

*Beauty –
How Hopkins Pied It*

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I propose to look as closely as possible at Gerard Manley Hopkins' brilliant and famous poem, 'Pied Beauty.' Hopkins was a Jesuit priest; his life and art were centered in a mystic's vision. The mystic sees in all things the immanence of the Divine. In a sense, all things are thus equal; but nonetheless, Hopkins superimposes upon all things an asymmetric cline, which orders them from low to high, from far away from us to near, perhaps as a metaphor for the inner journey of self-purification that each human being needs to make, to come personally to experience their own Divinity within. Let us agree to call this sequence the cline of person, and to say that the cline goes not only from third to first person, but from less first to firster (in a way which I take to be in accord with the spirit, though not the letter, of Peirce's notion of firstness). This is the cline that points us towards Self.

Pied Beauty

1Glory be to God for dappled things –
2For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
3For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
4Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
5Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;
6And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.
7All things counter, original, spare, strange;
8Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
9With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
10He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
11Praise him.

This poem wears its meaning, at least the surface of its meaning, on its sleeve: it is a hymn of praise to the creator, a hymn of thanks for the richness and diversity of the world. This multiplicity is reflected by the diversity of the poem's lexical items – of all of the poem's content words, only two repeat: *beauty* and *things*. However, it is not enough to point to the mere fact of non-repetition, for in addition, some of the words are out of the ordinary, if not downright exotic – words like *pied*, *brinded*, *stipple*, and *trim* may send other readers like me to the dictionary. Furthermore, not even the dictionary will avail when it comes to words that Hopkins has himself joined together, like *couple-colour*, *adazzle*, and *fathers-forth*, this last being what I will argue to be the syntactic and semantic hub of the whole poem. The wordscape, then, of this poem is marked by its uniqueness: little repetition, and the use of out-of-the-way and made-up words.

Let us take up first the most salient (because it is the first word we read) of the rare words: *pied*, a word which *The American Heritage Dictionary* defines as “patchy in color, splotched, piebald.” What might beauty which is patchy in color, splotched, and piebald be? It would be a beauty which arose through juxtaposition. Hopkins tells us that there is glory, beauty, in the joining of dissimilars, in the jostling, the cheek-by-jowling, of the infinitude of differents. There is beauty in the joining of white cloud and blue sky, there is beauty in the contrast of the brinded (“tawny or grayish with streaks or spots of a darker color”) cow, there is piedness in the myriad colors of the rose-moles along the trout's belly.

And it is clear that Hopkins sees this kind of beauty as central, at least among those beauties which are transitory, which are not “past change.” If we are to find our own divinity, what Hopkins would call the Christ within, in our lives, our job is to see the necessity of the piedness of the world. The way in is nothing less than the ability not only to perceive the beauty of this necessity (and vice versa), but also to contribute to it, by making a pied poem.

In short, just as the world presents us with an amiable (apparent) jumble of piednesses, for us to find the beauty of, a poet who wishes to pie a poem must present a multiplicity of structures, rubbing up against each other, vying with each other, contrapuntally, polyphonically, multifacetedly. Let us peer behind the scenes, visit Hopkins in his workshop.

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Punctuation is (almost) always important in a poem; Hopkins has divided this one up into two sentences – one of six lines, and one of five. The six-line one seems to mark a significant division, because of the odd pattern of indentations, which follow a three-line cycle, a cycle, moreover, which is echoed by an ABCABC rhyme scheme for these first six lines.

What more evidence could we need? Case closed – the first six lines mark a significant division. Let us therefore look more closely at the internal structure of this sentence: what is the figure of its syntax?

The first thing that we must take note of is the trope of *modification*: *pie*d beauty, *dapp*led things, *couple*-colour, skies *of couple*-colour, *brind*ed cow. When we modify, we bring into relationship two sets. There are basically two ways in which English lets this happen. In the case of restrictive modification, as when we say “the *indústrious* students,” with more stress on the modifier than on the head noun, we intersect the set of students with the set of industrious beings – as a result, this noun phrase would denote a subset of students – only those students that are industrious. On the other hand, in the case of appositive, or non-restrictive, modification, as when we say “the industrious *stú*dents,” with more stress on the noun than on the adjective, we are saying that all students are industrious. Hopkins will use both of these types of modification, these ways of pieing sets.

For instance, to arrive at the meaning of a noun phrase like *dappled things*, which we might take to represent a restrictive modification, despite the prosodic necessity of putting more stress on *things* than on *dappled*, we must intersect two sets – the set whose members are things, and the set whose members are dappled. The result is a set each of whose members has two properties – thingness and dappledness. And what does “dappled” mean? According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, it means almost what “*pie*d” does: spotted or mottled. Thus if the result of joining *dappled* and *things* is the formation of a set of members characterized by having a coupled property, then what is the result of modifying *beauty* by *pie*d? Are we to see the set of beauties as restricted to the set of those which are also *pie*d? Or is the modification non-restrictive – are all beauties also *pie*d? Despite the fact that the stress, as I hear it, at any rate, would favor this latter interpretation, I wonder if Hopkins does not intend us to keep both of these options open.

But even selecting for the moment the restrictive branch of this dichotomy, there would be a problem in claiming that this first, all-important, noun phrase has a meaning that results from simple set intersection: that we should select from the set of “all beauties,” or possibly “kinds of beauty,” just those (kinds of) beauties which are “patchy in color, splotched, and piebald.” For it is clear that this will not do: whatever beauties may be, they are neither patchy in color nor splotched, nor piebald. They are abstract, not the kind of entities that are characterized by visible properties like those in the definition of *pie*d. What Hopkins has done is to lead us down a semantactic garden path: though *pie*d *beauty* looks like a case of simple modification, we are forced, by our knowledge of the world, to find some more abstract interpretation, something along the lines of “the beauty of *pie*dness.” And is it not interesting that what we have had to do to compute this more complex meaning is to take the basic meaning of *pie*d, to use it as the core of the abstraction of “*pie*dness,” and then to make of this first-level abstraction a new modifier: “of *pie*dness”? Hopkins has led us to see that though the first two modified noun phrases we encounter, while apparently similar in structure (both are of the form [[stem + *ed*] + head noun], where the meanings of the two [stem + *ed*] forms are almost identical), these noun phrases are simultaneously deeply different. And it is anything but insignificant that we proceed here from abstract to concrete (from *beauty* to *thing*), at the same time as we are simultaneously proceeding from a complexly computed modificational structure to a more basic one, and at the same time as we are proceeding from a grammatically singular noun phrase, to a plural one, a metaphor for the move from the One to the Many.

As we read on, we will encounter these two nouns once more, in the reverse order, at the beginning and end of the poem’s second sentence. There, *things* will be modified by “counter, original, spare, strange” – a set of jostled words which we can take to be another sort of rough synonym of *pie*d / *dapp*led, while *beauty* will be modified by *past change*, a brilliant collocation which, as my poet friend Jack DeWitt has called to my attention (personal communication), could be said to be “semantically *pie*d.” It is ambiguous – it can mean either “change is already past, has passed beauty by,” or it can mean “beyond change, changeless.” Hopkins thus leads us to the perception that there exists a kind of beauty which paradoxically both changes and does not.

Before we take up again the matter of modification, let me just note that the journey from the abstract *beauty* to the concrete *things*, in the poem’s first sentence, and the return, from *things* to *beauty*, in the second, provides the fundamental scaffolding upon which Hopkins will erect the cline of person, a cline which will run from the Creator to the littlest and most concrete things in the world, and from these, through the world of nature, through that of artifacts, through the world of human being, back again to the Divine.

Thus the very syntactic act of modification, the joining of sets, can be seen as a metaphor for the act of creation. And Hopkins moves quickly, after setting beauty and things into relation, to produce more complex cases of modification – cases of modifiers within other modifiers. While the first two modifiers are the single words *ped* and *dappled*, the third modifier, *of couple-colour*, contains the first of the poem's five hyphenations – a clearly restrictive limiting of all colors to those that are made up of couplings of other colors. And in this modifier of *skies*, we see for the first time the use of a syntactic subordinator, the workhorse preposition *of*, which functions to subordinate *couple-colour* to *skies*. We are moving inexorably towards the end of the second line, the title and the first line have both ended in trisyllabic noun phrases of the form [[stem + *ed*] + head noun], and we see that Hopkins will let this morphosyntactic refrain sound yet once more: *a brinded cow*.

How masterfully Hopkins lets us see that these first three modifiers of line-final nouns, namely *ped*, *dappled*, and *brinded*, which have so much in common in their lexical semantics that we can take them to be rough synonyms – these three one-word modifiers are of necessity set into relationship with the first modifying phrase: *of couple-colour*. And in this juxtaposition, we are shown that its meaning can be blended in, as a fourth rough synonym. And in the progression from the singular beauty to the plural things (One to Many) to the plural skies, returning to the singular particularity of a brinded cow (the poem's first and only indefinite singular count noun), we complete the circle from the Many to the One. The move from the abstract beauty to the concrete things is paralleled by the move from the celestial skies to the terrestrial cow – as Above, so Below.

And let us note the second subordinator: *as*. This word loosely links the phrases *skies of couple-colour* and *a brinded cow*; if Hopkins had said “and” here, the connection would have been too loose. Hopkins wants us to connect the coupledness of the skies with the brindedness of the cow, to perceive the everywhere-ness of the piedness of the world.

It should be clear, without going into details, that Hopkins is increasing the complexity of the modificational structures. Line 3 ups the complexity a notch from that which we have just examined, and the first NP in line 4, the one headed by *falls*, becomes more complex yet. It may be that the second NP in that line should also be seen as introducing a new kind of conceptual complexity, as it is the first NP to contain two plurals. Piedness is sometimes a property of sets of nearly equivalent items (the rose-moles of the trout, the fallen chestnuts), and sometimes a property of one object, whose colors repeat in unpredictable ways: a pied piper ('s coat), dappled things, a brinded cow. In the case of the landscape, we leave the world of objects; a landscape is, very roughly, that part of a region which can be seen by an observer – its plots, varying between folds for animals, fields lying fallow, and ploughs (pieces of ploughed land) alternate dappledly. It is not clear whether with *finches' wings*, Hopkins is shunting to a new form of complexity or is abandoning that language game. I will leave this question open, and jump to the next form of serious verbal frolic that Hopkins offers us.

If we want to produce an indefinitely large set of natural numbers, there is an algorithm, named after the Italian mathematician Peano, which produces each successive number by taking the one just one lower than it and adding one to it. Thus to make 3, we take 2 and add 1; to make 4, we take 3 and add 1, and so on. There are quite a few sets in the poem which have this “plus 1” structure to them. Some have the 1 first – they are of the form “1 + X”; others are of the form “X + 1.” Let us examine some of both types.

The first one that comes into view are the three *for*-phrases at the beginning of the poem: [*for . . . things*], [*for . . . skies . . .*], and [*for rose-moles . . .*]. It is clear that these three make up a set of the form “1 + 2,” for while the last two are alike, in that each takes up an entire line, the first sticks out like a sore thumb (I will say that Hopkins has “sore-thumbed” it) in just being the last three words of line 1.

The next set of three is of the form “2 + 1”: these are the three bare NP's which follow the three *for*-phrases. The first two are the two NP's of line 4, headed by *chestnut-falls* and *wings*, respectively; both of these are head-final, and both start with [f]. The first NP in line 4 has a pair of prominent syllables which contain a voiceless palatal and the vowel [EiiiTM£e∞§]: [S] and [tS] – and the second has a pair of prominent syllables in [I] followed by a nasal consonant: [In] and [IN]. The third is sore-thumbed in occupying the entirety of line 5: [*landscape . . .*]. Thus the first set of three *for*-phrases bears a relationship to this second set of three bare NP's, with respect to the property of occupying part of a line or all of it. The three *for*-phrases are of the form [part of a line + (whole line, whole line)], while the three bare NP's are of the form [(part, part) + whole line].

Another set of three is formed by the three coordinate nouns at the end of line 5: [(*fold*, *fallow*), and *plough*] – the first two alliterate, with the third being the sore thumb. And the answering set is formed by the three coordinate nouns at the end of line 6, the last two of which are joined by alliteration: [*gear* and (*tackle* and *trim*)]. Each of these two coordinate triads has liquids running through it – three [l]'s for the first, and the sequence [r - l - r] for the second.

It is important to note that Hopkins has also arranged this Peano-like game to build a sequence of progressively more complex “Peanoings,” in that the last of the three bare NP's, which is

the whole of line 5, ends with the first of the two coordinate triads – thus Hopkins gives us here a Peanoing inside another Peanoing.

A slightly closer look at lines 5 and 6 reveals that the two coordinate triads at the end of these lines, which we have just discussed in some detail, are each standing in an appositive relationship with the first NP in each of these lines. That is, *fold, fallow, and plough* is an appositive modifier of *landscape (plotted and pieced)*, and *their gear and tackle and trim* stands in apposition to *all trades*. These are the first sets of four that we encounter in the poem; it is significant that both start with a nucleus of a pair, add a sore-thumbed third noun, to make triads, and then bring in a fourth noun, to stand in apposition to. These lines could then be said to have schematic structures something like this:

Line 5: [Landscape **p**lotted and **p**ieced – ({fold, fallow}, and **p**lough)];

Line 6: [And **á**ll **t**rádes, (their gear and {tackle and **t**rim})].

I have boldfaced the three alliterating voiceless stops in each line; Hopkins' great genius has allowed him to Peano twice here inside another Peanoing. In line 5, there are three ways of grouping the three [p]'s: morphologically, they are of the form [2 + 1] (two words in -ed + one monomorpheme); syllabically, they are of the form [1 + 2] (one bisyllable with a stressed short vowel + two monosyllables with long vowels); and in terms of alliteration, they are of a new form – ABA – the ends in [p] versus the middle in [p]. Then line 6 allows for two ways of grouping the three alliterating [t]'s: [1 + 2] (one long vowel versus a pair of short stressed vowels), or ABA again, the two [tr]'s on the ends versus the plain [t] in the middle. I do not have the space here to discuss in detail why it is important to make [p]'s parallel to, and thus "substitutable for" [t]'s. The three [p]'s of line five are highly prominent; they make ready the phonetic ground for the poem's last verb, though what follows these three [p]'s is not similar to the phonetic sequence [reyz] of *Praise*. However, what follows the [t] of *trades* is similar, and Hopkins will play on this similarity masterfully in the three other stressed monosyllables in [ey] that lead from *trades* to *Praise*, making this last verb simultaneously a surprise and a phonetic inevitability.

Let me call attention to just two more Peanoings – the four-member one of line 7, which clearly has the structure [1 + [1 + [2]]], and the show-stopping line 9. In line 7 we naturally group together the last two monosyllabic adjectives in [sTey], where "T" is the archiphoneme for voiceless stop. To this spare, strange pair Hopkins prefixes the poem's only quadrisyllable, the third adjective original. And then these three adjectives are set off against the weirdness of *counter*, which is normally a verb or a prefix.

And how can any reader fail to be struck by the architectural *pièce de résistance* of the six words that follow the *With* of line 9? Alliteration groups them into three polar pairs, articulating the dimensions of speed, taste, and light. But simultaneously, the four adjectives in [s] make the three pairs be "parsed" as an instance of [[2] + 1] (two pairs of [s]'s set off against a pair of [d]'s), even as the word-initial clusters of the first three adjectives in [s] set them off against the non-cluster onset of the third s-word, *sour* – an instance of the Peanoing [[3] + 1]. And finally, this set of six words must be seen as five set off against one – the five foundational monosyllables that are in even a learner's dictionary, set off against the brilliant newborn *adazzle*, which concludes triumphally the sequence of the poem's seven words in -le(d), even as its [æ] links it to the first in this series, *dappled*. If it has not become clear before now that Hopkins has been about giving us the almost tactile sensation of piecing, of making by binding together opposites, in line 9 we cannot escape this experience.

But now it comes time to ask: why? Even granting that one can find a sequence of ever more complex modifiers, and also one of progressively more complex Peanoings, why should Hopkins have placed these parallel complexifications in a hymn of praise for the Creator of our pied world? Why should the sequences not run from more complex to less complex? Why should there be sequence at all?

Is it not clear? Hopkins is here (roughly) recapitulating the Book of Genesis. The poem starts with an exhortation to glorify God, because of the dappledness of things. The first such things are the couple-coloured skies (celestial, thus close to divinity), then the earthiness, indeed farminess, of a cow. The diminution of size in the move from the immensity of the skies to the human-scale cow is continued with the next dappleds – the small rose-moles on the trout. The mention of chestnuts brings in the plant kingdom, and that of finches brings in the winged things – in four lines, Hopkins has evoked air, earth, water, and fire (in *firecoal*), as well as beast, fish, and fowl. And where are we lords of creation?

The vantage point for the observation of the skies, the cow, the trout, the chestnuts, and the finches is here on earth. But to see the alternation of the plots of the landscape, we must ascend to a higher point – we take a small step towards heaven. And, excluding the (inferrable?) domestication of the cow, in the piecing together of the landscape, we come for the first time to the interface of the human world with the world of nature. We are not shown a concrete human being, not shown

ourselves, we are shown our handiwork. Crucially, in this first, nearest, mention of the world of humankind, we have already taken a step towards the abstract.

The degree of abstraction then mounts in line six. The next reason for the glorification of God is more directly human – our trades, how we earn our daily bread. But these trades, more particularly, the tools and equipment which we use in our practice of them, are referred to in a much less visible way than the landscape. We seem to be progressing towards ourselves, but in the process, we are losing individuality, concreteness, thingness. And this is as it should be, for Hopkins wants to move simultaneously along two dimensions: towards humanity and towards divinity. Hopkins has nothing less in mind than to enact in words (I cannot find a better expression for what it is that poems do, in their going beyond mere saying) our simultaneous humanity and divinity.

And now on to line 7 – what are these things “counter, original, spare, strange”? My hunch is that they are us, ourselves, a hunch that is strengthened immeasurably in the next line: “whatever is fickle, freckled.” It is evident that the prototypical things of which fickleness can be predicated are people, though there are other fickle things – winds, fates. Thus *fickle* points pretty clearly in our direction. The clincher, however, is the next word: I have never heard of anything non-human having freckledness predicated of it.

I must note, however, that this line of reasoning would lead one to conclude that in line nine, the line of three polar pairs of terms, we are no longer talking of human beings, for of the three dimensions evoked by these polar pairs, only the first, that of speed, could be said to apply to humans. I am not entirely sure what to infer from the inclusion of line 9. On the one hand, it seems clearly an increase in the degree of abstraction; it reveals that the Creator wields not only individual predicates, like original, spare, fickle, but also the dimensions along which such individual attributes may be located. But as I pointed out immediately above, the inclusion of the dimension of light, or brilliance, would seem to exclude human beings, which I would not like to do in the last part of the poem, for reasons which will become clear shortly. One solution to this dilemma may be to say that yes!, we are talking humanity in line nine, and that therefore, we are talking metaphor – mental speed, emotional sweetness, spiritual radiance. I would favor such a line of interpretation, for I would like to be able to say that as we approach line ten, which in many ways can be seen to be a climax, we have also reached a peak in the evocation of our human essence.

And now what is it that happens in line 10? The line is adazzle with Hopkins’ Urverb, the Verb of the Beginning, the Word which describes what Hopkins’ Beloved does: fathers-forth. The poem only has five tensed verbs: 3swim, 8is, 8knows, 10is, and then this last flamboyant pieing. There are several ways in which this King of Verbs is sore-thumbed – I will mention just two.

1. It is the last of the five hyphenated words. It seems likely that the first four of these five are Peanoed as follows:

[[[couple-colour + rose-moles] + fresh-firecoal] + chestnut-falls]

The reasons for which I suggest this structuring are phonetic: the two halves of the first hyphenated word both start with the same onset and vowel, and the syllabic liquid [l] that couple ends with is replaced by the other syllabic liquid, [r], in colour. Furthermore, the [l] which is syllable-final in couple comes to be syllable-initial in colour. Similarly, the syllable-initial [r] of rose is replaced by the syllable-final [l] of moles; again, the two halves of this hyphenee are the same.

The third word, Fresh-firecoal, continues the game of moving the onset [r] of fresh to the coda of fire, but the stressed vowels are distinct, and the two halves have different numbers of syllables. In the fourth word, chestnut-falls, for the first time, we encounter a word that has no liquid in one half, and the two halves neither alliterate nor assonate. Thus I see in these four hyphenated words a clear and monotonic increasing of the phonetic distance between their halves.

When we get to fathers-forth, we return to the alliterative pattern (more on which below), and there is a switch in voicing of the interdental spirants (though I do not have space here to go in detail into all of the play of voicing that Hopkins frolics in, consider just the three following examples: (a) the two pairs of obstruents of the title: [p . . . d + b . . . t] – in each word, we move from a labial stop to a dental, reversing voicing as we go; (b) the first four icti of the first line are all voiced stops [Glory, be, God, dappled] – then we jump to the line’s only ictal spirant, which is also the line’s only voiceless onset [ʃ] – things; (c) the second line reverses the flow, with four icti containing the voiceless stop [k], sore-thumbing the line’s lone voiced ictal onset in brinded – voicing dapples itself throughout the poem). Furthermore, one could argue that there is a metathetic game going on here too: that the interdental archiphoneme TH and the [r] are permuting. Thus the Peanoing of these five words would be the following: (((1 + 1) + 1) + 1) + 1). And the fifth would stand out because of containing the poem’s lone particle forth, and because of being a verb after four hyphenated nouns, and for mentioning the only human noun (albeit in a divine context) – father.

2. It is the fifth in a sequence of five pairs of ictal words which alliterate in [f]; the first four are these:

4Fresh-firecoal; 4-falls; finches'; 5fold, fallow; 8fickle, freckled

Again, it is the only verb in this sequence, and the only member in it to contain no [l].

But now let us move to the most burning question that we can ask about such an adazzle word: what does it mean? Since Hopkins invented it, we may have to move with some care, inferring what he may have meant readers to assume from other patterns already established in the language. Let us start with forth, which means "outwards, away from the center, into view," in such intransitives as go forth and come forth. But it is used after the transitive verb bring too, and there it has the metaphorical meaning of "into view, into being." To bring something forth is to make it visible, and metaphorically, to cause it to come to exist, to create it.

Forth is a rare participle. Does Hopkins mean it to be understood here in the transitive, creative, sense we know from bring forth, or in the intransitive, more motional sense of go forth, come forth? As is usually the case with poetry, the answer to such disjunctive questions is a straightforward "yes." Let us take first the transitive sense, and ask what argument could be made that fathers-forth should be understood transitively, in a way that could be crudely pointed at by the locution "brings forth as a father (paternally, lovingly, etc.)." It is evident that the punctuation helps such an interpretation along a lot, for the period at the end of line 6 says: what follows is another sentence. The main verb of this second sentence being fathers-forth, its subject can only be He. But if this is so, what is the function of all of the words which precede this He?

It seems most likely that the three paired dimensions of line 9 are to be understood as adverbs of some kind, though whether they modify fathers-forth, as manner adverbs, or is fickle, freckled, as some other kind of adverb, seems to me to be up for syntactic grabs, with the former possibility seeming most probable semantically, and the latter one being favored by the lack of any punctuation at the end of line 8.

But how then to parse lines 7 and 8? One way is to say that line 7 is a noun phrase (this under the assumption that we are to take counter to be an adjective, paralleling the unproblematic sequence of three adjectives which follow it). This NP would be headed by things, which would be then post-modified by the four adjectives counter, original, spare, strange, and if we wish to continue this line of syntactic understanding, we can take line 8 to be another NP (a headless free relative clause, also post-modifying things). Under this assumption, then, that lines 7 and 8 are one large NP (with the additional uncertainty imposed by possibly wanting to allow line 9's with-phrase to be a part of this NP, if taken to modify is fickle, freckled), what is this large NP doing to the left of He, the subject of fathers-forth? The first answer is: this large NP is the object of the transitive verb fathers-forth – it has been moved to sentence-initial position by the process that converts a sentence like the humdrum I don't like this to the more emphatic This I don't like. In short, under this parse, the large NP of lines 7 and 8 is the direct object of fathers-forth, and the sentence is saying that God fathers-forth all things counter, original, etc. I think that the punctuation provides the strongest warrant for seeing the poem's second sentence in this light – for saying that fathers-forth is a transitive verb, a verb which means "to create in a loving, fatherly way."

But let us downplay the evidence from the punctuation for a moment, and turn back to the dominant syntactic figure that Hopkins establishes at the beginning of the poem. What is the function of the poem's first line? It is to open a list of things, dappled things, which are the reasons for which Hopkins glorifies God, with us, if we would like to join him. The first two things on that list, skies of couple-colour and rose-moles, are preceded by for, the same preposition that precedes dappled things, but as the list goes on, the preposition falls away (we hear a faint echo of it in the [fr] which starts line 4, but by line 5, it is gone for good. From now on, we hear nothing but plain noun phrases, all of them more and more reasons to magnify the name of God. To be hard-nosed about it, the poem's first sentence ends with four plain NP's, ones that we hear in apposition to dappled things; these are the noun phrases which are headed by chestnut-falls, wings, landscape, and trades. What, then, is our reaction when we move into the second sentence, and find it starting with all things?

A first reaction, while we wait for the sentence to unfold, is simply that the list of reasons to glorify God is continuing. We may not understand why there was a period after trim, but we continue under the assumption that what we are reading is an extension of the list that we have been working our way through. And we can maintain this parse right up until the He of line 10. We have just heard a semicolon, which we can take as a closure for the last noun phrase in our list, and when we hear He fathers-forth, we say to ourselves, "Ah – the list is over; here is an intransitive clause. Its verb is a verb of motion, and it seems to mean something like 'He emerges paternally, loving as a father does.'" Assuming for the moment that both the parse which would take fathers-forth to be a transitive predicate and the parse which would take it to be an intransitive one are equally viable, and that Hopkins wanted this ambiguity, aimed for it, intended it, why might he have done so? How would

such an intention be relevant in a hymn of praise? I think that the answer may lie in the notion, central for Catholic theology, of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost. If we view these three terms as being ways of pointing at three distinguishable aspects of something that is beyond concept, we might say that the essence of fathering is the distinction between that which creates and that which is created. This is the transitive aspect of the Divine – it is that force, distinct from the universe, which caused it to come into being. And what is the essence of the Son? A son is what the Divine creates; to focus on the Son is to see, as Hopkins clearly does, the Divine in all the dappled things of the world around us. From this viewpoint, there is no separation between the created and the Divine, between a Divine agent/subject and a non-Divine object – this view is in harmony with seeing the Verb of Verbs as intransitive. Thus to father-forth is kin to coming forth, emerging transcendentally, fatheringly, radiant with Divine love. So far, so good, you may say. But in our discussion of the syntax of the poem's second sentence above, we only found two poles of ambiguity, not three. If there is to be a parallel to the doctrine of the Trinity, we will need to find textual warrant for seeing yet a third way of parsing the words around fathers-forth.

I think this may exist; it was first suggested to me by a member of the audience when I gave a talk on this poem at the University of Chicago in May of 1995. I believe that the suggester was Richard Janda, though I am not certain. Whoever he was, the suggester asked in effect this question: what is the function of the clause which follows fathers-forth? Previous to this question, I had always taken it to be an extraposed relative clause, one modifying the subject of fathers-forth, namely He. Thus a more transparent representation of the meaning of the sentence would be He [whose beauty is past change] fathers-forth (all things counter, original, . . .). But the suggester pointed out that since fathers-forth is a sort of syntactic wild card, Hopkins could have intended us to read it as a sentential verb, one taking as an object complement an embedded question, a verb of the class of know, discover, announce, etc. If we explore such a parse, how can we blend in the basic meaning of forth, which has a core signification of “outward, into view”? I would suggest that there exist verbs with something close enough to this concept, verbs like reveal, disclose, manifest, and the like. On this syntactic take, then, the meaning of the fathers-forth clause of the poem would be something like “He manifests, in a fatherly, loving way, the Identity of the One Whose beauty [has done all its changing already / is beyond change.”

I am not a Catholic myself, and I do not pretend to understand the Trinity. Thus I do not know even if what I have suggested about the Father-aspect and the Son-aspect of the Divinity can be accepted, let alone the much more difficult notion of the Holy Ghost. If the concept of the Holy Ghost is something like that aspect of the Divine which is beyond the Creator, the Created and even the process of Creation, then it may be that this third, sentential, reading of fathers-forth can serve to point in that direction. I will leave that for those who are versed in Catholic theology to work out. All that I can say, as a syntactician looking at Hopkins' sentences, is that a verb in the syntactic context of fathers-forth could be simultaneously transitive, intransitive, and sentential.

Let us step back from the syntactic fray for a moment, to return to the cline of person. I have suggested above that the poem progresses from the concrete to the abstract, from the inanimate (skies) to the animate, from the non-human (skies, rose-moles, chestnut-falls, wings) to that which implies the presence of humans (the plots and piecings together of the landscape), to that by which we make our living (trades), to our characteristics (strange, freckled, then intelligence, sweetness of disposition, our purity of soul). Is it not significant that it is as we get to the end of this cline of person that we also find categorial complexity? Whereas in the first sentence, there is only one adjective (Fresh), with its status as adjective being compromised by its being hyphenated to a following noun, in the second sentence, there are many adjectives. Similarly, there are wh-words, there is even a question (with multiple wh-words, even, possibly a rhetorical question), we find the first occurrence of a particle (forth), a possessive (whose) and the poem ends with an imperative. Thus as we move towards the end of the poem, we move into the full richness of English. We are a complex, self-contradictory, ambiguous race – Hopkins paints the language that carries us towards ourselves with increasing subtlety, opacity, shimmeringness.

It is a fundamental tenet of Christianity that we humans are created in the image of the Divine. We are both divine and terrestrial. The relationship between God and us is simultaneously a transitive and an intransitive one. I think that an emergent meaning of this poem is that it celebrates not only God, but also us. It starts far away from us, follows the cline of person to come ever closer to us, and, in the epiphany of fathers-forth, passes through us and to us at the same instant. That is, paradoxically, at the end of the cline of person is not us, but God, and so are we.

The fundamental insight on which I base this conclusion I owe to Shary Gentry, a student and member of a group of us who are addicted to ripping poems to pieces here at the University of North Texas. Shary asked: why is the last word of the poem him, not Him? Until that question was posed, I had unthinkingly assumed that since the poem was a paean of praise to the Creator, of course that last pronoun must refer to the Divine. And so, argued Shary, it would, unambiguously, had Hopkins

capitalized it. There can be only one explanation for his decision to leave it in lower case: to make sure that the reader takes it to include us in the Divine. I find this argument totally compelling.

There are many other things that I would like to point out about this poem, but limitations of space and time preclude all but one final, immense, topic: fiving. Pied Beauty is extremely heavily fived. I say that a poet integers a poem (Thus: threes it, sixes it, or in the present case, fives it) when there is a significant number of sets of the cardinality in question. In “Pied Beauty,” there are many things that occur in sets of five, some of which I have already mentioned in passing. I will give a partial listing here of some of the most salient ones.

Fivings

1. 5 tensed verbs
2. 5 hyphenated words
3. 5 pairs of adjacent icti which start with [f]
4. 5 occurrences of and, all in the last two lines of the first sentence
5. 5 occurrences of [m], the first in an onset (rose-moles), all the rest in the four rhyme-words in [Im].
6. 5 occurrences of [h] in monosyllabic pronominals: who, how, He, whose, him. [There is a sixth polysyllabic pronoun in [(h)w] –whatever]
7. 5 lexical occurrences of the highly salient stressed vowel of dappled: dappled, Landscape, fallow, tackle, adazzle. Note that all are at least two syllables long, and all contain [l].
8. 5 pairs of alliterating adjacent adjectives / nominal modifiers (in case freckled is not to be classified as a pure adjective): spare, strange; fickle, freckled; swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim
9. 5 words which begin with [p]: Pied, plotted, pieced, plough, Praise (in passing, these seem to be Peanoed as {(3 forms in -ed) + 1 noun – all in the first sentence} + 1 verb – in the second sentence)
10. 5 occurrences of the archiphoneme TH in monosyllables: things, that, their, things, forth
11. 5 monosyllables in [i]: be, pieced, gear, sweet, He (these too are Peanoed: {(2 verbs) + 1 noun – all start with stops} + 1 adjective – these first 4 are all ictal) + He – the lone pronoun, also the only non-ictal word in [i])
12. 5 icti in [o]: Glory, rose, fold, slow, forth (also Peanoed: {(2 nouns in [r]) + a third noun} + 1 adjective) + 1 particle)
13. 5 monosyllables with [w] in their onsets: swim, wings, with, swift, sweet (there is a sixth word with onset [w] – Whatever)
14. 5 monosyllables in [aw]: cow, trout, plough, how, sour (there is a sixth word in [aw] – counter) (The 5 monosyllables are Peanoed: {(3 nouns, all in the first sentence) + one adverb} + 1 adjective)
15. 5 monosyllables in [ey]: trades, spare, strange, change, Praise (also Peanoed: {(1 noun + (2 adjectives) – all three contain [r] and a dental strident spirant) + 1 noun with no liquid} + the lone verb)

These may be felt to be only gourmet fivings, so I have saved for last a strong structural one. We have seen above how the poem is broken into six lines + five lines, by the punctuation, rhyme scheme, and sequence of indentations. What I would like to suggest now is that the poem is co-sectioned; that it should also been seen as being comprised of five lines + six lines. Further, I suggest that we include the two-word title as a part of the overall structure, which will thus assume two halves, as shown below (I will refer to this sectioning as “the 6+6 sectioning”):

I.	Short 1:	1	two-word line	
	Long 1:	5	long lines	(lines 1 – 5)
II.	Long 2:	5 long lines	(lines 6 – 10)	
	Short 2:	1 two-word line	(line 11)	

What do we can by adding this structural perspective to the sectioning that is mandated by the punctuation and indentations? Here are some of the reasons that I find compelling.

A. Under the 6+6 sectioning, the length of the last vowel in each line makes a mirror antisymmetry: basically, these last vowels alternate in length, except that there is a pair of short vowels (3swim, 4wings) in adjacent lines in the first half, and in the second half, there is a pair of long vowels in adjacent lines: (7strange, 8how) [Note that the first of each of these pairs starts with a cluster in [s]. and the second starts with a single glide.]

Last vowel
and its length:

Pied Beauty	[i]	- L		
Glory be to God for dappled things –			[I]	- S
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;			[aw]	- L
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;			[I]	- S
Fresh-firecoal chestnut falls; finches' wings;			[I]	- S
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;		[aw]	- L	
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.		[I]	- S	
All things counter, original, spare, strange;		[ey]	- L	
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)			[aw]	- L
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;			[I]	- S
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:			[ey]	- L
Praise him.		[I]	- S	

B. The noun things: under the 6+6 sectioning, the distribution of this important word is regularized – the second line of each half contains things, as a last ictus in line 1, and as a first one in line 7. The noun beauty, which is the only other repeated lexical item, also occurs once in each half, but since it also occurs once in each sentence, its placement does not provide any evidence for adopting the 6+6 sectioning. I have thus far been unable to find any way to regularize its distribution

C. The dashes end the first line of Long 1, and occur in the last line of Short 1.

D. The five and's occur on both sides of the central boundary. Moreover, observe the alliterative parallels in the ictal syllables of the two lines which flank this boundary:

PLotted	pieced	[i]	(fold)	fallow	[æ]	PLough
TRades	gear	[i]		tackle	[æ]	TRim

These phonetic similarities, coupled with the syntactic peculiarity that both lines end with a triad of conjoined nouns, strongly argues that these two lines are to be seen as establishing and repeating a section-bounding pattern.

E. Under the 6+6 sectioning, we find two structurally parallel mirrors in the two halves in the area of grammatical rhyme – that is, in the sequence of categories of the rhyme words.

Rhyme word	Category
Beauty	Noun
things	Noun
cow	Noun
swim	Verb (!)
wings	Noun
plough	Noun
trim	Noun
strange	Adjective
how	Adverb (!)
dim	Adjective
change	Noun
him	Noun

As is apparent, both Long 1 and Long 2 begin and end with rhyme-words which are nouns, and both have in their centers, a rhyme-word whose category is unlike that of all other rhyme-words in the section in question.

F. A particularly strong support for the 6+6 sectioning is provided by the placing of the poem's two morphemes which relate to divine/human entities: God and father appear in structurally parallel positions, in the first and last lines of Long 1 and Long 2, respectively.

G. Finally, given the high salience of the poem's seven words in [TM](d), the fact the first three of them (dappled, couple, and stipple – note that in all three, the unstressed syllable begins with [p]) are found in the first three lines of Long 1, and the next three of them (tackle, fickle, and freckled – observe that they all have [k] as the onsets of their unstressed syllables) are found in the first three lines of Long 2. The first of the first set of the three -le-words ends in [d]; the last of the last set of three does.

I take it as established, then, that there is strong support for seeing this poem as being co-sectioned – as having both the sectioning that accords with punctuation, rhyme scheme, and pattern of indentations, and also the 6+6 sectioning. And this latter, less apparent, sectioning, because of the central role of the two five-line subsections in it, provides evidence, in turn, for the claim that Hopkins has fived this poem in a serious way.

What might be the meaning of integering? The first place that I ever saw it discussed was in Jakobson's brilliant article (Jakobson, 1970). In his discussion there of Paul Klee's poem, "Zwei Berge" [Two mountains], Jakobson shows indisputably how what he calls "the ternary principle" (what I would call "threeing") is operative in Klee's poem. That poem concerns three realms – the two on the tops of the two mountains of the title are the realms of the gods and of the beasts; between them, in a "dusky valley" is the realm of us humans. Jakobson shows how this thematic ternarity is reflected in multiple ways in the structure of the poem, through he mentions that the ternarity is not always linked to the overriding thematic threeness. I have encountered fiving in a poem by Wallace Stevens, "Domination of Black," which I can see no thematic basis for – the fiving is, in that poem, autonomous, to use Jakobson's term. I discuss this poem, and its fiving, in my forthcoming book, *Here Dwell Tygers* (Ross, in preparation).

At issue for us here, then, since integering sometimes is and sometimes is not, thematically connected, is the question as to whether the fiving of *Pied Beauty* is linked to the poem's great ascent of the cline of person, culminating in the revelation of the inseparability of our terrestriality/divinity. For many years, I thought that this strongly manifested fiving was autonomous. But recently, I looked up the entry for five in the *Dicionário de Símbolos*, which is almost four pages long. I will translate the first few paragraphs, to convey some of the excitement that I felt upon making this connection.

'The number 5 derives its symbolism from the fact of being, on the one hand, the sum of the first even and the first odd number (2+3), and on the other, of being in the middle of the first nine numbers. It is a symbol of union, a nuptial number, according to the Pythagoreans, and also a number of the center of harmony and of equilibrium. For this reason, it is the digit of the hierogamies, the marriage of the celestial principle (3) and of the terrestrial principle of the mother (2).

It is, moreover, the symbol of man (with outspread arms, man appears arrayed in five parts in the form of a cross: the two arms, the chest, the center – the shelter for the heart – the head, the two legs). Equally, it is a symbol of the universe: two axes, one vertical, the other horizontal – both pass through the same center. It is a symbol of order and of perfection. Finally, it is a symbol of divine will, whose only wish is for order and perfection.

The number five also represents the five senses and the five perceptible forms of matter – the totality of the perceptible world.

The pentagonal harmony of the Pythagoreans left its mark on the Gothic cathedrals. The five-pointed star and the flower with five petals are placed, in Hermetic symbolism, in the center of the cross of the four elements: this is the quintessence, or the ether. The number 5, in relation to the number 6, is the microcosm in relation to the macrocosm, the individual human being in relation to the universal Man.' (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1991, p.241) [my translation]

It seems to me that there is a lot of overlap here between the meanings that Chevalier and Gheerbrant have categorized as being part of what the number five is associated with in the collective unconscious and the figure that this poem makes in the semantic landscape. If this perception is shared generally, we are confronted with the vexed question of intentionality: did Hopkins five this poem on purpose? Did he know of the kinds of symbolism that Chevalier and Gheerbrant have compiled, and did he then set about constructing the kinds of fived sets that I have exemplified above?

I do not raise these questions because I know of any way to resolve them. I find them difficult in the extreme. On the one hand, there are some of the fivings which seem quite visible (say, the number of hyphenated words, the number of pairs of words which begin with [f], possibly even the existence of the co-sectioning, with its concomitant profiling of the fiveness of the Long 1 and Long 2 subsections), and it is thinkable [though in my opinion, highly unlikely] that Hopkins actually consciously chose to make the poem in such a way that these aspects of it would "rhyme numerically,"

so to speak. But I doubt totally that he controlled consciously for the number of [m]'s, the number of lexical [æ]'s, and so on.

He was a consummate artist; he had an incredible ear for verbal music, as one can easily convince oneself of, by reading a few of his poems aloud. But the "ear" of the greatest writers goes beyond the perception of what sounds can dance together to an intuitive grasp of what structures should be pressed into service, borrowed from earlier poems or other poets, or invented, fresh out of the oven, to be used once, and possibly never again in the history of poetry (I have never encountered elsewhere the kind of structuring that I have here referred to as Peanoing, but this could easily be due to my limited experience). And beyond that, the greatest of souls can venture, carried to the edge of expressibility, borne aloft by the structures of sound, image and sense that they have fashioned with words, to take them, and us with them, to ranges of experience beyond language, beyond knowing, beyond all boundary.

Guy de Maupassant expressed well one aspect of the writer's quest:

Words have a soul. Most readers, and even writers, demand only that they have a sense. One has to find that soul, which appears in the contact of words with other words.

The great writer knows how to effect the "contact of words with other words" that de Maupassant speaks of here. In our all too brief look at Gerard Manley Hopkins at work, we begin perhaps to intuit how rich a structure a word is – its initial consonants will link it by alliterative games not only to other words in its line, but to all similar words throughout the poem, as will its vowels link it to similar vowels. Its voiced consonants may link it to words containing corresponding voiceless consonants, or corresponding nasals, and on and on. And one image, placed a line away from another, will impose a mutual relevance upon the two: the poet will ask us to "rhyme" these images visually, and then to blend into a growing network of relevance all of the other visual material that occurs in the poem. And an infinity of syntactic games are available, the move from sparse, nominal, syntax to fully clausal, which we have had a taste of here, being only one possibility. And everywhere the writer goes, she or he is guided by the ever-present choice of repeating, or striking out afresh. I will close with a quote from Hopkins himself:

'In art, we strive to realize not only unity, permanence of law, likeness, but also, with it, difference, variety, contrast: it is rhyme we like, not echo and not unison, but harmony.'

Gerard Manley Hopkins,
'The Origin of our Moral Ideas,' quoted in (Jakobson,

1981b, p. 775)

I feel that Hopkins has succeeded masterfully in "Pied Beauty," in finding a harmony of the regular and the wild, in writing as dappled a poem as the universe whose beauty he wrote to help us celebrate.

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This paper is for you, most Dappled Thing of All.
Don't pretend. You know who I mean.

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Abstract

This paper presents a stylistic analysis of Gerard Manley Hopkins' 'Pied Beauty.' The poem uses the cline of person, moving from inanimate to animate, then to artifacts and finally to humans and, simultaneously, the Divine. The poet calls for us to glorify God, because of the dappledness of things, saying that beauty results from piedness, from the patchy or splotched juxtaposition of colors. There are many structural ways that are used to enact this cline: the poem moves from nominal to clausal syntax, from simple to complex modification, and invents a device (called 'Peanoing') to create sets of higher cardinality.

Háj Ross is interested in poetics 'and' semantax – he does not see the sense in trying to keep them separate. He teaches in the Linguistics Section of the English Department of the University of North Texas.