

**J.M.S. COLLEGE, MUNGER**  
**(A Constituent Unit under Munger University, Munger)**  
**Department of English**  
**B.A. Part-III, English (Hons.)- Paper VI**

**Pied Beauty**

**-G. M. Hopkins**

Glory be to God for dappled things –  
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;  
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;  
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
He fathers-foth whose beauty is past change:  
Praise him.

**Introduction:**

"Pied Beauty" is a poem by Victorian poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins. It is a kind of hymn of praise to God that marvels at the varied world that God created. Though most of the Victorian poets deal with the theme of frustration, anxiety, decay, loss of human values and faith, Gerard Manley Hopkins is the only one poet who finds hope in God. The poem sees God's majesty not just in nature's sheer variety, but also in the labors of humankind and in the abstract categories that people use to understand their experience of the world. The poem was written in 1877 but not published until 1918, and showcases God's grandeur with Hopkins's trademark linguistic inventiveness.

**Brief Biography of Gerard Manley Hopkins:**

It is good to get to know the poet a little before digging into this poem particularly. Gerard Manley Hopkins was born in 1844 and was the eldest of nine children. In elementary school, he won a poetry contest, and it was evident early on in his life that he was a gifted writer. However, he was devoutly religious and actually burned his early poems, feeling that writing poetry was too worldly a pursuit.

After some time, he came to realize that writing was not in conflict with his religious beliefs, and wrote to express and work through both his beliefs and doubts. He became a priest, and that was always his primary priority. He strove to keep a positive attitude in life, and even as he was dying of typhoid fever in 1889, his final words were, 'I am happy, so happy!' He died without seeing any of his poems published, but his good friend and Poet Laureate Robert Bridges published them in 1918.

### **Summary and Analysis of the Poem “Pied Beauty”:**

In this short poem, Hopkins appreciates the strength of the god in the universe. All the things in the universe contain the pied beauty. Sky does have the couple color, trout are spotted and chestnut does have the multiple color. Different trades do have the different purpose and different instruments have different tunes. In addition, the landscape is pieced, plotted, fold, follow and ploughed. Multiplicity and pied beauty can be seen in the landscape and the things of this universe. Not a single thing resembles with the other. Then pied beauty is the dominant feature of this universe and for this pied beauty he gives glory to god because god is the only source or father of all these things. Taking this glory of God into account, Hopkins asks mankind to praise him, then all the problems of the universe can be resolved peacefully.

Hopkins has a different form. He says every poem must have inscape and should be in design. The distinct design makes poem a poem. For that reason, he uses the

rhythm as sprung rhythm. Sprung rhythm is a poetic pattern resembling to general speech with each foot having one stressed syllable that is followed by changing the number of unstressed syllables. Sprung rhythm does not follow the traditional metrical pattern rather its pattern is the pattern of themes which means it carries the theme. Here, pied beauty itself is the theme. Somewhere there is internal rhyme which is sprung rhythm and brings the theme of the poem. The design of the poem corresponds to the design of the universe.

His curial sonnet is an exceptional sonnet where he minimizes the traditional form of a sonnet by reducing the eight lines in six and the six lines sestet into four and a half. Multiplicity is there in the pattern, somewhere there is alliteration. The repetitions of the sounds in the poem through the words like 'dappled', 'stipple', 'tackle', 'fickle', 'freckled', 'adazzle' etc. reinforces the theme of the poem by intertwining the diverse things of the nature created by the god into a beautiful and comprehensible whole.

The ending of the poem has juxtaposition. The vicissitude of his creations and their continuous flux in nature is juxtaposed with the changeless nature of God. This provides a mild irony in the poem and also surprises the readers. The speaker just wants all the people to praise the lord for his variety of creations.

The poem can be taken as a form of hymn of creation. The poet praises the variety and beautiful things of the world which are fathered by the god. By praising the creation, he praised the almighty god. He glorifies the infinite power of God to create the vicissitudes of things and also for the power to bring uniformity despite the diversity.

## **The Theme of “Pied Beauty”:**

### **The Majesty of God**

As with a number of poems by Victorian poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, “Pied Beauty” is a kind of song of praise to God. It takes a beautifully detailed look at

the world in all its variety, and sees in this variation and abundance the glory of God's creation. In particular, the poem admires God's capacity for creating opposites. The poem celebrates God's work and invites the reader to do the same.

"Pied" means having two or more colours, and it is this quality of variety that the speaker most admires about God's work. This is primarily expressed through a close look at the natural world, but the poem also sees it in the "trades" of humankind and in more abstract categories. The first stanza, which opens with a prayer to God that praises "dappled things" (another way of saying pied), is mostly about the natural world. The speaker marvels at nature, seeing in it God's majestic teleological design (which just means that God made the world as it is with intent and purpose). The speaker lists some of these more visual examples of "piedness": skies of two colors (specifically the appearance of a gathering storm), the spotty pattern on fish, the contrast of chestnuts with their green coating, the coloring on birds' wings. All of these are part of God's design and deserving of attention and praise.

But it's not just the natural world that shows God's glory—it's also human activity. Pied beauty can be found in the way that people work the land—think of green turf contrasted with the color of brown soil—as well as within the labors of humanity more generally. Here the poem sees the sheer variety of human work as a type of pied beauty. It's not possible to say for sure what "gear and tackle and trim" represent, but whether they relate specifically to farm-based labor or more varied "trades" like fishing and cloth-making, they are certainly meant to build this sense of beauty in variety.

Indeed, part of the poem's aim is to argue that beautiful evidence of God's design is everywhere—not just in the natural world. The second stanza makes this point with forceful persuasion, by shifting the focus from concrete examples of "pied" beauty to a more abstract list of opposites: "swift" and "slow," "sweet" and "sour,"

light and dark. In other words, it's not just the obviously beautiful things in the world that showcase God's majesty—it's also the world's limitless variety, the way in which contradictory categories can exist in complete harmony. In this, the speaker sees God's paternal love for the world (his "fathering-forth").

Beginning and ending with "glory" and "praise," "Pied Beauty" is a poem that strives to turn the reader's attention to the beauty of the world—and to see in that beauty the intelligence and benevolence of the Christian God. *All* of existence, according to the poem, stands as a testament to God's capacity for creation; the variety of the world is an often undervalued, but no less powerful, aspect of its beauty.

### **Development of the Theme:**

In the poem, "Pied Beauty" by Hopkins, the poet gives glory to God for the rich colour-dappling of the world of Nature and of man. As illustrations of the pied beauty of the world, he mentions:

- skies of couple-colour;
- the trout with their rose-coloured skin spotted with black;
- fallen chestnuts revealing the reddish-brown nut;
- finches wings;
- the landscape which looks like a patch work;
- all trades.

Apart from above illustrations, the poet also refers to the general qualities which he appreciates in dappled things such as:

- Swift and slow;
- Sweet and sour;
- Bright and dim;
- Fickle and freckled.

Thus, in the space of about nine lines the poet covers a wide range of things and their attributes. In the last two (or one and a half) lines he praises God, the father of all this ever-changing variety and contrast, whose own beauty is eternal therefore “past change”.

From the glorification of God as revealed in dappled things to the final injunction to the reader (“Praise him”), the movement of this poem takes place between the two mottoes of St, Ignatius: “To the greater glory of God” and “Praise be to God always”.

### **“Pied Beauty” Described as a Curtal Sonnet:**

Hopkins described “Pied Beauty” as a ‘Curtal Sonnet’ by which he meant a shortened form of the sonnet, with only ten and a half line, and a different rhyme scheme. Although Hopkins used this form in only two of his poems—Pied Beauty and Peace – it is one of his most successful inventions. The main proportions of the sonnet are retained, but within a smaller compass. Instead of fourteen lines made up of eight plus six, we have ten and a half lines made up of six plus four and a half. Hopkins described the metre as ‘sprung paeonic’, a paeonic foot being stressed plus three unstressed syllables.

“Pied Beauty” is a Scottish poem in the sense that Hopkins, following Scotus, is preoccupied with the intense particularly and distinctiveness of natural things. A theological problem which greatly exercised the mind of Scotus was: how the various attributes in God can be really distinguished from one another without prejudice to the simplicity of this divine being. Hopkins touches upon this problem in Line 10 when he says that all the various things he has mentioned flow from their source in the paternal being of him “whose beauty is past change”.

“Pied Beauty” is a special sonnet consisting of a sestet + quintain, the last line of which is shortened. The rhyme scheme **abcabcdcbdc** neatly tightens up the whole poem, the full end rhymes, all monosyllabic, help bring a crisp finish.

Sprung\_rhythm occurs when stress is placed on two consecutive feet, and the usual iambic beat is broken, with alliteration often present, giving a burst of energy and reflecting more natural conversation :

- For **rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;** (line 3)
- **Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;**

Finding the right rhythmic balance internally when reading this poem is a challenge, which is why it is a good idea to read through several times, taking into account the punctuation and dense language.

### **Rhyme and Rhythm**

There are some interesting word combinations and internal near rhymes in Pied Beauty. Look out for:

- *dappled/couple/stipple/plotted*
- *cow/trout/plough/counter/how/sour*
- *For rose moles/Fresh-firecoal/fold,fallow/who knows/slow/whose*

And the hyphenated combinations of:

- *couple-colour/rose-moles/Fresh-firecoal/chestnut-falls/fathers-forth*

These all combine to produce a pied effect themselves, a multitude of sounds, arranged stresses and images, all tied up with full end rhymes - what some have called an aesthetic of contrast.

### **Analysis of Literary Devices in “Pied Beauty”:**

Literary devices are tools used to create meanings in poems. The writers can make their texts distinguished from others with the help of these devices. It is through these devices the writer’s few words can mesmerize the readers. Hopkins, too, has used some literary devices in this poem to project his ideas about God’s creation.

The analysis of some of the literary devices used in this poem has been given below.

**Alliteration:** Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds in the same line such as /s/ and /d/ sounds in “With swift, slow; sweet, sour; dazzle, dim”.

**Metaphor:** It is a figure of speech in which an implied comparison is made between the objects different in nature. The poet has used a metaphor in the third line, “For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim.” Here he compares the spots on a speckled trout to moles.

**Consonance:** Consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds in the same line such as /d/ and /l/ sounds in “Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough.”

**Rhetorical Question:** Rhetorical question is a question that is asked without expecting an answer and to make a point clear. Hopkins has posed a rhetorical question in the second stanza to emphasize his point.

**Anaphora:** It refers to the repetition of a word or expression in the poem. Hopkins has repeated the words “for” in the second and the third lines to emphasize his point.

**Simile:** Simile is a device used to compare something with something else to make the meanings clear to the readers. There is only one simile used in this poem. It is used in the second line where it is stated as, “For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow”, he compares skies to the cow’s skin pattern.

**Imagery:** Imagery is used to make readers feel things with their five senses. Hopkins has used images appealing to the sense of sight such as, “For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow”, “Landscape plotted and pieced” and “Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches’ wings”.



**Assonance:** Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in the same line such as the sound of /o/ in “Glory be to God for dappled things”.

The literary devices used in this poem successfully help Hopkins describe deep religious beliefs and gratitude towards God’s creation.

**Acknowledgement (Sources taken help of):**

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