Chapter - IV

Patterning as a poetic idea.

In Chapter III we have used the word 'pattern' a number of times in the context of Hopkins's poetry. Replying to the charge of obscurity and oddity of his verse, Hopkins told Bridges:

"No doubt my poetry errs on the side of oddness. I hope in time to have a more balanced and Miltonic style. But as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern or what I am in the habit of calling 'inscape' is what I above all aim at in poetry. Now it is the virtue of design, pattern or inscape to be distinctive and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped."

This remark is important as indicating what importance Hopkins attached to 'inscape'. Inscape was above everything else what he aimed at in poetry. He also told that the queerness of oddity of his verse was due to inscape or patterning. Hopkins stubbornly held that oddity or queerness was desirable, if it was for the sake of 'inscape'.

Bridges who never comprehended the genius of Hopkins, brought the charge of 'affectation and obscurity' against
Babkins’s poetry. Hopkins replied:

"Obscurity I do and will try to avoid so far as is consistent with excellences higher than clearners at a first reading. This question of obscurity we will sometime speak of but not now. As for affectation I do not believe I am guilty of it. You should point out instances, but as long as mere novelty and boldness strikes you as affectation your criticism strikes me as - as water of the Lower Isis."

Here also 'excellences higher than clearness' refer to 'inscape' or 'pattern'. Hopkins does not mean to be deliberately obscure. But if for the sake of 'inscape', his verse becomes obscure, he cannot help it because 'inscape' is 'excellence higher than clearness at a first reading'.

The above two remarks of Hopkins clearly show how important 'inscape' was to Hopkins. Critics have been puzzled by Hopkins's strange use of language. Various theories have been put forward to account for the obscurity of his poetry. But it is clear that Hopkins's strange diction, his supralogical use of language, his dislocation of normal English syntax — in fact, every factor that contributes to the obscurity of his verse comes from his individual and distinctive conception of poetry. And the cornerstone of that conception is 'inscape'.
On Hopkins's own admission the 'obscurity' and 'oddity' of his poetry results from 'inscape'.

Hopkins's letters, note-books and Journals are full of references to 'inscape'. Thus in a letter to Patmore, he criticised the poetic talent of Sir Samuel Ferguson in the following words:

"... he was a poet as the Irish are - to judge by the little of his I have seen full of feeling, high thoughts, but the essential and only lasting thing left out - what I call inscape ......."³

At another place Hopkins calls it 'the very soul of art'.⁴ Hopkins also defined poetry in terms of inscape. In his essay Poetry and Verse, Hopkins writes -

"Poetry is in fact speech only employed to carry the inscape of speech for the inscape's sake - and therefore the inscape must be dwelt on ...... Verse is (inscape of spoken sound, not spoken words, or speech employed to carry the inscape of spoken sound - or in the usual words) speech wholly or partially repeating the same figure of sound."⁵

'Inscape' is indeed 'the soul of art' and is applicable to other branches of art. Thus speaking about an art exhibition
Hopkins wrote:

"I also saw a good engraving of his 'Vintage Festival', which impressed the thought one would gather also from Rembrandt ... of a master of scaping rather than of inscape. For vigorous rhetorical but realistic and unaffected scaping holds everything but no arch-inscape is thought of."\(^1\)

The term inscape is first mentioned in Hopkins's essay on Parmenides. There speaking of Parmenides, Hopkins remarks,

"His feeling for instress, for the flush and foredrawn, and for inscape is most striking and from this one can understand Plato's reference for him as the great father of Realism."\(^7\)

But later the term is more frequently used. Hopkins cannot look at any object of nature without thinking of inscape. His Journal, which is full of his nature-observation, mentions 'inscape' every now and then. Thus -

"The blue-bells in your hand baffle you with their inscape, made to every sense: if you draw your fingers through them they are lodged and struggle with a shock of wet hands; the long stocks rub and click and flatten to a fan on one
another like your fingers themselves would when you passed the palms hard across one another, making a brittle rub and jostle like the noise of a hurdle strained by leaning against; then there is the faint honey smell and in the mouth the sweet gum when you bite them. But this is easy, it is the eye they baffle. They give one a fancy of panpipes and of some wind instrument with stops — a trombone perhaps. The overhung necks — for growing they are little more than a staff with a simple crook but in water, where they stiffen, they take stronger turns, in the head like sheep-hooks or, when more waved throughout, like the waves riding through a whip that is being smacked — what with these overhung necks and what with the crisped ruffled bells dropping mostly on one side and the gloss these have at their foot-stalks they have an air of the knights at chess. Then the knot or 'knoop' of buds some shut, some just gaping, which makes the pencil of the whole spike, should be noticed: the inscape of the flower most finely carried out in the siding of the axes, each striking a greater and greater slant, is finished in these clustered, which for the most part are not straightened but rise to the end like a tongue and this end their tapering and a little flattering they have made them look like the heads of snakes."8

Again,

"June 13 - A beautiful instance of inscape sided on the slide,
that is / successive s\xingdings of one inscape, is seen in
the behaviour of the flat flower from the shut bud to the
full blowing: each term you can distinguish is beautiful
in itself and of course if the whole behaviour were
gathered up and so stalled it would have a beauty of all
the higher degree."\(^9\)

Or,

"Later - The Horned Violet is a pretty thing, gracefully
lashed. Even in withering the flower run through beautiful
inscapes by the screwing up of the petals into straight
little barrel of tubes. It is not that inscape does not
govern the behaviour of things in slack and decay as one
can see even in the pining of the skin in the old and even
in a skeleton but that horror prepossesses the mind, but in
this case there was nothing in itself to show even whether
the flower were shutting or opening."\(^10\)

Or,

"There is one notable dead tree in the N.W. corner of the
wave, the inscape marked by holding its most simple and
beautiful oneness up from the ground through a graceful
swerve below (I think) the spring of branches up to the
tops of the timber. The finest of all stands I think in
the monks' day-room."\(^11\)
Or,

"The ash tree growing in the corner of the garden was felled. It was lopped first: I heard the sound and looking out and seeing it maimed there came at that moment a great pang and I wished to die and not to see the inscapes of the world destroyed any more."12

Or,

"April 20 - Young elm-leaves lash and lip the strays. This has been a very beautiful day — fields about us deep-green lighted underneath with white daisies, yellower fresh green of leaves above which bathes the skirts of the elms, and their tops are touched and worded with leaf too. Looked at the big limb of that elm that hangs over into the Park at the Swinggate / further out than where the leaves were open and saw beautiful inscape, home-coiling wiry bushes of spray, touched with bud to point them. Blue shadows fell all up the meadow at sunset and then standing at the far park corner of my eye was struck by such a sense of green in the tufts and pashes of grass, with purple shadow thrown back on the dry black mould behind them, as I do not remember on a slip of paper at that time, because the eye for colour, rather the zest in the mind, seems to weaken with years, but now the paper is mislaid."13
Or,

"March 12 - A fine sunset: the higher sky dead clear blue bridged by a broad slant causeway rising from right to left of wisped or grass cloud, the wisps lying across; the sundown yellow, most with light but ending at the top in a foam of delicate white pearling and spotted with big tufts of cloud in colour russet between brown and purple but edged with brassy light. But what I note it all for is this: before I had always taken the sunset and the sun as quite out of gauge with each other, as indeed physically they are, for the eye after looking at the sun is blunted to everything else and if you look at the rest of the sunset you must cover the sun, but today I inscaped them together and made the sun the true eye and ace of the whole, as it is. It was all active and torsing out light and started as strongly forwarded from the field as a long stone or a boss in the knop of the chalice-stem: it is indeed by stalling it so that it falls into scape with the sky."14

Or,

"April 6 - Sham fight on the Common, 7000 men, chiefly volunteers. Went up in the morning to get an impression but it too soon, however got this - caught that inscape in the horse that you see in the pediment especially and
other basereliefs of the Parthenon and even when Sophocles had felt and expresses in two choruses of the Oedipus.

Coloneus, running on the likeness of a horse to a breaker, a wave of the sea curling over. I looked at the groin or the flank and saw how the set of hair symmetrically flowed outwards from it, all parts of the body, so that, following that one may inscape the world's beast very simply.¹⁵

But although Hopkins had attached so much importance to 'inscape', indeed, although he had made 'inscape' the cornerstone of his poetry, most of the critics have thought 'inscape' was one of the many words Hopkins had created fancifully. It is therefore not strange that little, almost negligible space is devoted by critics to explain this term. Again when at all explained little effort is made to relate it to Hopkins's poetry. W.A.M. Peters, S.J. has noted how this term has been neglected by critics. Thus Peters notes how G.W. Steiner in his essay on G.M. Hopkins in Gog Magog writes:

"The landscape expressed for him God's presence; inscape or instress (words he is fond of using) is not merely the artist's apprehension of vital form, but of divine shape. Wherever he can find inscape — in the eternal yet ever-changing forms of tree, river and cloud — he finds God."¹⁶
Again Miss E.E. Phare in her *G.M. Hopkins: A Survey and Commentary* has this much to say about inscape:

"The oddness of Hopkins, then is connected with his theory of 'inscape', a word which he coined himself to describe the pattern which makes every fragment of creation, every "head of being", to use his own phrase, individual and unique."17

W.A.M. Peters has quoted a passage from the *New Review, Vol. II*, p.4 which runs like this:

"He used words with new connotations, he even invented words when the ordinary vocabulary failed him: "sake" referred to the unique attribute of the thing that struck an observer, "instress" to the design cohering the particulars of a scene, and 'inscape' to the core of creative purposeness underlying the design."18

These casual and cursory treatment of the word 'inscape' shows that most of the critics have failed entirely to grasp the true significance of the term. And because they have found little of consequence in term, they have refrained from reading it into the poetry of Hopkins.
John Pick has given some attention to this term in *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Priest And Poet*. Pick believes that the term ‘inscape’ was used with some flexibility; the variations in its application are largely a matter of emphasis; sometimes he stresses ‘inscape’ as configuration, design, shape, pattern, and contour - the 'outerform' of a thing; sometimes he stresses 'inscape' as the ontological secret behind a thing, as in 'inner form'. But usually he employs the word to indicate the essential individuality and particularity or selfhood of a thing working itself out and expressing itself in design and pattern. This then he calls beauty.¹⁹

John Pick believes that Hopkins had formulated this conception of beauty before he stumbled upon Duns Scotus. But in the writings of the learned doctor Hopkins found philosophical justification of his theory.

W.H. Gardner, an excellent scholar, pays scant attention to 'inscape'. He brings all his deep erudition and analytic mind to bear upon the subtler aspects of the poetry of Hopkins. But in his two volumes containing otherwise brilliant analysis of Hopkins's poetry - its diction, syntax, imagery, rhythm and background, there is little attempt to probe the true meaning of 'inscape' and to relate it to Hopkins's poetry. Thus he writes:
"To Hopkins, therefore, an inscape was something more than a delightful sensory impression: it was an insight by Divine grace, into the ultimate reality—seeing the 'pattern, air melody' in things from, as it were, God's side. Scotus offered the poet an aesthetic sanction and the priest a moral justification for his inordinate attachment to poetry and other arts."^20

Thus both John Pick and Dr. Garner attempt to explain the term inscape in terms of theology and in neither is there an attempt to trace it back to Hopkins's poetry.

Other critics of Hopkins have paid scant attention to 'inscape'. Even when they mention the term, they take it to mean the external objects and their form. Mostly it is interpreted in religious terms. Thus, David Downes believes that "..... the prefix 'in' of 'inscape' denotes that 'scape' is the outer fixed shape of the intrinsic form of a thing. For that reason Hopkins was not satisfied with the term design or pattern as the unqualified designation of the intrinsic order of being. These terms indicate an order impressed from without, an intrinsic principle of unity."

Thus 'inscape', according to Downs is not interchangeable with 'design' or 'pattern'.
Robinson also writes in *In Extremity*:

"Hopkins developed his own interest in form characteristically in the direction of law and strictness; he invented the 'inscape' to help him do so. Perceiving the inscape in something seems for him to have been the important first step in discovering the ideal in the visible world."²¹

He clarifies his idea about the term in this way:

"As an alternative to 'design' or 'pattern' form risks describing the mere appearance of a thing which because it is an appearance is subject to change. Moreover, form implies something outward only; 'inscape' insists on an abiding and essential quality which shows itself in externals but which unlike them, has permanance."²²

Finally Mr. Robinson comes to the conclusion that inscape is more than form, pattern, or design. It has something of the 'matter' and 'immaterial' it is subjective and objective at the same time:

"Form or 'inscape' is for Hopkins the essential bridge between matter and immaterial. It is not in itself matter for it needs a discerning eye to see it, nor is it exclusively mental, for it has its existence in the object seen."²³
Prof. Sulloway believes 'Inscape' denotes 'wholeness'. She is also of the opinion that the idea of 'inscape' was implicit in the writings of major nineteenth century writers like Ruskin, Arnold and Pater. Thus:

"Hopkins's aesthetic concepts embodied in his terms 'inscape' - the whole object as it is in all its wholeness and each of its specific parts - and 'instress' - the onlooker's emotional response to that object - would have been as acceptable to earlier Victorian aestheticians as theirs were to him."^{24}

Again,

"...... Hopkins's 'inscape' and 'instress', all appear as versions of a post-Romantic sensibility, a process that begins almost in scientific empiricism and ends in piety, or at least in moral elevation. It must have been crucial for Hopkins's purposes that Ruskin and Arnold both stressed the importance of the artist first as a camera eye and then as a transforming alchemist, a remaker of beauty in his own right."^{25}

Sulloway believes that, "what Pater called the 'established order of things' Hopkins called 'inscape' - the exact laws of natural things, their looks and their conduct."
Donald Walhout interprets the term 'inscape' as a religious concept. He quotes John Pick, Gardner, Hillis-Miller and says, 'Inscape, then is a formal element' and further says, "My suggestion, for brevity (inscape) would be individually distinctive form ...." Donald Walhout believes that Hopkins attaches so much importance to 'inscape' because Hopkins believed that God was the deviser of 'inscapcs' in nature. 'Inscape' was important as it was a model for us of the "great individuality in unity which is God himself". Secondly, 'inscape' is important as everywhere showing the 'goodness of God'.

W.A.M. Peters attempted to do what John Pick and Dr. Gardner and others failed to grasp. His book Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Critical Essay towards the Understanding of His Poetry was an attempt to explain Hopkins's poetry in terms of the words 'inscape' and 'intress'. W.A.M. Peters was the first to point out that these terms were integral to an understanding of Hopkins's poetry. Thus declares the author,

"My aim has been to place within the reader's reach the clue to Hopkins's most peculiar medium of expression; I intend to show that obscurity and oddity are not the result of artistic wantonness or bad literary taste, but the logical outcome of his poetical theories, which, in
According to Peters, Hopkins's poetry was conceived in accordance with a theory and that theory was the outcome of his own and individualistic view of life and the universe. Hopkins, according to Peters, was intensely aware of the 'actual presence of God in each individual thing in its own peculiar way, brought him news about the creator'. As Hopkins was intensely aware of the presence of God in all the objects, he lovingly admired the inscapes of the world. 'Inscape', according to Peters, is not primarily valuable because it is so closely related to beauty: for in the quotations given Hopkins entirely precinds from beauty. Inscape is appreciated for its own sake, for a value entirely its own. It was his spiritual outlook, on this world that made inscape so precious to Hopkins; the inscapes of an object was, so to speak, more 'word of God' reminded him more of the Creator, than a superficial impression could have done.

Consequently 'inscape' is defined by the author in the following manner:

"..... inscape is the unified complex of those sensible qualities of the object of perception that strikes us as
inseparably belonging to and most typical of it, so that through the knowledge of this unified complex of sense-data we may gain an insight into the individual essence of the object."28

Peters thinks that as Hopkins scrupulously and earnestly tried to catch this inscape and as ordinary language was inadequate in describing 'this individually-distinctive' 'inscape', Hopkins turned and twisted his language so that it could exactly catch the 'inscapes' of the world. Hence, all the peculiarities of his language.

Brilliant as is this explanation of the term inscape, we believe that it overlooks certain aspect of Hopkins's conception of the term. Where Peters went wrong will be explicit as we take a fresh look at Hopkins's use of the word in different places of his journal and note-book.

"... as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music, and design in painting, so design, pattern, or what I am in the habit of calling 'inscape' is what I above all aim at in poetry."29

So, on his own admission, Hopkins looked to melody in music, design in painting and design or pattern in poetry above everything else. He calls this design or pattern 'inscape'.
So design or pattern is interchangeable with 'inscape'.
That 'inscape' was Hopkins's main concern is evident
from his essay 'Rhythm And the Other Structural Parts of
Rhetoric — Verse' where verse is defined as "speech
having a marked figure, order / of sounds independent of
meaning and such as can be shifted from the .ord or words
m to others without changing. It is a figure of spoken
sound."30

From these remarks, it is clear that Hopkins broke
radically from the conventional notions of poetry. For him
poetry was not 'spontaneous overflow of powerful emotion'.
In fact, the expression of emotion, or for that matter thought
was entirely secondary to Hopkins's conception. Poetry to
Hopkins, as it was to Mallarme, was made not of ideas but of
words. But since words were conceptual their use would entail
certain structure of meaning whether the poet wanted it or not.
So poems were basically verbal structures and it was the verbal
structures which, really mattered in poetry. Meaning inhered
in poetry only to uphold the edifice of words, not exactly words
to Hopkins, but words-as-sounds. That is why Hopkins defines
poetry in the following manner:

"Poetry is speech framed for contemplation of the mind
by the way of hearing or speech framed to be heard for
its sake and interest even ever and in above its interest"
even over and above its interest of meaning. Some matter and meaning is essential to it but only as an element necessary to support and employ the shape which is contemplated for its own sake. (Poetry is in fact speech only employed to carry the inscape of speech for the inscape's sake - and therefore the inscape must be dwelt on ...."31

These essays and other undergraduate essays clearly show that Hopkins was more interested in the technical aspects of poetry. Indeed the titles of his essays indicate how the structural matters of poetry engaged his mind — Rhythm And Other Structural Parts of Rhetoric, Verse, Poetry and Verse, On the Origin of Beauty. In these essays Hopkins deals not with what poetry is about, but about how poetry should be written. Hopkins's poetry has been variously classified by critics. The popular division of his mature poetry is — (i) poetry dealing with sacramental view of nature, (ii) poetry reflecting his outlook on man and (iii) his personal wrestling with God, i.e. 'the terrible sonnets'. But such a division of Hopkins's poetry is entirely artificial. In fact, Hopkins's poetry cannot and should not be divided on the basis of their theme because Hopkins never cared much about themes. For him poems were designs, patterns or inscapes, that is, structures of words or words-as-spoken-sound. The structure of meaning was there only a prop to support and uphold the structure of
sound. It was this structure that really mattered to Hopkins. And for the sake of this structure he was willing to sacrifice intelligibility. For the sake of this structure Hopkins tried to make language as malleable as was possible for him to do so.

That structure was the end in art was evident to Hopkins since his undergraduate days. Thus, in his undergraduate essay On The Origin of Beauty Hopkins says, "Beauty therefore is a relation, and the apprehension of it a comprehension."^32

And again,

"..... there is a relation between the parts of the thing to each other and again of the parts to the whole, which must be duly kept. If from the volume of poems we take a dozen away, we agreed there is no difference, the remainder (or) neither better nor worse. But if from one single work of art, one whole we take anything appreciable away, a scene from a play, a stanza from a short piece, or whatever it is, there is a change, it must be better or worse without it; in a great man's work it will be - there are of course exceptions - worse."^33

This point is emphasised again in the same essay from which the extract given above, have been taken:
"Well then, said the Professor, 'before we pass on, we understand that the collective effect of a work of art is due to the effect of each part to the rest, in a play of each act to the rest, in a play of each act to the rest, in a smaller poem each stanza to the rest, and so on, that addition or loss of any act or stanza will not be the addition or loss of the intrinsic goodness of that act or stanza alone, but a change on the whole also, either for the better or for the worse necessarily."\(^3\)

In course of this essay Hopkins comes to the conclusion that "All beauty may by a metaphor be called rhyme."\(^3\)

Later in the essay Hopkins explicitly says, "'The plain difference which strikes all is what we call verse; is it not? It is that poetry has a regular structure and prose has not' said the Professor."

And,

"'Verse and artificial prose then' said the Professor 'are arts using the medium of words, and verse is distinguished from prose as employing a continuous structural parallelism, ranging from technically so-called parallelism of the Psalms to the intricate structure of the Greek or Italian or English Verse'."\(^3\)
In his essay *On the sign of health and decay in the arts* when Hopkins speaks about beauty as "the apprehension of the presence in one or more than one thing" he was thinking of beauty in terms of wholeness or unity. The relation of these remarks with 'inscape' is very clear. Inscape is unity or wholeness and this unit or wholeness is the soul of art.

This concept of wholeness is not something invented by Hopkins. It is as old as Aristotle. But where Hopkins was ahead of his time was that he believed that the wholeness could be achieved on the plane not of meaning but of sound. And this is where pattern design or the 'inscape' comes in. If meaning becomes secondary, sound predominates and it achieves wholeness or 'inscape' through delicate patterning, through the mixture of regularity and irregularity. 'All beauty may by a metaphor called rhyme ....' and 'Rhythm therefore is likeness tempered with difference'.”

Hopkins's effort to achieve wholeness, or pattern on the plane of sound is again related to his notion of words or to his theory of language. That Hopkins took a keen interest in the relation between sound and sense is clear from his various jottings in early diary. There is also an essay written in 1868 which throws much light on his view on words. The essay is incomplete but it is important as throwing light
on an important aspect of his thought. Let us quote at some length from this essay:

"All words mean either things or relation of things: you may also say then substances or attributes or again wholes or parts, e.g. man and quarter.

"To every word meaning a thing and not a relation belongs a passion or prepossession or enthusiasm which it has the power of suggesting or producing but not always or in everyone. This not always refers to its evolution in the man and secondly in man historically.

"The latter element may be called for convenience the prepossession of a word. It is in fact the form, but there are reasons for being cautious in using form here, and it bears a valuable analogy to the soul, one however which is not complete, because all names but proper names are general while the soul is individual.

"Since every definition is the definition of a word and every word may be considered as the contraction or coinciding-point of its definitions we may for convenience use word and definition with a certain freedom of interchange."
"A word then has three terms belonging to it or moments - its prepossession of feeling; its definition, abstraction, vocal expression or other utterance; and its application, 'extension', the concrete things coming under it.

"It is plain that of these only one in propriety is the word; the third is not a word but a thing meant by it, the first is not a word but something connotatively meant by it, the nature of which is further to be explored.

"But not even the whole field of the middle term is covered by the word. For the word is the expression, uttering of the idea of the mind. That idea itself has its two terms, the image (of sight or sound or scopes of the other senses), which is in fact physical and refined energy accenting the nerves, a word to oneself, an incoherent word, and secondly the conception."

Commenting on this essay W.A.M. Peters writes,

"Scrappy as the essay is, no one can doubt that Hopkins had very sound as well as rather original, ideas about the nature of words. To my mind, he has to a certain extent forestalled many opinions that were only put forward some forty or fifty years after the date when Hopkins wrote the above remarks, and that are now eagerly discussed"
in books dealing with the philosophy and psychology of language.39

W.A.M. Peters rightly concludes,

".... to Hopkins a word was very much more than a sign for a thing. To this poet a word was as much an individual as any other thing."40

This is to say that the words have a life of their own. They do not always conform to the rules of grammar and syntax but obey their own rules which may run counter to the rule of grammar and syntax. In other other words, words and their aggregate, language, is a sort of energy. This conception of language is strangely similar to the conception of language held by French symbolist poets and implicitly by modern poets like Ezra Pound. Hugh Kenner has very much the same to say about words.

"Hammer or Theobald, with Dr. Johnson supposed that words denoted things. A language is simply an assortment of words, and a set of rules for combining them. Mallarmé and Valery and Eliot felt words as part of that echoing intricacy. Language, which permeates our minds and obeys not the laws of things but its own laws, which has an organism's power to mutate and adapt and survive, and
exact obligations from us because no heritage is more precious. The things against which its words brush are virtually extraneous to its integrity."

Language is living in the sense that it changes and mutates. It is an energy which has come down us through the ages, "from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing". But in the midst of the changefulness of language the pattern abides. "Energy creates pattern" wrote Ezra Pound. A vortex is a patterned energy made visible by the water as a "knot is neighter hemp nor cotton nor nylon: is not the rope. The knot is a patterned integrity. The rope renders it (pattern) visible." In the same way poetry is not language, nor its meaning but the pattern made visible by the language. "A magnet brings order and vitality and thence beauty into a place of iron filings", their design expressing "a confluence of energy". So is a poem patterned energy. That is how Ezra Pound, according to Hugh Kenner, looked upon poetry. This is how Hopkins looked upon it too.

Why is this insistence on pattern? "Energy creates pattern" and language is an energy. Again language is changeful while the pattern endures. "Like molecules of water in fountain or vortex, particulars of the pattern mutate; the pattern is stable, an enduring integrity, shaped by movement, shaping it."
Foremost among the critics who have grasped this fact about Hopkins's poetry is Donald McChesney. In his essay *The Meaning of Inscape* and in his book *A Hopkins Commentary: An Explanatory Commentary on the Main Poems 1876-89*, he comes to conclusion very much like this. Thus in his essay *The Meaning of Inscape*, he writes:

"In his poetry, he is not merely trying to reproduce in language his particular 'inscaped' vision of nature; he is also trying to produce inscapes or patterns of speech-sound which can be contemplated for its own sake. To use an analogy, it is as if a craftsman in wood, not content with carving an object, also endeavoured to bring out and even to create the arabesques and patterns inherent in the very grain of the wood."  

Again,

"To Hopkins, it is what he called the shape that matters - the pattern or inscape imposed by the artist on the raw materials of his medium - paint, stone, wood or words. The correspondence of this 'shape' to anything outside itself is of secondary, even minimal importance."
"He did not exclude logical verbal meaning. He merely said that it was secondary to the shape. The shape, in a poem, is the total sound pattern as received by the listening ear and contemplated by the listening mind ..... All Hopkins's poems, even the most verbally convoluted, have a core of logical meaning which can be paraphrased. But more than most, Hopkins's poetry is totally irreducible; you no more have the meaning of his poems when you paraphrase it than you have the building when you strip it to use its girders. Syntactic 'maps' of his logical meaning are useful for the newcomer to Hopkins, but only that he might more quickly pass on to contemplate the shape of the poem - i.e. the inscape or pattern of speech-sound."47

Another critic who has recognised the fact of irreducibility of Hopkins's poetry is John Wain. Wain argues that Hopkins was really a modern poet who was far ahead of his time. His conception of poetry is comparable to those of Baudelaire, Verlaine and La Borge and goes on to say that "What Baudelaire and Verlaine accomplished by vice and squalor, Hopkins accomplished by being a poet."48

Wain sums 'inscape' under the two heads of irreducibility and simultaneity and regards these two qualities as the hallmark of Hopkins's poetry. Writes Wain,
When Hopkins tried to explain to Bridges what he meant by 'inscape', he was in reality pouring into that monumentally deaf eardrum the doctrines of irreducibility and simultaneity.

John Wain argues that like the French symbolists Hopkins also held that "Poems do not mean, but be". In this context Wain approvingly quotes Laforgue who said, "It cannot be too strongly stated that a poem is not the expression of a feeling the poet had before he began to write." The poem, in fact, calls into being the feeling it expresses and concludes "and with this assertion we reach the ultimate frontier. Irreducibility is now total."

Speaking about 'obscurity' of its poetry Wain writes,

"It seems to me that much of the obscurity with which all modern art has been charged is in fact nothing more than simultaneity. Hopkinsian 'inscape' leads on to the 'image' of the Imagists, which Ezra Pound defined as 'that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time'. Going back, one finds distinct evidences of the same impulse to simultaneity, to instantaneous inclusiveness with the image, in Baudelaire.

By an analysis of Hopkins's sonnet 'Andromeda', Wain
illustrate his points. "What is the poem about?" asks Wain, and goes on to say,

"The orthodox commentator, working within a pre-Hopkinsian tradition, has no doubt that some cut-and-dried answer can be found. To him, the poem is a code message, to be 'cracked' and its matter extracted. Thus Dr. Gardener unhesitatingly glossed: "Lice 1, Times' Andromeda (Symbol) the church". No nonsense here about irreducibility! Similarly a more recent critic, Mr. Alan Heuser, describes the poem as "a public sonnet on the political situation of the church

...... 'Times' Andromeda' was the Roman Church militant in England ('on this rock rude') persecuted in the past, now threatened from the West with industrial mob-rule ('A wilder beast')." It is all refreshingly simple. The only problem that remains is why Hopkins bothered to write a poem. If all he wanted to convey was that the Church was in a difficult position in 1879, but still had a mighty resuce to look to, surely he might have said so straight out? I would rather get my illumination from that rejoinder of Rimbaud's. "It means what it says". Hopkins is giving us a picture and a picture is irreducible". 55

And Wain concludes,

"If we will just let the poem alone, leave it to stand in its own solidity, without trying to peel o.f specific meanings
and argue about their correctness, we shall find that it will speak to us, as music, painting, or sculpture do.  

Another critic who has paid attention to this pattern-making faculty of Hopkins is Bernard Berganzi. In Chapter-6 of the book *Masters of World Literature* (ed. Louise Kronenberger) he makes much valuable observations on Hopkins's poetry. Here he remarks,

"Hopkins frequently wants to use English with the freedom of an inflected language, and he is here seizing on one of the few vestigial inflected forms remaining in the language - the genitive - and using it in a quite unidiomatic way to enforce a conclusion of extra-ordinary compression and intensity. In this final line Hopkins also sets up an autonomous pattern, whose effect is more decorative than expressive, based on alliteration and assonance between the pair of words, "hearts / hearths", "thoughts / throngs", "charity / Chivalry". 

At another place, speaking about Hopkins's dislocation of normal syntax, Berganzi remarks:

"..... one may tentatively conclude that Hopkins's syntactical deformations may have begin in the attempt to render speech as writing but turned into the opposite: autonomous pattern-making."
Later, Bargonzi analyses Hopkins's *Spelt from Sybil's Leaves* and says -

"Yet whatever its origin in actual and painful experience, this poem seems to me a product of the "Mallarméan" Hopkins; as we read it, the world seems to melt into language. Semantically, the words are not empty, nor there just for musical effect; but in their interactions their meanings fade and they exist as a strange unearthly music. The lines become pure poetry in a symbolist sense, or pure 'Textuality' in a Structuralist one."\(^{59}\)

The poem reminds Bargonzi of the "haunting evocation of nightfall from the "Anna Livia Plurabelle" section of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*.

Wain puts it as follows:

"He did not think literature important enough to go to the extremes of Mallarmé or Joyce, though he went further along their road than is often realised."\(^{60}\)