

ISSN 0910-500X

英文學思潮

THOUGHT CURRENTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

VOLUME LXXXVIII

2015

THE ENGLISH LITERARY SOCIETY
OF
AOYAMA GAKUIN UNIVERSITY

青山学院大学英文学会

The Unity of the One and the Many: Tracing the Genealogy of Dappledness in Hopkins

Toshiki Mizuno

Dappledness and Difference

The notion of difference is a key concept of modern thought. For example, Saussure, a precursor of structural linguistics, in stating that 'in language there are only differences' (Saussure, 120), denied any external reference point outside of language; Derrida, a major figure of post-structuralism, cast doubt on the existence of the ultimate and stable truth by setting forth his own doctrine of difference ('différance'). Though in a slightly different way, Hopkins was also extremely sensitive to differences, especially in the natural world. The poet referred to the subtle interactions between different things as the beauty of dappledness or piedness. As were structuralists, Hopkins was also deeply attracted to the fluidity to which the differences in the world inevitably lead.

And, just as our age is called a digital age, our science is also entirely based upon discrete units, such as a computer using a binary system. In his undergraduate essay 'On the Origin of Beauty: A Platonic Dialogue,' Hopkins divided beauty into two distinct types: chromatic and diatonic (*Journals*, 86-114). As Ong has shown, 'chromatism refers to differences that are sliding or unmarked by clear borders, "analogic," while diatonism refers to abrupt or digital differences, marked by clearly disparate, distinct cutoff points' (Ong, 15); and Hopkins, of course, set greater store by the latter.

To express the idea of difference or discreteness, Hopkins used the adjective 'dapple' or 'pied' in his poems, whereas he used his coinage 'inscape' in his journals and sermons. The essence of the poetry of Hopkins all boils down to the idea of 'inscape.' 'Inscape' refers to the fact that each individual self

(humans, animals, or inanimate things) has its own unique attribute, and the idea that the occurrence of each self depends solely upon the creative tension between the One (the metaphysical, ideal world) and the Many (the physical, phenomenal world).

Since Hopkins was very fascinated by the differences exhibited by natural things and to depict them he had to develop an innovative poetic style, and since his poetry was published posthumously (only in 1918, around 30 years after the poet's death), Hopkins had been highly acclaimed as an exponent of modernism for a while. However, as the great enthusiasm for his poetry gradually faded, opinions have begun to emerge that Hopkins' poetry should be considered in the context of Victorian England: for instance, Arthur Mizener, 'Victorian Hopkins' and Alison G. Sulloway, *Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper*.

The objective of this paper is to examine the poems typifying dappledness and to trace the idea back to its origin, in order to explore Hopkins' poetical range without categorizing his concept in any conventional manner.

The Integration of the One and the Many

From 1874 to 1877, at St Beuno's College in North Wales, Hopkins studied Theology with the aim of becoming a Jesuit priest. That was one of the happiest moments of his life; there, with 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' as a beginning, he resumed writing poems. One of the so-called 'Bright Sonnets' written during that time is the poem 'Pied Beauty,' in which Hopkins tries to grasp the Creator (the One) in nature (the Many), and praises His grandeur highly. To fully express the mutual relationships between the One and the Many, Hopkins used a Petrarchan (Italian) sonnet form in which a poem is divided into two parts (octave and sestet) by the 'volta' (a shift in meaning). In this sonnet, the poet compared the earthly beauty in the octave with the celestial beauty in the sestet:

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 trade, their gear and tackle and trim.

In the first part of the sonnet, using similes and metaphors, Hopkins vividly depicts the beauty of dappled things existing within the natural world. For example, 'skies of couple-colour' are compared to a 'brinded cow' (brindled or streaked cow); chestnuts that have fallen on the ground, to 'fresh-firecoal.'

All things counter, original, spáre, strange;
Whatever is fickle, frecklèd (who knows how?)
With swift, slów; sweet, sóur; adázzle, díim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is pást change:
Praise him.

Whereas in the first part of the poem, pied things are described in a concrete and specific way, in the second part they possess more abstract and general attributes: 'counter' (opposite), 'original,' 'spáre' (distinct or separate), 'strange.' The poet adds that dappled things are 'fickle'; in other words, they are disseminated everywhere in the way that they are split up into two opposites: 'swift' and 'slow,' 'sweet' and 'sour,' 'adazzle' and 'dim.'

It is worthy to note that Hopkins here uses the word 'fickle.' Dapple things, as we have seen, are based upon binary opposition; however, such opposition is not a fixed or static difference. If the difference were firmly fixed, dappled things in the natural world would not demonstrate as much spiritual brilliance. Indeed, as Miller discerningly puts it, 'Beauty lies in the copresence of the two, unlikeness with likeness, sameness with difference' (Miller, 300).

Since pied things, as we have seen, are essentially not static but dynamic, they also display fleeting and fugitive qualities. However, what prevents dappled things from lapsing into a mere difference is the unchangeable nature of God. In the last part of the sonnet, Hopkins says that the beauty of God which

'fathers-forth' (bring into being) is 'pást change' (eternal). God as the One, to put it another way, can guarantee the existence of dappled things as the Many. Pied beauty is, as Miller points out, 'a *concordia discors*, a unifying of diversity, and thereby a finite image of the infinite God' (Miller, 304).

The notion itself of 'concordia discors' can be traced back to Greek philosophy. In his commentary on this poem, for example, McChesney refers to the Aristotelian theory of the Prime Mover (McChesney, 71). Aristotle's Prime Mover moves other things, but in itself remains unmoved. In scholasticism, which aimed to merge Greek philosophy (Aristotle in particular) with Christianity, the idea of the Prime Mover evolved into some overlap with the concept of the Christian God. Given that the Prime Mover (the One as a stationary being) works upon the natural world (the Many as moving things), it may well be that Hopkins well versed in Greek philosophy was, as a matter of course, deeply influenced by the idea of the Prime Mover.

On the other hand, in terms of Christology, Cotter has succinctly summed up the idea of inscape (as the correspondence between the One and the Many) as follows:

The purpose of man's existence is to inscape reality, to unify it through his encounter with Christ the Son of God and the Son of man. Through his condescension, the One is made visible in the many, that man may ascend through the many to the One. (Cotter, 184)

In 'Pied Beauty,' dappled things as examples of the creative tension between the One and the Many, at any rate, have an intrinsic instability but still preserve their beautiful harmony.

The Dissolution of Dappledness

In ten sonnets (what we call the 'Bright Sonnets') including 'Pied Beauty' written in 1977, as suggested above, Hopkins depicted piedness as a graceful unity between the Creator and the creation through his close observations of the

natural world. However, in 'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves,' which seems to have been completed in 1886, about ten years after Hopkins wrote 'Pied Beauty,' his perspective had changed greatly. Since at the time Hopkins suffered frequent bouts of depression (in part because he was not able to adjust to Ireland, a new place of work), the poem is generally classified as one of the so-called 'Dark Sonnets.'

A 'Sibyl' in this poem is a prophetess of ancient Greece who serves God and delivers oracles, and whose supernatural power allows her to predict what will happen. As the adjective form 'sibylline' also means 'mysterious or enigmatic,' predictions of a Sibyl are delivered in secret code. And, as if to reflect Hopkins' sense of gloomy despondency at the time, the poem begins with a solemn but desolate tone.

Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable, I vaulty, voluminous,
... stupendous
Evening strains to be tíme's vást, I womb-of-all, home-of-all,
hearse-of-all night.

To depict an approaching evening, Hopkins uses no fewer than seven adjectives to modify the noun 'Evening': 'earnest' (serious or determined), 'earthless' (unearthly or ghostly), 'equal' (tranquil or serene), 'attuneable' (harmonious or congruous), 'vaulty' (secure, like an arched roof over one's head), 'voluminous' (large or immense), and 'stupendous' (astonishingly or overwhelmingly large). The landscape of this evening implies the possibility that pied things lose their spiritual distinction between the One and the Many and degenerate into sheer non-being. This evening 'strains' (draws with force) to 'womb-of-all' (alpha, or the beginning of everything) and 'hearse-of-all' (omega, or the end of everything) night.

For éarth I her béing as unbóund, her dápple is at énd, as-
Tray or aswarm, all throughther, in throngs; I self ín self stéepèd and
páshed—quíte

Disremembering, dismembering, I all now.

Once the knot of the existence of things on earth has been 'unbound,' piedness in nature has disappeared. Superb dappled things have been plunged into complete chaos; they are wandering ('astray') and crowded ('aswarm,' 'in throngs') and through each other ('throughther'). Dappled things in nature (including humans), as we have seen, have their unparalleled and irreplaceable selves. In this regard, Hopkins was profoundly influenced by a medieval theologian, Duns Scotus, not by a prominent figure of Scholasticism, St. Thomas Aquinas. The part of Scotus' doctrine particularly appealing to Hopkins is as follows:

According to Aquinas, the direct object of human intellectual knowledge is the form abstracted from matter, which is the principle of individuation, and known through the universal concept. The senses apprehend the individual thing; but the mind apprehends it only indirectly, as represented in the image or phantasm. There is no intellectual intuition of the individual thing as such. Scotus rejected this view in favour of the view that the mind does have a primary intellectual, though confused, intuition of the individual thing as such. (Copleston, 109)

Scotus also believed that 'there exists in each individual thing a nature distinct from its 'thisness' (Copleston, 110). Heavily influenced by the doctrine of Scotus, Hopkins clearly states the inscape of self:

... when I consider my selfbeing, my consciousness and feeling of myself, that taste of myself, of *I* and *me* above and in all things, which is more distinctive than the taste of ale or alum, more distinctive than the smell of walnutleaf or camphor, and is incommunicable by any means to another man (as when I was a child I used to ask myself: What must it be to be someone else?). (*Sermons*, 123)

For Hopkins, my being as an absolute self ('selfbeing') is very 'distinctive' and.

therefore, is 'incommunicable' with others.

The piedness of the earth that can be seen at dusk, as suggested above, is about to disappear with the coming of a pitch-dark night, with the result that the marked selves of the dappled things have also gone. Hopkins describes the circumstances in the way that a self is thoroughly soaked ('stéepèd') in other selves, and is smashed to pieces ('páshed') and is separated into parts ('disremembering,' 'dismembering').

| Lét life, wáned, ah lét life

wínd

Off hér once skéined stained véined varíety | upon áll on twó spools;

párt, pen, páck

Now her áll in twó flocks, twó folds—bláck, white; | ríght, wrong; réckon

but, réck but, mínd

But thése two; wáre of a wórld where bút these | twó tell, éach off the

óther; of a ráck

Where, selfwring, selfstrung, sheathe- and shelterless, | thougths

agáinst thoughts ín groans grínd.

In this part of the poem, Hopkins explains the dissolution of pied things in terms of the Apocalypse. Dappled things were tangled as if wound in a coil ('skéined'), and formed streaks or spots ('stained'), and are marked with stripes ('véined'); but now, they must be rolled around 'two spools.' The next section then recalls a biblical scene in the Gospel of St. Matthew in which those who are given eternal life and those who are given eternal punishment are judged: 'And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left' (Matthew 25: 32-33). Into the dichotomy (black and white, right and wrong), everything as a pied thing in the natural world is evenly divided, much as domestic animals are confined in a small yard.

In the Last Judgment in which everything is sharply divided between right-

ness and wrongness, an individual self must go through excruciating pain. Still, Hopkins firmly insisted that one must acknowledge ('wäre') the conditions like physical torture ('ráck') which cause one to groan aloud as if the self squeezed hard ('selfwrung') and tightened painfully ('selfstrung').

Interestingly enough, from the point of view of physics (thermodynamics), Brown describes the binary oppositions in this way: 'This destructive process, whilst it ostensibly works to distinguish particular meanings within the field of being, effectively precipitates a heat death in which the stark binary oppositions represented by "black, white", and indeed "right, wrong", are worn down to a meaningless entropic grey' (Brown, 322). Entropy (originally a physical term) is the scale that indicates the degree of disorder. An increase in entropy means the state in which order turns into chaos; 'a heat death' or thermodynamic equilibrium means the state in which entropy reaches a maximum and nothing will never change thereafter. That a self finds itself confronted by the two extremes of 'white, black' or 'right, wrong' in which dappled things can lapse into 'entropic grey,' in any case, does indeed give an individual self terrible torments like on the 'rack.'

As already noted, in 1884-86 Hopkins underwent a serious spiritual crisis and wrote the so-called the 'Dark Sonnets.' In 'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves,' completed sometime in 1886, there were no longer positive and bright depictions of dappled things as 'Pied Beauty.' Rather, in this piece, piedness is viewed differently from the perspective of eschatology.

From Flux to Immortality

'That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection,' written in 1888, may be a poem which reconciles the dappledness in 'Pied Beauty' and that in 'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves' in a philosophical way. Dappled things that were grasped in terms of Christianity (especially eschatology) have now been understood in terms of Greek philosophy. Hopkins speaks of this poem thus:

I sent you a sonnet, on the Heraclitean Fire, in which a great deal of early Greek philosophical thought was distilled; but the liquor of the distillation did not taste very Greek, did it? (*Letters*, 291)

In this poem, we should examine exactly what part of Greek philosophy is purified as an essence ('distilled').

Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows | flaunt forth, then chevy on
an air —
Built thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers, in gay-gangs | they throng; they
glitter in marches.
Down roughcast, down dazzling whitewash, | wherever an elm arches,
Shivelights and shadowtackle in long | lashes lace, lance, and pair.

In the first four lines, in a bright way that recalls 'Pied Beauty,' Hopkins described a cloud as a typical example of dappled things. The poet was particularly attracted by the inscapes of clouds, and very often referred to them in his poems and journals. Here, using powerful metaphors, Hopkins depicts the beauty of piedness produced by subtle differences in the forms of clouds: clouds like 'puffball,' 'torn tufts,' or 'tossed pillows,' and the movement of clouds produces the complex interplay between light and shade. Moreover, a thin, sharp beam of light ('shivelights') and shade like ropes and pulleys ('shadowtackle') wonderfully reflect ('lace', 'lance', or 'pair') on walls. Within the dappled things (such as clouds, lights and shades) which reveal their inner characteristics of changeability and unsteadiness (the Many), Hopkins did recognize a stable Idea or Form (the One as God) that in turn supports them.

Delightfully the bright wind boisterous | ropes, wrestles, beats earth bare
Of yestertempest's creases; in pool and rutpeel parches
Squandering ooze to squeezed | dough, crust, dust; stanches, starches
Squandroned masks and manmarks | treadmire toil there
Footfretted in it. Million-fuelèd, | nature's bonfire burns on.

A beacon, an eternal beam. | Flesh fade, and mortal trash
Fall to the residuary worm; | World's wildfire, leave but ash:
In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
I am all at once what Christ is, | since he was what I am, and
This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, | patch, matchwood, immortal diamond,
Is immortal diamond.

Here the Heraclitean idea that everything exists in flux is suddenly been interrupted by the resolute voice of Hopkins ('Enough!'). This is a flourish of bugles alerting us to the moment of the Resurrection. Even though humans leave themselves to the 'residuary worm,' and even though Heraclitean 'world's wildfire' leaves behind only ashes, one can potentially be a Christ oneself, an eternal and everlasting being, by the roaring trumpet of the Resurrection. In other words, those that seem to be worthless to all ('Jack,' 'joke,' 'poor potsherd,' 'patch,' 'matchwood') can become inestimably precious beings ('immortal diamond') at the time of the Resurrection. It is also worth noting that an object Hopkins praises as a dappled thing is, not so much a magnificent and splendid one as an apparently trivial one: the fluid movement of clouds in the sky; the fluctuation of light and shade through the branches of trees; the subtle gradation between colors in animals and plants. Behind these very things is a divine essence which is 'past change;' at a revelational moment, ordinary beings around us (including us) can manifest themselves as an 'immortal diamond.'

The Whole and/or the Parts

The idea of inscape embodied in a dappled thing first appeared in Hopkins' undergraduate note on a Greek philosopher, 'Parmenides,' written in 1867. Therefore, it is clear that the idea of dappledness owes much to the thought of Parmenides.

Since Parmenides flourished before Plato, he belongs to the so-called 'Pre-Socratics,' along with Heraclitus. Pre-Socratics were allegedly the first to speculate on the origins of the universe. Thales proposed the origin of all things

was water; Pythagoras (also known as a mathematician) claimed that it was numbers; Democritus asserted that it was an 'atom,' or indivisible matter. As already noted, Heraclitus proposed that it was fire; Parmenides, a contemporary of Heraclitus, maintained that the primary source was unchanging Being or Reality. In short, Parmenides's idea was based upon the One, whereas Heraclitus's idea, upon the Many. Hopkins expresses admiration for Parmenides in this way:

His great text, which he repeats with religious conviction, is that Being is and Not-being is not—which perhaps one can say, a little over-defining his meaning, means that all things are upheld by instress and are meaningless without it . . . But indeed I have often felt when I have been in this mood and felt the depth of an instress or how fast the inscape holds a thing that nothing is so pregnant and straightforward to the truth as simple *yes* and *is*. (*Journals*, 127)

Hopkins' coinage 'instress' is comprised of different shades of meaning; however, here, it means 'the undercurrent of creative energy that supports and binds together the whole of the created world giving things shape, form and meaning to the eye of the beholder' (McChesney, 28). Hopkins also recognizes Parmenides as 'the great father of Realism' (*Journals*, 127), a precursor of Platonic Realism. Dappledness is, here, grasped in relation to Parmenides' (and Plato's) Realism. The Realism of Parmenides, however, is not completely similar to that of Hopkins. Parmenides 'considered the senses deceptive, and condemned the multitude of sensible things as mere illusion' (Russell, 66); he completely discarded the Many, whereas Hopkins especially emphasized the creative interrelation between the Many and the One (the Being).

In this respect, Hopkins's Realism seems rather more related to the doctrine of Heraclitus mentioned above. Heraclitus, as noted above, insisted upon the perpetual flux of the universe. Even so, he did not solely stress the aspect of the never-ending change: 'His belief in strife is connected with this theory, for in strife opposites combine to produce a motion which is a harmony. There is a

unity in the world, but it is a unity resulting from diversity' (Russell, 62).

Since Heraclitus looked on 'Fire' as 'logos' in his fragment ('everything happens in accordance with this principle (logos)') (*The Presocratics*, 37), there is an underlying principle behind the fluctuating world. Similarly, Hopkins clearly discerned a principle (the One) in the Many. As the Greek term 'logos' implies, Heraclitean 'Fire' in the previously cited poem overlaps with the image of Christ as the Word (logos) (cf. the Gospel of John 1: 1-5).

It is interesting to note that Nietzsche, who was a contemporary of Hopkins and is one of the most influential modern thinkers, was also deeply influenced by the thought of Heraclitus. Nietzsche thought of the world as existing in a state of flux, or 'the eternal recurrence of the same things' (die ewige Wiederkunft des Gleichen). In Nietzsche's primary work, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, he introduced the notion of the 'superman' (Übermensch) who is determined to stay in this fluid and meaningless world. In contrast, Hopkins put an end to a world of Heraclitean flux and replaced it with a world of immortality through Christ. To put it another way, it may represent a shift from the cyclic concept of time in Greek philosophy to the linear concept of time in Christianity.

As stated at the outset of this paper, Hopkins had something in common with modernist thought. However, as Saussure says that 'Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms' (Saussure, 120), in the context of modern linguistics, the whole maintained always priority over the parts. In that circumstance, the self, as Ong puts it, is 'simply a "crossroads," a structure of recurrence' (Ong, 26).

In his poem 'Henry Purcell,' Hopkins described the self as an 'abrupt self there so thrusts on, so throngs the ear.' As the etymology of the word 'abrupt' (ab- = away, off, -rupt = break) demonstrates, the self for Hopkins was something completely detached from other selves.

Digesting and assimilating Greek philosophy and Christian theology, Hopkins developed the idea of dappledness (inscape). Although there is, seemingly, something in common between Hopkins and modernist thinkers, Hopkins' views on difference do not exactly correspond with those of modernists.

Whereas modernist thinkers emphasize that the whole comes before the parts, Hopkins placed significant emphasis upon the tension between the whole (the One) and the parts (the Many), without the parts losing their 'abrupt' selves.

References

- Boardman, John, Jasper Griffin, and Oswyn Murray (eds.), *The Oxford History of Greece and the Hellenistic World*, London: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Brown, Daniel, *Hopkins' Idealism: Philosophy, Physics, Poetry*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.
- Carroll, Robert, and Stephen Prickett (eds.), *The Bible: Authorized King James Version* (Oxford World's Classics), London: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Copleston, Frederick, SJ, *Medieval Philosophy*, London: Methuen, 1952.
- Cotter, James Finn, *Inscape: The Christology and Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972.
- Derrida, Jacques, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.
- Easson, Angus, *Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Routledge Guides To Literature), London: Routledge, 2011.
- Fennell, Francis L. (ed.), *The Fine Delight: Centenary Essays on the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1989.
- Hopkins, Gerard Manley, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Major Works* (Oxford World's Classics), ed. Catherine Phillips, London: Oxford University Press, 2002. All quotations from Hopkins' poetry are taken from this edition.
- *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Humphry House and Graham Storey, 2nd. edn., London: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. Claude Collier Abbott, 2nd (rev.) impression, London: Oxford University Press, 1955.
- *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Norman H. MacKenzie, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- *The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Christopher Devlin, SJ, London: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- MacKenzie, Norman H., *A Reader's Guide to Gerard Manley Hopkins*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1981.
- McChesney, Donald, *A Hopkins Commentary: An Explanatory Commentary on the Main Poems, 1876-89*, London: University of London Press, 1968.
- Miller, J. Hillis, *The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth-Century Writers*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963.
- Milward, Peter, SJ, *A Lifetime with Hopkins*, Naples: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2005.
- *The Priestly Poems of G.M. Hopkins*, Campbell: FastPencil, 2012.
- Mizener, Arthur, 'Victorian Hopkins,' in The Kenyon Critics, *Gerard Manley Hopkins*, Norfolk: New Directions Books, 1945.
- Ong, Walter J., SJ, *Hopkins, the Self, and God*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986.
- Russell, Bertrand, *A History of Western Philosophy*, 2nd.edn., London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961.
- Saussure, Ferdinand de, *Course in General Linguistics*, eds. Charles Bally and Albert Seche-

- hayes, trans. Wade Baskin, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959.
- Salloway, Alison G., *Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972.
- Waterfield, Robin, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and the Sophists* (Oxford World's Classics), London: Oxford University Press, 2000.