals, especially Crashaw and Vaughan. He has been mentioned in one breath with Walt Whitman, and a
curious likeness has been discovered between him and Patmore. Among his literary ancestry, are also mentioned Charles Doughty and William Barnes; 'he is, obviously inspired by Walsh poetry, and his supposed great likeness to Aeschylus in many respects is the subject of again another article.

"I am sure that this list is not complete; but in any case it must be obvious to all who like to compare him to others, that is a hopeless task to assign Hopkins to his right place"^.

We also believe that "it is a hopeless task to assign Hopkins to his right place" because the similarities of Hopkins with other poets are purely accidental. He remains basically a lonely figure because of his strange experiment with language.