CHAPTER I

POETIC DICTION
POETIC DICTION : GENERAL

"Between the language of prose and the language of poetry there is, in fact, no difference at all - save a difference of poetry; and that is why, so long as there is poetry, there will be poetic diction. Nonetheless poetry works here, still and always, overshadowed by its deadliest peril, the peril of custom. Sick and fevered it respires after freshness, and reaches arms towards eloquence, but

Custom lies upon it with a weight
Heavy as frost and deep almost as life".

(Garrod, H.W., The Profession of Poetry)

First, we must consider what 'poetic diction' has meant to poetic practitioners down the ages. The problem of poetic diction came to prominence only after Dryden. There were writers and critics who made their comments sporadically. Ben Jonson's comments on Spenser are very well known. The Elizabethans spoke of a middle style. But one would do well to start the survey with the Victorians and work back and work forwards.

In his own time and for a quarter of a century later (in the twentieth century) Tennyson was considered the English Virgil-- the most accomplished practitioner of English poetic style.
Only because Browning could not, did not, achieve beauty of phrase, we ought not to say he had nothing to say on poetic diction.

Arnold's criticism on poetic diction is contained in his "The Literary Influence of Academies". Arnold there distinguishes between the pure style of poetry which he calls the Attic Style and the tasteless magnificence which he calls the Asiatic. He has also something to say on this subject in his Lecture 'On Translating Homer'. He, like Dryden and Johnson before him, leads us to the concept of the central style in poetry— that which is not odd or out of place.

In the twentieth century we have many romantic poets continuing the romantic tradition. (One of the short-sighted views we are likely to have in the twentieth century is that everything after Eliot must be in the manner of Eliot. No. After Eliot is not necessarily after Eliot). Some of them are: Robert Bridges, Lascelles Abercrombie, Laurence Binyon, Sturge Moore. The last of the romantics died recently—Dylan Thomas. These romantics still cultivated a richness and sensuousness in diction which recalls the practice of Spenser and the earlier Keats.

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So much for a 'Period-survey'. Then, what does it all boil down to?

The first conclusion we can arrive at is that every age has its own conception of what good poetic diction is or ought to be. For instance, if the poets of the 18th century had been gifted with the power of pre-vision they would have disapproved of modern diction. We are not necessarily right because we come after them. Raleigh said that every age in poetry has a watchword: Nature. Only, the next age does not agree that it is Nature. The best poetic diction, we say, is that in our own time.

We may wish to end the whole thing by saying that there are two traditions: that which is simple, orientated to conversation and that which is mannered, heightened-- or as Garrod would call it Bardic. In other words, we may say that there are two styles: the plain and the coloured. If that were all, there would be no difficulty. Simplicity would be preferable. The other party would be put out of court altogether. It is not as simple as that.

Let us see how complex the problem is. Michael Roberts, in his Introduction to The Faber Book of Modern Verse, makes a very far-reaching distinction between two
traditions in English poetry—the English or native tradition and the European tradition. It does not matter which poets we put into this or that category. That is a matter of taste. The point is there are two kinds of sensibility: one which is Native English and is rooted in the experience of the race; the other is conscious of a kind of European solidarity. Therefore it tries to widen its sympathy, to enlarge its horizon, to share its interests and ideas with other European communities. We can say that Shakespeare is on the whole English in his sensibility. Milton is European. Wordsworth, partly by temperament and partly by choice, made himself a Lake Country Englishman. Shelley and Byron are European—aware of the fact that they belonged to a European community. Eliot is European.

If that is so, then we can understand two approaches to the problem of verbal expression. If one belongs to the European tradition one doesn't limit oneself to any part of the language, not even to English, but looks upon the whole of European speech as a reserve bank from which one could draw. If a poet belongs to the English tradition, then it is natural for him to find expression to the English thoughts in English words. If enough words are not available, then he transforms the native
material according to the English genius. He thus practises a kind of self-sufficiency. (And because it is an English sensibility it is shared by all common people, not merely the refined and the sophisticated).

We can thus say that there must be at least two approaches to poetic diction. The European sensibility demands and finds an eclectic language taken from all places, collecting what is good. If however one's sensibility is pure English, one then turns to the resources of English language and explores it.

Other things being the same, the poet with European sensibility may have a loftier style than the poet with an English sensibility.

This division is not wholly true. It is not proof against criticism. But it is a kind of working-generalization we may make for our purpose; that is, if there are two sensibilities, there may be two kinds of creatively dealing with the language.

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Let us now take another point of view. It has been observed that there is a kind of pendulum-motion—a swinging to and fro between two logically opposed
positions. (1) Sometimes poets cultivate a very lofty poetry. It has magnificence and richness both of structure and texture, both of syntax and vocabulary. It is a good brocade robe which can be taken and stood on the end exactly like a man; we don't require a manikin. It is so richly encrusted with image that it can stand by itself. (2) At the other extreme we have a plain language of prose and conversation— the language which Wordsworth thought to be fit for poetry— the language we find in a Railway timetable or an income-tax demand-notice. And nobody except Wordsworth believed that the language of poetry need not be different from the language of prose/conversation.

It is the nature of poetry to swing between the one extreme—brocade robe— and the other extreme— the plain utility cloth. In any age either the one or the other is preferred. But we must remember that when plain prose is used it get transformed, even in the age where they are using prose, even in Wordsworth. The language of prose, we find when we read Wordsworth, has already undergone the process called selection.

So we understand that the poet's choice is not between extremely rich diction on the one hand and
the language of daily life but with a proviso: that it must first have passed through a selective process. The poet as we know it from all practitioners from Dante downwards, must first purify the language of the tribe.

In between the two we have a middle style which the Elizabethans called 'the mean style' (the middle style). It is as far removed from the ornate as it is from the language of the slums. It is this type that Wordsworth wrote whatever he said in theory.

Coleridge called it 'The Neutral style' -- that body or collection of words which has no colour, character of its own and which can therefore be used for the purpose of the poet as and when wanted. The trouble with most words which are in use in any given period is that they come to us somewhat like coins which are worn, like second hand clothes. What fits everybody will fit nobody. Some one made them. Now they are cheap to us and we devalue second hand clothes as we devalue other things. So what the poet wants is not good words but words which almost mean nothing.

This fact is coming to be recognised. Among the Symbolists there was a woman called Gertrude Stein. She
was a very influential person at the time when Eliot was revolutionizing English poetry. She was making experiments by which words should all be decontaminated. A poet wants to have words with no meaning, so that he can fill them with new meanings. A poet therefore doesn't want good words or bad words. The writer who wants the neutral style, wants his words to be colourless.

The result is that the simplest words, in the hands of a great poet like Shakespeare, take exactly the charge of meaning he wants, because they have no meaning eg. 'Never, never, never'. NEVER is one of the words which have almost lost meaning. It is for the poet to fill the neutral words with the meaning, colour, richness he wants.

So we have our choice: either a style that depends upon perfectly transparent, untinted words or a style that depends upon old associations. The poet using the latter style expects that one would remember all the former occasions, contexts in which it has occurred and then to the present context or meaning. That means taking over and enriching the heritage of words used and passed on by the old masters. We can't read four lines of Milton without finding some
echo of some earlier poet. We can read five hundred lines of Shakespeare without finding any echo. The words create their own meaning.

The neutral style probably began with Chaucer. It gives in Chaucer the impression of a speaking voice, a conversational pitch and key. In the 18th century it was used for the familiar style— for verse-epistle or satire. It began with Dryden and came up to Byron.

This was also what Dryden and Johnson said in theory: that it ought to steer a middle course between the Scylla of pedantry and the Charybdis of low and coarse associations—the language of profession ("jargon") and the language of thieves ("slang"). This is what Dryden advocates in his Preface to *Annus Mirabilis* and what Johnson pleads for in his *Life of Dryden*.

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We have another point of view. We note that poetic diction is itself a kind of changing concept. It is dynamic.

In English as in other literatures, poetid
diction was once thought of as peculiar to poetry. It was considered a prerogative of poetry to use it. Those words belonged to the aristocracy of speech just as fighting pertained to the aristocracy of the commu-
nity. We still have vestiges of that in Thesaurus. We find this in every country. That is, in the early days of the country's civilization there is set apart a pocket of speech for poetic expression.

The makers of this kind of poetic speech--those who first said bonehouse, swanroad, nailshirt, seal's bath, and so on--must have done it after first-hand observation, imaginative re-thinking and a kind of codifying. Their observation resulted in a special symbol. We have reason to think that, by the 10th century, most of these poetic words were known, available, required no observation. They were a kind of prefabricated poetry. Take, for example, the Battle of Maldon (991) and the battle of Brunanburh (924). The Battle of Maldon, though it comes later, is written in authentic verse. But the battle of Brunanburh is nothing but a patch work of phrases. Anyone can play that game.

The moral is not that Old English poetic diction had decayed or lost its freshness and savour, but that every creative use of the language has a beginning, a middle and an end. When we come to the end we see it is useless. There is nothing inside it. It is a shell.

That applies to all kinds of poetic diction, even simple diction.
So what is wrong with Old English poetic diction is not that it was poetic but that it was available to those who were not poets.

Practically the same thing happened among the followers of Chaucer: Chaucer himself tried to write a neutral style. But his more influential followers—Dunbar, Lindsay—made for themselves a kind of golden diction which can be called aureate. Chaucer purified the language of the tribe and his followers made it once more aureate. The difficulty with 15th century poetry is not that it was poetic art but that it was only art.

The same thing happened after Milton, and perhaps because of Milton. It was found that Milton was a great poet; it was also found that he was greatly imitable. So Milton is held responsible for two lines of imitation: those who admired Milton's later manner wrote blank verse as if writing blank verse would help them write in the Miltonic manner (eg. Cowper, Thomson, Wordsworth). Some early 18th century poets (Thomson to the two Wartons) fell in love with *Il Penseroso*, *L' Allegro*, *Lycidas*, *Comus*, *Arcades* and they made that kind of poetic diction fashionable as distinct
This latter fashion was more mischievous because it had the driving power of another poet (Spenser). Those who wanted to bring about a return to Nature imitated Spenser and early Milton.

The result is that the poetic diction came to have a very objectionable meaning to genuine poets whether Romantic or Classic. Today we can't seriously discuss poetic diction without making fun of it on the one hand or without being made fun of on the other. It is like poetic justice.

We have therefore no use for that kind of poetic diction which can be hardened into a manner. We see that good poets are free from poetic diction. Original poets, those who use the language creatively, do not cultivate poetic diction. So poetic diction is a term of opprobrium. First poetic diction was a kind of distinction. Then it became a term of opprobrium.

On the top of all these, a very independent writer of our time—Donald Davie—showed, in his book Purity of Diction in English Verse (1952), how the question could be viewed in yet another light.

His treatment of the subject in the whole book may be reduced to this point: that poets may be
divided into two groups: poets who use what Davie calls 'language' and poets who use what Davie calls 'diction'. 'Language' according to Davie, means the entire content and resources of the language, the whole range of its power and possibility. These are freely used by the poet as and when he requires. The best example of this is Shakespeare. What is 'diction'? 'Diction' means a kind of exclusive use of language, treating some words as permissible and shutting out certain other words as unpoetic.

It is in this convenient, inclusive outline that the difficulty comes. Who are the poets who employ 'language'? There is no much difficulty here: Shakespeare, Donne, the Metaphysicals, Eliot, Yeats. Who are the poets who employ a kind of restricted language leaving out more than they admit? If we have already been conditioned by Dr. Leavis we should expect Davie to say that Milton was the first in this group. One of the many agreeable surprises of this book is that Davie puts Milton alongside of Shakespeare as an open-handed prodigal spender of language. As for the second category he takes unexceptionable names such as many of 18th century poets after Pope and imitating Pope,
many of the Victorian poets, chiefly Tennyson. There is no quarrel with this grouping. No one ever held a brief for the poetic diction of the 18th century or the chaste and restrained diction of the Victorians.

While the principle seems to be practicable, easy to apply (the greater poets are those who use 'language'; the lesser poets are those who use 'diction') we shall find more disagreement than agreement upon those eligible for the second category. That is why the definition doesn't give all that it promised.

Davie says: All those who begin a tradition or enrich a tradition use a comprehensive language and they are in course of time succeeded by those who use only a restricted language. Then comes diction.

The moral Davie draws is this: Just as a major poet is expected to take the whole of life for his province, despising nothing and cultivate an inclusive consciousness, so his language also must be as wide, as mixed, as impure as life. It ought not to be too pure.

Another service Davie has rendered to us is the concept of a pure diction, that is, the diction which has no idiosyncrasy of its own and acts as a faithful
and complete medium of communication, so that nothing is lost on the way and nothing is changed. So pure diction is that which is functionally fit and does not destroy or divert or distort what is to be communicated. And above all, it does not try to enrich the medium. So a medium which does not attract attention to itself, which is merely functional, may have some claim to be called one of the good voices of poetry. It is not the only voice and it is not fit for every purpose. But it has its uses, its season, its own legitimate masters. And that is what we find in the great stylists of the Neo-Classical period.

We have therefore, to be careful when we speak of the 'unreal poetic diction' of the 18th century which Wordsworth destroyed. The point is that he destroyed one kind of poetic diction.

We may, however, note one or two tendencies as emerging in history:

There is not merely a kind of action and reaction. If that were all, it would n't be difficult to understand. We can't say there are a hundred years of ornate diction and then a hundred years of simple diction. It is not like that. The point is that like
the development of science, there may be development all the time, but nothing once gained is completely lost. It is a process of cumulative development. We don't find poets writing in the style of emblem-writers. The result is that whatever has been achieved on the credit side is there, is valid. That fairly general statement will help us to understand a kind of general tendency or the trend of poetic speech.

We may try to put it in the form of two or three apparently different statements, but they are all interlocked.

What is rendered here is true not only of Eliot and his generation. Progressively it has been realized that the poet requires all the resources of the language and if he is a great poet he requires a little more, which means that in his own use he must see to it that he uses a quantum of lexical wealth that is not less than what his contemporaries give him. He must not aim at less (unless he deliberately restricts his scope and writes a special kind of society verse, cultivated by poets like Austin Dobson or Andrew Lang). Unless the poet restricts his scope he should use the entire resources of the language— not only the re-
sources that had been there in the past and the resources which may yet become available in current speech, but the resources that had been there in the past and the resources which may yet become available in the future. A poet like Shakespeare takes all the words his contemporaries used but is not satisfied. He goes back to the past in so far the past is not dead. (This is sometimes made into an extreme statement: in our country it was considered till a few years ago that writing poetry meant taking from the classics of antiquity just those words which are now dead and using them so that they won't be understood - what is called the decent obscurity of a dead language). But you can use words which have gone underground, which are there in literature. Whether a theorist like Eliot allows it or not, every poet worth his salt gets his words from that great reservoir in which earlier poets have deposited their writings. What about the future? It sometimes happens that the poet makes a kind of neologism—word-coining or audacious compounds—but it comes to be accepted, not because of him in the next fifty years. He seems to be in advance of his generation and he is able to look into the seeds of time and see which will grow.
The point is that we ought not to tie down any major poet to any particular kind of speech saying this is the right speech. Take for instance, the colloquial element. It is true that the language of poetry must derive its strength from it. But if that is made the sole substance of poetic speech it will be an impoverished speech.

There is a great deal of muddled thinking about the colloquial element. We seem to say and we want others to understand that if only the poet would leave the company of the courtier, the upper classes, the pedants and the professionals and goes and listens to what common people actually speak, then he will find a fund of suggestive and useful words. We are far too sensible to mean it. But what we actually mean is that the poet will not merely get his words from the books but keep his ears open and listen to well-bred people who know at least two or three languages--people who have something to say with their words. And this is exactly what Dryden had the courage to say: that he for his part and probably all other poets learnt true elegance of speech, both for prose and verse, from keeping company with accomplished courtiers like Lord
Dorset (Eugenius). That is the heart of the matter. One doesn't get the words one wants from books. One gets them by listening to people who have learning aerated with wit.

This was where Wordsworth made a mistake. Wordsworth thought in a series of wrong syllogisms: that he could get words for poetry from peasants, that peasants who lived in the company of Nature would think in terms of mountains and so on and whatever they said would be suitable for poetry. We know Coleridge's reply: if you are to make a selection, you may as well start with a whole body of words.

What Wordsworth could have said, though with his class prejudice he wouldn't have said it, is that one way of getting a true mean between pedantry and vulgarism is to keep good company.

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To get back to the lessons of history: the poet should be satisfied with nothing less than the entire resources of the language. What is language for us is diction (not in the Davie sense) for the poet. What is a kind of potential for us is kinetized for him.

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Another thing that has emerged and has come to be recognized is that there is no racialism in words. Till about fifty years ago, this subject could not be argued in cold blood (as it can't be argued in cold blood in our part of the country today). It was thought that poets did well if they used Anglo-Saxon words; poets did wrong if they plucked words out of a foreign language. Poor Milton was regarded a sinner and Tennyson was given high marks. But it becomes manifestly absurd to limit the province of the poet. For the purpose of the poet it does not matter whether the word is of local origin or foreign origin. It is open to a poet to take words from anywhere he likes. Eliot, for instance, uses a polyglot vocabulary and at any time in his poems we may find a French word without italics, a Sanskrit word, a Chinese word. So it was in a greater degree in the work of Ezra Pound.

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The third general principle that has emerged is this: the language of poetry is becoming more and more like the language of good, animated dramatic conversation. It is the general tendency in respect of words as well as grammar and this applies also to verse-rhythm.
Poets are now trying to get nearer to the intonation and the rhythm of good, refined, enjoyable dramatic speech. But this doesn't mean that the texture of speech is steadily becoming drab, uninviting. If that were so, there would no longer be poetry. This is done by increasing the ratio of figurative to non-figurative words.

If one goes back to the Neo-Classical style at its best—say Dryden, Johnson—and also Wordsworth at his best—say his lyrical poems—one finds that there is a kind of austerity. The poet denies himself the power of using colourful words. Then, after practising this austerity he suddenly rises to a peak point of imagery and just because it comes without rousing an expectation it causes an effect.

Compared to that earlier purity of diction we find that the ratio of metaphorical words is much larger now. It is as if poets are now finding it difficult to speak without metaphor.

But when we examine these metaphors and their use—unless we are dealing with a careful artist like Eliot—we find there an army of mercenaries: they attend parade on pay, but when they are ordered to the
front they don't turn up. A number of apparent metaphors in modern poetry are metaphors in spite of themselves, because the English language has been evolving in a direction not quite to its own advantage. It has gone on accumulating dead metaphors until we can't write or speak a passage of hundred words upon the subject of sugar without perpetrating at least fifty metaphors. But the ratio of genetic metaphors compared to the ratio of functional metaphors is very low. Just as we eat more drugs than food we use more metaphors than ordinary words. The percentage of figurative words in modern poetry is much greater than even in ornate poetry. This is a worse kind of poetic diction than the old poetic diction. What is poetic diction? It makes use of metaphor. We live and thrive on metaphors.

And so the modern poet finds it necessary to decontaminate the language, to make it serve new functions, which is very difficult, possible only for the masters. On the one hand we use metaphors. On the other we get less benefit from them.

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Once upon a time the unit of poetic charge was
the word, the phrase or the image made up of phrases. In the last fifty or sixty years, as Dr I.A. Richards noted in his Philosophy of Rhetoric the unit has come to be not the word, but the sentence, very often the paragraph, very often the whole composition. The word is not even the building brick. It has little existence as the protons. Conceptually it is there. But it becomes charged into a unit only when it gets into a composition. Words get their full meaning from other words in the sentence and through the sentence other sentences in the para. No use saying "Choose a good word and begin saying 'Now I have got a good word'". Poets are finding out that words establish interanimation. (The word is from Donne. It means giving life to each other—giving life and receiving life).

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So the subject is incomplete. We can't boast that because we live in the twentieth century we know all about the language of poets.

There has been a kind of fruitful interaction between the language of speech and that of writing. We can't restrict it to a point of time or region. It is not class dialect, not regional dialect.
The poet, growing up in a community gets his knowledge of words through the pores of his body and charges them with meaning with his imagination and experience and gives them back to the people. It is a kind of feed-back. The poet absorbs and gets words from his tribe, purifies them and gives them back. It is in this contact that the real relationship between the poet and the community emerges. The poet is engaged in this endless battle, but he gives the words back with fresh meaning.
INTRODUCTION TO GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS - study has been slowly yet so steadily gaining ground that not only FR Leavis's guess about the poet: 'he 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' is realized to be not an exaggeration but also that it has indeed been a giant yet miraculous leap for Hopkins to the present times in that even our modern poets have been alerted to catch up with a poet who had been far far ahead of his times. Like Shakespeare Hopkins too may be said to have broken usage and the Priscian's head and was the more applauded for that. He took liberties with language and metre which many did not like as his dearest Bridges remarked: "...these blemishes in the poet's style are of such magnitude as to deny him even a hearing from those who love a continuous literary decorum...". A few rough-riding took the cue. The New Statesman thus found fault with his diction:

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 BLEAR-ALL
BLACK and the like are traps for the attention, not aids to visualization.

The TLS reviewer thus disparaged Hopkins's plays 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 stuttering, except that he did not strive against it.

That dyed-in-the-wool grammarian, Yvor Winters, with his IPSE DIXITISM is still a literary fast-bowler to Hopkins.

Again it was Bridges, who found fault with Hopkins for his oddity, obscurity and mannerism, that with a natural poetic insight could 'search out the rare masterly beauties that distinguished his Hopkins's work'; and wished eagerly in the last two lines of the dedicatory sonnet to the volume of his friend's poems published that

amidst our chaffinch folk display
Thy plumage of far wonder and heavenward flight.

Scholars and critics have since 1933 concerned themselves in discovering the below-surface effects
of Hopkins's lines as of all great poetry and in most cases triumphant in looking at, in looking up at the great masterly beauties. Commenting in earnest with Laura Riding and Robert Grave's close reading, quite a good number of scholars busied themselves in contributing variously to the study of Hopkins -- by writing biography, giving a detailed commentary on the specific poems, providing glossaries, preparing concordances and up-to-date bibliographies and so on. This has indeed been rewarding to Hopkins in that gradually his oddities were contended to be aberrations but not blemishes and "it is easier to see this today since some of his most daring innovations have been in part attempted independently by later poets". This is only a beginning. We have an academic journal wholly devoted to the study of his work. There are Hopkins Societies in London and Japan also. 'Hopkins is a religious poet not only as one who after interiorising the teachings of the Catholic church, expressed them powerfully as personal poetic statements but in the deeper sense in which Keble, in his day considered Spenser rather than Milton the sacred poet of England. Also Hopkins is accorded membership of Poet's corner in Westminster Abbey--
the most coveted accolade England can confer upon her poet.

The appearance of 'The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins' edited by Humphry House and completed by Graham Storey, 'The letters of G M Hopkins to Robert Bridges', 'The correspondence of G M Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon', and 'Further letters of G M Hopkins including his correspondence with Coventry Patmore' all edited by CC Abbott; and 'The sermons and devotional writings of G M Hopkins' edited by Christopher Delvin has been of utmost help resulting in a better explanation and appreciation of the poet's work. Among the scholarly output WAM Peters's "G M Hopkins" subtitled 'a critical essay towards the understanding of his poetry' is to be mentioned first. Fr Peters, making full use of many passages in Hopkins's letters, journals and note-books, besides discerning how in the poet's imagination there remains a line of demarcation between the poet-activity and the object-activity (as if of a human being) -- which characteristically contradistinguishes him from other poets in their reaction to objects; analyses the canons of his poetry fused by the notion of his 'inscape' and discusses his poetic
diction and syntax. Also he emphasizes the poet's dictum that 'the poetical language of an age should be the current language heightened'. "The Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins" by James Milroy is another penetrating study of the language of Hopkins. The remark that his (Hopkins's) innovations' accentuate and develop bents it (the spirit of the language) exhibits in living use where FR Leavis is inexplicit about living use is Milroy's starting point. He finds Fr Peters's account of 'heightening' unsatisfactory because he (Peters) assumes that the (underlying) current language is a logical language consisting of well-framed and carefully constructed sentences. "When Hopkins speaks of current language", Milroy maintains, "he means the spoken language as opposed to literary one..." and continues "the essential spoken language is not the educated language of university graduates and the middle classes of large urban centres; it is at its most perfect in the mouths of country people and since it is ephemeral and not committed to paper, its interesting features must be jotted down in the diaries just as the inscapes of nature are".6 Amongst other things Milroy calls attention to the very great strides
the language scholarship was making during Hopkins's life-time—a fact very slightingly referred to by Hopkins's critics as 'dry bones' and 'brain-starved plodding' of Anglo-Saxon scholars—with such luminaries as Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), Jacob Ludwig Carl Grimm (1785–1863) in Germany and William Barnes (1801–86), Friedrich Max Muller (1823–1900), Richard Chenevix Trench (1807–86), W W Skeat (1835–1912) and others at its head; which had as much direct bearing on Hopkins's attitude to language as Ruskin's principles of color-gradation and chiaroscuro on the poet's chromatic and diatonic beauties respectively. This shall be returned to shortly briefly.

HOPKINS THE POET OF 'INSCAPE'

'Inscape' and 'Instress' are Hopkins's own coinages. "All the world" he writes in an entry "is full of inscape". Applying this term in referring to varieties of natural beauty—clouds scudding along the sky; hills, the harvest landscape, glaciers and the windhover, he reminds us "unless you refresh the mind from time to time you cannot always remember or believe how deep the inscape in things is...". Beauty thus perceived is recondite as in a mystic's experience.
Critics differ in elucidating 'inscape'— that it is the 'inner form' of a thing, it 'holds fast' in being... inscape upholds unity of being in fixed position and fixed shape';\textsuperscript{10} while Prof. Gardner, finding that it is more than any sensory impression contends: "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".\textsuperscript{11} Again it is Fr Peters who gives a satisfactory definition of inscape that "it is the unified complex of those sensible qualities of the object of perception that strike 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".\textsuperscript{12} Shall we say it is the uniqueness as perceived by God who has chosen to become that.

This aspect of inscape viz. "All the world is full of inscape" is about the world of nature as perceived by the mind. Again explaining that he meant design or pattern by the word 'inscape', he adds in a letter to Bridges that 'design, pattern or what I am in the habit of calling 'inscape' is what I above all aim at in poetry'.\textsuperscript{13} This is clearly about his language—
his attitude to, the experiments he made and the patterns he created in language. The recent experiment conducted under the auspices of a psychiatric research group to explain 'inscape' is worth recalling here. A man capable of seeing into his own states of mind, who took 100 milligrams of LSD to see if it would transport him into as mystical a world as that of Hopkins to inscape the world around recorded:

It seemed instead that my senses had been given a kaleidoscopic character . . . which made the world entrancingly complicated as if I were involved in a multidimensional arabesque. Colours became so vivid that flowers, leaves and fabrics seemed to be illuminated from inside. The random patterns of blades in a lawn seemed to be exquisitely organised without, however, any distortion of vision . . . what are ordinarily dismissed as irrelevant details of speech behaviour and form seemed to be in some indefinable way to be highly significant. Listening to music with closed eyes, I beheld the most fascinating patterns of dancing jewellery, mosaic, tracery and abstract images . . . Ordinary remarks seemed to reverberate with DOUBLE and QUADRUPLE (my capitals) meanings. 14

For inscapes in nature Hopkins had recourse either to a high strung up mood of a visionary or
mystic or a conscious artist's method of picturesque description. It was enough if any of these ways brought home to him the message of, as Emerson puts it, "nature that keeps much on her table and more in her closet", and the 'MORE' more bore witness concerning God who made it. "I don't think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the blue-bell. I know the beauty of our Lord by it" is one of the journal entries.

It was different with his inscapes in language. We find in his Journal the descriptions of cloudscapes, landscapes, sunset, sunrise written in rather a rough-hewed out language. After a lapse of time we find the same passages moulded into poems, now in the rich finery woven by the conscious artist. That this was so with his Muse we learn from his sonnet to Bridges:

'Nine months she then, nay years, nine years she long/within her wears, bears, cares and combs the same.'

(Poems 76)

The transition into poetry requires cogitation, a wrestling with words. As Donald Mc Chesney notes 'their wrestling is raised to the nth pitch of intensity in his poetry where he is trying to inscape
his sound-patterns as well as his logical meaning.  

To analyse the spectra of meaning, one with his words is to study Hopkins-spectroscopy. Words are rays of light in his possession. His trying to find out word-inscapes or patterns of speech-sound which can be contemplated for their own sakes, to use a familiar analogy, is to see the ray of light transformed into an image of a meadow-down-rainbow, at the same time, not losing visualization of another characteristic--Raman effect.

Let us see such an association of meanings of the simple word 'keen' in the last line of stanza 25 of the Wreck of the Deutschland thus:

The keener to come at the comfort for feeling the combating keen?

paraphrasable as: was the tall nun (who cried Christ, Christ, come quickly' amidst shipwreck) keener to reach Christ so that she could feel the fighting and hence dreadful death. Old English c'ene means fierce. Wright gives for 'keen' 'sharp, severe' of weather in which case, we find an adjective used as a noun, as is very common in Hopkins. But usually dictionaries give 'lamentation over the dead'. The Irish, and the
Northern sense also affirms this.

Note the sound-effect of

Ten or twelve, only ten or twelve
Strokes of havoc unselve/(ing) (Poems 43)

'... aspens dear' and make the poet ruefully
observe how Time's fell hand had defaced his favourite
haunts of which he used to have his heart's fill - the
poplars of the village Binsey for example. The axe,
set to the aspens, he imagines, echoes in his ears.
The strokes could be eight or nine. But the poet
prefers 'ten' and 'twelve', the monosyllabic explo-
sives most effectively suggesting, in the poet's
masterful sprung rhythm, the strokes of the axe hacking
the trees. 'Ten' dins into our ears the tragedy of
dint and rent the hand unteachably after evil rendered
and the purposeful 'twelve' ominously rhymes with
'delve' and 'unselve'. 'Eleven' is thought unfit
as the eleventh stroke also, following probably the
direction of that of the tenth will not strike as hard
as the twelfth when, we naturally suppose, the axe
changes direction; thus powerfully pointing out the
poignant drama.
In the following stanza

The Mawddach, how she trips! though throttled
If flood tide teeming thrills her full
And mazy sands all water-wattled
Waylay her at ebb, past Penmael Pool

(Poems 30, St. 6)

is described the Mawddach estuary, that, always with
strong tides, threw a challenge to the oarsmen. Her
sandy net works waylaying her high flow are water-
wattled. 'Wattle' as a dialectal verb means to inter-
lace (boughs, twigs etc.) so as to form an obstruction.
It may also mean any of various Australian acacia
yielding such twigs adrift and obstructing flow here
and there at the sandy ridges. Or commonly we may take
the sands so tinged as the wattle or the coloured fleshy
excrescence on any part of the head of a bird. Yet
another dialectal meaning going friendly with the
context is simply a hurdle.

Diction is not just vocabulary but the effectiveness of vocabulary in a particular context. 'In general
terms' says Winifred Nowottny in his "The language poets use" diction is what the word or phrase brings with it
that is constant enough to make it a contributor as well as a recipient of the poetic power of the structure
it enters'. Thus in true and creative poetic writing
words and phrases distinguish themselves from those in
ordinary use. Some times a synonym alone heightens
style, felicitous phrases by the innovative touch of a
poet like Hopkins confer honour on their inventors.

Apart from the real snorters, every page of
Hopkins may be cited for such function. "... How
he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing/In his ecstasy"
is a clause in 'The Windhover' the best poem the poet
ever wrote (Poems 36), wherein the poet responds with a
sensuous delight to a windhover hovering over one spot
steady in the face of the wind. Dr.I.A. Richards alludes,
'rung upon the rein' to a usage of the horseman and
taking the bird to be the horseman it would mean that
the bird makes the wind as it wants to much like a horse-
trainer, who controls the horse by the reins. Thereby
even the invisible wind is made visible. It is suggested
by R.V.Schoder that 'rung' is the correct hawking term
for describing a spiral climb.16

Dennis Ward, taking Shakesperian echo in the
phrase 'giving rein' (The Winter's Tale, 111, 3.51)
further refines and feels that it conveys the idea of
controlled freedom or of governed impulse. In a reli-
gious poem like this dedicated 'To Christ our Lord', Hopkins would possibly have meant that man's actions are influenced by God; man, in a sense, is also on a 'running rein', though his free will may or may not acknowledge God's supremacy.  

Unlike, to the recent critic, Devasahayam, 'rein of a wimpling wing' is not an oppositive genitive at all; 'rein' indicates figurative and accepted dictionary sense of controlling or guiding power'. To him then 'dapple-dawn-drawn falcon' means that the falcon, a charioteer like the ancient Sun-God, holds the rein of seried sunbeams and is drawn forward in the dawn-cheriot.  

'Beam' is another common noun set in context becomes imaginative and richly evocative. In compounds 'Whitebeam', (32), 'hornbeam' (159), its Old English meaning 'tree' is preserved. But in close association with 'beacon' as in

Across my foundering deck shone
A beacon, an eternal beam (Poems 72)
it calls up the reference Hopkins made to the Cross as: 'they enclose the head of the cross in a triangle ... it looks like a beacon at sea', thus speaking of churches
in the Rhone Valley.

Amongst other meanings of the word we find in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary Illustrated an obsolete meaning" 2. the rood tree or Cross (cf. Acts v. 30) - 1720". Also in Old English the words 'beacon' (=sign) and 'beam' (=tree) are frequently used of the Cross.

And beam blind as in

Are you beam-blind, yet to a fault

In a neighbour deft-handed? (Poems 46)

clearly calls up "... but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye". (St. Matthew, VII, 3).

'Sloggering' in

The rash smart sloggering brine

Blinds her ....... (Poems 26, St.19) is of kaleidoscopic interest. Norman H.Mackenzie (Hopkins, 119) says it is the colloquial term for the action of a prize-fighter raising blows on his opponent: behind it lies the dialect 'slog' = to strike with great force. Milroy finds no justification for slogger as a verb meaning 'to slog' though etymological dictionaries (Onions) recognize 'slog' = to strike with great force. He cites Wrights' EDD recognizing a Northern dialect verb slogger : to hang loosely and untidily - of clothes
and *sloggering* (adj): loosely fitting, solvenly; untidily, loosely-built. Many other dialect words of related sound and meaning: *slocher, slidder, slobber, slugger, slodder, slubber* are quoted for comparison with such standard words as *slude, slush, slitter* and the colloquial *slurp*. Also in this context of the waves constantly dashing against and withdrawing from the slip, thus making a grinding noise, it is believed that Hopkins, to whom - ER system is in effect a variant of the - LE system involving phonetic dissimilation, with good reason meant the word to be iterative or frequentative.

*Rash* in the same context, notes Mackenzie as an adjective in nineteenth century dialect use combined notions of violence, clumsiness and impetuosity and *smart* yokes together the normal English value it has in a 'smart blow' i.e., 'hard enough to cause pain', with its provincial application to weather, 'severe, sharp'. We see thus the common word 'sloggering' ringing or echoing its whole being in association with *rash* and *smart* and becoming richer than in ordinary speech.
Hopkins wove so much of dialectal vocabulary into the detailed descriptions in his Journal and the things rather modified, we find in his poetry, that without reference to a good dialectal dictionary, the reader, a beginner especially loses his cool easily. Stanza 26 of "Wreck of the Deutschland" is often quoted for the poet's deliberate dialectal drawl and droves of double dyed adjectives.

For how to the heart's cheering
The down-dugged ground-hugged grey
Hovers off, the jay-blue heavens appearing
Of pied and peeled May!

Here pied (=particoloured, variegated) is all right. What is peeled May? Is it that during May buds open and lose their outward coverings? Hence peeled May? Dr. Gardner thinks of a change of spelling 'pealed' suggesting thereby that the freshness of May is closely associated with the ringing of happy bells. Wright recognizes 'peel' a dialect form of 'pool' varying with 'pill' (a pool, creek, running stream). Shorter OED recognizes OE Pyll, a variant of pull, pul, pool (a local name on both sides of the Bristol channel, in Cornwall etc., for a tidal creek on the Coast, or a pool in a creek etc.). So 'pied and
peeled May' is a month of particoloured clouds and showers which cause small pools of water in fields, roadways and so on. In close association with 'pool' (Poems 72), 'rutpeel' is pool left by the rain in ruts caused by cartwheels on unpaved roadways. Bridges suggested that 'rutpeel' is a compound word and the 4th edition inscribes it into one word. Dr Gardner suggests 'peel' = cakes of mud from wheels. What about 'down-dugges'? Until Prof. Mackenzie showed a probable source in Muller's Lectures II, 353-4 where the rain clouds are spoken of as cows with heavy udders and referred to a letter from Dixon in which he had described 'white precipitate clouds... like a herd/Of deep-udder ed cows', we could not be clear about it. Hopkins also remarked that the image was of Aryan origin. Even then this appears a metaphysical conceit in exelcis.

Citing a number of examples in the Journal Prof. MacKenzie discusses the dialectal influences of words 'lodge', 'shock'. 'Lodged' may simply mean 'stuck fast'. Hopkins uses 'shocks' for 'stooks' as in 'shock of wetheads' in prose and

... within doors

House the shocks .... (Poems 32)
on which Mackenzie comments that 'shock of wet heads' is influenced by the Devonshire word for a stook of corn, (Hopkins 115). The OED also recognizes shock = a thick mass (of hair).

In another remarkable phrase 'a pash of soap-sud-coloured gummy bim-beams (JP 233)' Mackenzie suggests that 'pash' is the dialectal word for a medley, or collection of crushed or broken fragments, a pulpy mass, a sudden rush of water, a puddle and sees 'bim-beams' to be a rationalizing of the Somerset bimboms originally referring to Church bells, but applied to anything dangling down such as tassels, drops of rain hanging from a rail or icicles. Here, to Milroy, the origin and use of dialectal words in Hopkins count next to the sound, colour, texture and their association in phonetic pattern with other words in the language (splash, pom-pom). Even when we cannot for certain trace a dialectal origin for words, the pulse of their meaning in the context is easily felt.

COMPOUNDS

Shakespeare's "Some carry-tale,' some 'please-man' (Loves Labours Lost, V. 2.463) are some who carry tales, and some who please men. But a licence as
"War is his vengeance, so that here men are punished for before-breach of the king's laws in now-the-king's quarrel" (Henry V, iv. 1.179) paraphrased as 'war is but God's instrument, so that in war men are punished for their previous violation of the King's laws just as they are fighting at present in the cause of the king; is intended for so much of syntactic compression. Keats has compounds almost on every alternate page of his: over-darken'd, rain-scented, well-wooing, sheep-hooks, eye-earnestly (Endymion BK 1) rotten-timbered, gold-tinted (Endymion BK 2) to quote a few. Past-masters of the past are there for compound making. But Hopkins, the poet of inscape transforms them until they are sometimes unlike themselves as he wrote in his letter to Bridges, 25 Sept. 1888 that 'the effect of studying masterpieces is to make me admire and do otherwise," and hence he is recognized to be richer and more innovative than others in this respect.

Before going to Hopkins's Compounds in particular, let us remind ourselves of the distinction between the surface structure and the deep structure. On the surface garden-flower, house-top, leg-harmonium, power-press, shop-keeper, face-powder and gun-powder are all of noun and noun form. Syntactically they are variously related:
garden-flower is a flower grown in a garden. The relationship, must be, by some equal sign, said for certain. Housetop at the syntactic level speaks of possession - the house has a top. Leg-harmonium is just the opposite. This time the latter item, harmonium has legs. Power-press is yet different - a press worked by (electric) power, and the shop-keeper is one who keeps (runs) a shop. Face-powder is powder for the face and gunpowder is for use IN a gun. There is no structural ambiguity. On the same analogy how is a lady-killer to be interpreted? Is it a man or an animal who kills ladies? Or the lady who kills animals or lovers? As we commonly understand, it means a man who fancies himself irresistible to women and thus simply kills them in separation. Is a witch-doctor a witch who is a doctor or a doctor who is a witch. Not both. It is a doctor who exorcizes evil spirits like the witches. We see thus surface-structure speaking of potential structural ambiguities. An original poet like Hopkins exploits this variously in his compounds.

Cloud-puffball (72) may be interpreted as either clouds that are puffballs or the puffballs that the clouds are - thus inscaping the fleecy clouds. Heaven-
roysterers (72) though simple as a noun+noun compound is richly suggestive by sound and sense. Apart from the purposeful roysterer (instead of 'royster' which also means the same thing) with an additional -r-to mark a reveller, 'heaven' has Shakespearian rings: heaven-bred (T.G. of Verona, 111.2.72) 'heaven-kissing' (HAMLET, 111.4.59) and thus the clouds are at the same time heaven-bred and heaven-kissing roysterers. Wind-puff bonnet (56) is also of this class. Flint-flake (28, St.13) with its Shakespearian echo flint-heart (Twelfth Night 1, V, 305) seemingly an adj + noun compound is more complex as the word 'flint' is a noun as well. Thus it may be a compound of the form 'flint and flake' or a copulative; flake is flint. Understood as a subordinating construction with flint as an attribute of flake it connotes that the flake has the property of being flint (y). Discussing the structural ambiguity or uncertainty inherent in this type of construction, whether it is a Hopkinsian coinage or not says Milroy that "it is not a defect of his art, but a characteristic of current English." Fire-folk (32) Meal-drift (38) snow-pinions (45), silk-ash (49), silk-beech, water-world (159) come under this class.
On the analogy of (verb + object) and biadjectival compounds occasional in Shakespeare: Carry-tale, please-man, mumble-news (Loves Labours Lost, V. 2. 463-4); find-faults (Henry V, v.2.398); and fertile-fresh (Merry wives of Windsor V, 5.72); stubborn-hard (King John, iv. 1.67); strange-suspicious (Henry viii, iii. 1.45) etc. we have fall-gold mercies (28, St.23); wring-world right foot (64); blear-all black, spend-savour salt (46) of the former category and the latter overed and overed: Crimson-white, rosy-pale (2), long-superfluous (12), lovely-dumb (22), rare-dear (28, St. 35), Wet-fresh (62), rash-fresh (35), blue-bleak (36), airy-grey (49), and so on.

(Noun+noun) compounds are almost on every page of Hopkins - they need no special mention. But some (adjective + participle) deserve special consideration. Milroy discusses these cases while treating Hopkins's Compound-making conventions. He considers them 'extensions of linguistic patterns inherent in English. Lushkept (28, St.8) is one such remarkable instance. Phonetically and grammatically it looks like its neighbour plushcapped but in its deep syntax, Milroy observes "is accompanied by a variation, for, where as 'plush-
capped' sloe is simply a sloe that has a plush cap and copulatively that the cap is plush, \textit{lush-kept} (by the feature of 'kept' being truly a verb) differs as it takes an object and an object-compliment as in: 'they keep it LUSH.' Perhaps God keeps it lush.

For me 'wind-wandering weed-winding' bank (Poems 43), which, though different in form yet defies classification according to syntactic types by nice ambiguity is of interest for the present. There seems to be no difficulty in rewriting as 'wind-wandering' and 'weed-winding' as locative 'where wind wanders' and 'where weeds wind = \{1. not only extend in a sinuous course flourishing but also 2. take a bent or twisted form, growing\}. Now let us refresh ourselves with Hopkins's oft-remarked carelessness in hyphenating. He can have hyphened all the four items, indeed, but will not do at times. One is not punctilious with a kaleidoscope. But we are prim and proper and read it 'wind-wandering - Weed-winding' as on-the-wing multiplication as dappale-dawn-drawn-and gather at once that the wind wanders and winds weeds just as somebody winds= (wields) an instrument (in dialectal use). And like a beetle her little horn,
the wind may wind his horn namely the weeds to produce a rustling sound. Hopkins liked a little archaism. Thus it may mean the wind putting the weeds into twisted or curved form blowing over. Or still, shorter OED gives "wind ... 17 b. to exalt or screw up to a certain pitch." 'Pitch' so loved by Hopkins makes me think, he should be meaning the wind giving the weeds their pitch (state of being AND doing). Figuratively the bank itself, wanders as the wind wanders, and winds along with weeds, whose shooting in wheels is of special significance to the poet who also liked to enjoy the barbarous beauty in the stubby fields. His vowelling-on to add to all this! We may call this Hopkins's language-game which gives his language 'thaw and sinew.'

As Prof. Gardner observes the compound of three elements, sporadically as it appeared from Herbert to C.G. Rossetti, has not only been revived but extended to four or five elements to fit his flashing, asyndetic style which well accommodates, as Charles Williams observes "a passionate emotion which seems to try to utter all its words in one." They are more complex, and as miniature poems tell whole stories.

We know stanza 7 of the 'Wreck of the Deutschland'
is a very crisp summary of Christ's life; progressing from the manger, to His mother's knee and thence to the passion. But what a peculiar fusion of Chiasmus with Hopkins's alliterative pattern we have in line 3 there:

"Warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey." Rewritten it is: Grey grave of a warm-laid womb-life. Still the syntax is not clear. But it is evident that Hopkins believes that Christ's incarnation (womb-life) implies the necessity of death (grave). Both life and death are part of incarnation. But the poet who chose FRIGHTFUL SWEAT (Anglo-Saxon Sweat=blood) to symbolize Christ's gift (st.4), I suppose in his 'warm-laid' and 'womb-life' must have been cryptaesthetic. 

"The heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame

(Poems 28, St.34)

may be explained as the phrase: Miracle which is in Mary and which is of flame; being in turn pre-modified by three compounds. The whole thing then reads: the Miracle is flung from (or by) heaven, fleshed in the form of a heart and furled in a maiden.

Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire,
Our thoughts' chivalry's throng's Lord

(Poems 28, St.35)
supplied with the secondary (redundant according to Hopkins) words will be: God is the fire of Charity in the hearts of men and the lord of our noblest aims and thoughts.

'Wimpled-water-dimpled' and 'not-by-morning-matched' face is an interesting case. Discussing Hopkins's premodifying constructions, Milroy writes the former first as 'a face which is dimpled by wimpled water' and further as two sentences: 'Water dimples the face' and 'X wimples water' thus showing, in some other context, the difficulty with the premodifying adjectives in Hopkins is more than that of the post-modifying ones.

But whether it is premodification or post-modification, I would like to add here that Hopkins's compounds, with their much condensation and more poetical charge are very Sanskrit for which there may be but few parallels. One or two examples will suffice:

'wimpled-water-dimpled' and 'not-by-morning-matched' face will be: 

\[ \text{kapolormikanushopamanam} \] (Resolution: kapolormika = dimpled, anushopama = not by morning matched, ananam = face) dappled-with-damson

west is: 

\[ \text{sandra-dhumrachitra paschima} \] (Resolution: Sandradhumra = damson, chitra = dappled, paschima = the West).
Some of the compounds may appear to be somewhat unnatural, going against what may be called the genius of the language. We find many such compounds in, for example Carlyle. But the point to be noted in Hopkins is that even while doing violence to language, he, to use the words of Leavis "does a pleasing violence to language." The context is created where the whole thing becomes natural.

Indeed, the whole compass of dialectal expressions in wholesome participation with near synonyms (especially in his poetry), bold-new compounds, casual styles and disjointed syntax (which is not the topic of this dissertation) go to convince us of Bridges who recalled 'No one wrote words with more critical deliberation than G. Hopkins'. He went to

Rural scene, a rural scene
Sweet especial rural scene (Poems 43)
which still had that 'cheer and charm of earth's past prime' in spite of our 'sordid turbid time'; and for inscapes of nature he kissed his hand to the Hand of God.
As the most innovating poet, he sought the basis of his poetic diction also therein. Even his mature poetry derives its virile force from the language of ordinary speech as it is spoken around in all its variety, com-
plexity and splendour. 

And canvas and compass, the whorl and the wheel
Idle for ever to waft her or wind her with, these
she endured (Poem 28, 56, 14)

is like : brothers, sisters and friends/- unable to console
her, these she endured' in common speech.

Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair not feast
on thee (Poems 64) is like
"No, no, no, I'll not believe you." Milroy recognizes
in Hopkins's verbless

... up above, what wind-walks, what lovely
behaviour,
Of silk-sack clouds! .... (Poems 38)
a conversational 'what a fine day!' and in Felix Randal
the farrier

O is he dead then?
my duty all ended (Poems 53)

the sympathetic tone of the priest 'Felix Randal did
you say? So he is dead then!

Rhetorical questions

Ah, touched in your bower of bone,
Are you! turned for an exquisite smart,
Have you! ... . (Poems 28, St.18)

posed to the poet's heart by himself amidst mixed
feelings of joy and sympathy are the everyday 'Enjoying
your tea, are you?

The whole sentence becomes a unit and one recalls
Dr.I.A.Richards speaking to us of sentences as units while
discussing poetic diction. It is not anything new for an Indian because sentence as unit or utterance as unit is one of our most ancient texts viz. VAKYA PADIYA.

If not these nuances and their poetic charge at once, it strikes the reader that this is new. A careful reader is alerted that this is not 'continuous literary decorum.' Better still, that Hopkins, anxious to bring about effects all original in his poetry, broke away from 'continuous literary decorum,' well-beaten tracks. They would ill fit his individually distinctive 'inscapes' as the gewgaw clothes of a child a fully grown up man, "A perfect poetic style should be 'of its age', "he made clear his views in that most-oft quoted letter to Bridges (LB, 89) and should be "the current language heightened." That he also had disregard for Victorian poetic diction and wanted to break fresh ground with the current language of his notion and heightening thereof, is clearer still from the same letter as he continues:

... I cut myself off from the use of ERE, O'ER, WELLNIGH, WHAT TIME, SAY NOT (for DO NOT SAY), because, though dignified, they neither belong to nor ever cd. arise from or be the elevation of, ordinary modern speech. For it seems to me that the poetical language of an age
should be the current language heightened, to any degree heightened and unlike itself but not (I mean normally: passing freaks and graces are another thing) an obsolete one. This is Shakespeare's and Milton's practice and the want of it will be fatal to Tennyson's Idylls and plays, to Swinburne and perhaps to Morris.

Such a rigid norm was later revised in the 1879 letter while speaking of archaism that

some little flavours, but much spoils and always for the same reason - it destroys earnest: we don't speak that way; therefore if a man speaks that way he is not serious, he is at something else than the seeming matter in hand, non hoc agit, aliud agit.

(LB, 218)

From these we can make out the principle of his poetic diction: that he rejected the nineteenth century diction in which normally whenas, perchance, wherewithal, doth, and the like bob up. Nay, even the subject matter—medieval legend or romance or classical story and the syllable-timed metres were also discarded.

In his rejection of 'Standard diction' he was to some extent like Wordsworth. But just as he went further than Wordsworth in his attitude to nature, he went much farther than him in poetic diction. "The poetic diction scarcely differed or ought to differ from that of prose..."
the most important parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written" wrote Wordsworth in the Preface to his Lyrical Ballads. But for Hopkins the model for poetic diction was not prose but speech on which his current language has the closest bearing. Hopkins is not explicit about current language but from his own writings we can infer that it was much more meaningful than what is implied in educated speech. The same argument speaks for his sprung rhythm—using the rhythm of speech as its base as against the age old Spenserian tradition monotonously ordering alternating stress of iambics. Compare the freedom of

Our hearts, charity's hearth's fire,
Our thoughts chivalry's throng's Lord

(Poems 28, St. 35)

While words of learned length and thund'ring sound.

Sprung rhythm and the disjointed syntax, sprung syntax as Dr. Gardner remarks, are the major feature of the 'Wreck of the Deutschland.' That is why the poet insisted on his poetry to be heard. In fact his poetry is to be read with the ear.

That independent writer Donald Davie too, in his
'Purity of diction in English Verse' says thus on Hopkins's not selecting anything from the stock-in-trade of poetic diction that 'if diction is a selection from language of men, then Hopkins may be said to use a poetic diction that hogshead or any other word one may call to mind was never used by him in any of his poems and that he therefore used a selection of language which excluded hogshead or whatever word it is. But even poor hogshead has its place in Shakespeare: in its usual sense in some places Tempest IV, 1.252; The Winters Tale III, 3.95; and referring allusively to a person as in 1 Henry IV, 11, 4.5. Was it that old poets used it that Hopkins avoided it? No, Shakespeare is his model for so many things. Or that 'hogshead' never seemed to thrust into Hopkins's spectroscopy? Davie has the answer pat - "Hopkins could have found a place for every word in the language if only he could have written enough poems."
God had his infant races as well as his intelligent ones, like Greece and Rome.

That is about Hopkins's attitude to language. As has been mentioned earlier let me give briefly an account of the revolution in linguistic interests that took place in the middle years of the nineteenth century and the fruitful synchronization of Hopkins's life-time with a period of intense research in English dialect besides a keen interest in folk-lore and the customs of country people. With its insistence on 'correctness' in prose and ordinary speech, standardizing and reverence for grammar the eighteenth century formed a striking contrast to the nineteenth century with its shift of emphasis to non-standard and non-literary forms of languages. The view that 'writing is superior to speech' was fast losing ground. Jacob Grimm in preface to his 'Deutsch Grammatik' seemed to derestrict grammar rules and wrote "each individuality even in the world of languages should be respected as sacred; it is desirable that even the smallest and the most despised dialect should be left only to itself and to its own nature and no wise subjected to violence, because it is sure to have some secret advantages over the greatest and most highly valued language."
Hopkins's respect for individuality of things and words is similar to this.

The study of Sanskrit language late in the eighteenth century was such that it soon occupied the status of Greek and Latin as classical languages. It became clear and was held by scholars that language is an ever expanding thing like a country's progress and can never be fixed in any framework. Linguistics came to be studied as a historical discipline. The monumental Oxford English Dictionary (1888-1924) was prepared on historical principles. A great enthusiasm for the study of speech as it existed in the mouths of country people was a marked characteristic of the period. Scholars also devoted their energy to study the non-standard dialects in France, Germany and England.

Rev. William Barnes wrote 3 volumes of dialect, poetry and published his *Tiw* or *A View of the Roots and Stems of the English as a Teutonic Tongue* in 1862. Though we are not sure whether Hopkins read *Tiw* he admires Barnes's poetry and his Anglo-Saxon purism, and refers to him as 'The Rev. Wm. Barnes in a letter to Bridges, 26 November 1882.

Barnes's speech-craft has been very influential in the growth of philology and condemnation of Latinism and
foreign borrowing. In the preface to a work published in 1863 when Hopkins entered Balliol, Barnes wrote:

In searching the word stores of the provincial speech forms of English we cannot but behold what a wealth of stems we have overlooked at home, while we have drawn needful supplies of words, from other tongues; and how deficient is even English itself without the synonyms which our land-folk are ready to give it.22

In the 'Foreword' to his Speech-Craft itself, he speaks of the wealth of English words that the Dialectal Society had begun to bring to light:

Words of meanings which dictionaries of book-English should, but cannot give, and words which should be taken in hundreds (by careful choice) into our Queen's English. If a man would walk with me through our village, I could show him many things of which we want to speak everyday, and for which we have words of which Johnson knew nothing.23

Most, significantly enough, 'The English Dialect Society' was founded in 1873 with W.W. Skeat, the renowned etymologist as the secretary. Joseph Wright's English Dialect Dictionary was in progress during Hopkins's lifetime and Hopkins's contribution to it was gratefully acknowledged "Hopkins, The Rev. G.M."
So much of dialectal English is woven into Hopkins's Journal and other writings that first Mackenzie and then Milroy point out that Prof. Gardner and Fr. Peters mistakenly classified it under achaism.\textsuperscript{24}

Clearly under the influence of such an atmosphere, Hopkins broadened his notion of Current English (or ordinary modern language) to embrace forms of casual speech (as against formal English), country speech, and the vocabulary of various rural crafts and trades. No doubt Hopkins heightens the dialect words also but there is no difficulty in tracing the dialectal word to its root.

Richard Chenevix Trench's 'On the study of Words' is a rare store-house of dialectal and folk-lore words that the names of flowers, beasts, birds and fishes form a sort of poetry in the language of ordinary man. The description of the windhover justifies why Hopkins preferred it to kestrel:

Any one who has watched the Kestrel (sic) hanging poised in the air, before it swoops upon its prey, will acknowledge the felicity of the name 'windhover', or sometimes wind-fanner which it popularly bears.\textsuperscript{25}

Last, but not the least is the influence of Loyola's 'The Spiritual Exercises'. Hopkins entered Manresa House,
the Jesuit Novitiate at Roehampton on 7th September, 1868 and from then onwards his life was fashioned in the discipline of The Spiritual Exercises and Loyola's influence on the poet is treated by Downes in his "G.M. Hopkins: A study of his Ignation Spirit." But a detailed study of Loyola's influence on the poet's poetic diction is yet to come.

The Spiritual Exercises customarily fall into three parts: Composition, analysis and colloquy. A colloquy is just conversation between the exercitant and the Father, the Son, or the Virgin in a friendly tone. In a familiar tone the exercitants could also go in talk with God, sometimes with the blessed Lady, with the Angels, with the Saints of heaven, with their own hearts and with insensible creatures. Thus the spiritual problems came to be discussed in conversational or colloquial, manner. Hopkins too practised colloquy in his daily devotions. It is therefore not surprising to find some of his poems in a conversational or dramatic tone. For example Nondum • (Poems 23) is a colloquy between Hopkins and God when he could not decide between the Anglican and the Catholic faiths. 'The wreck of the Deutschland' offers many instances of dramatic quality. 'The handsome heart' (47), The loss of the Eurydice (41), Thou art indeed just, Lord, ... (74) & etc. are other examples.
Such is the brief survey of the influences. Nay Hopkins was not simply influenced, he was a part and parcel of the movements, revolutions and training.

"..... all were good/To me, God knows, deserving no such thing...."
NOTES.

CHAPTER 1.


9. Ibid., p. 140.


17. Bottrall, op. cit, p. 171.


19. Milroy, op. cit, p. 182.


24. Milroy, op. cit, p. 80.

25. As quoted by Milroy, Milroy, op. cit, p. 82.