

Chapter 1 : What is the study of poetic meter and art of versification called

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Introduction Versification, art of making verses, or the theory of the phonetic structure of verse. This theory considers the phonetic characteristics of verse both as absolute elements and as relative to the other, nonphonetic elements of verse. Theoretically, any phonetic characteristics of a language, such as the number of syllables in an utterance, the degrees of energy or lengths of time taken to utter them, or even their pitch, may be organized into an orderly and symmetrical pattern. The study of versification in the poetry of different languages and periods must take account of these possibilities.

English Versification In the English language the basic system of versification is known as accentual-syllabic. Thus, in English poetry of almost all periods, the verse structure is created both by the fixed or varying numbers of syllables per line and by the constant alternation of accented and unaccented syllables in definite, recurring sequences within each line.

The Foot In accentual-syllabic versification the basic unit of measurement is known as the foot. The foot consists of one accented syllable accompanied by one or two unaccented syllables. In each foot of the example above, one unaccented syllable precedes one accented syllable. This type of foot, called the iamb or iambic foot, is the most common in English verse. The other principal types of foot found in English verse are B. The Line

In addition to accent, the number of syllables to a line is an important determinant of the theoretical pattern of English verse. This syllabic pattern, or meter, is usually expressed in terms of the number of feet to a line. The example given previously contains five feet and is known therefore as a pentameter Greek penta, "five" line. Iambic pentameter is the most common type of verse line in English. Other types of line frequently encountered in English verse are These lines are illustrated in the accompanying table of the principal versification systems. Although each line of a poem often contains the same number of feet, poets also employ lines varying in length either according to a definite scheme or, less frequently, according to expressive need.

Rhyme Another and more obvious way to create a pattern among the various lines of a poem is by the use of rhyme, or identity of sound. Rhyme is established between two or more words or phrases in respect to the vowel of the last accented syllable and to all the sounds following this vowel. Thus, for example, lines rhyme if they end in oar and more, or in table and fable, or in tenderly and slenderly. All of these are so-called perfect rhymes. Imperfect, or slant, rhymes are those in which the phonetic identity is not complete, as in love and remove. Such rhymes are sometimes used to avoid monotony or to support some other purpose in a poem; occasionally they are used as part of a regular pattern. The following is an example of internal rhyme: Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary, Rhyme is found commonly in almost all periods of English verse. A notable form, which was used as early as the 14th century by Geoffrey Chaucer and which became very popular in the late 17th and 18th centuries, is the couplet, a recurring unit of two successive rhymed lines: Know then thyself, presume not God to scan; The proper study of mankind is man. Couplets of iambic pentameter, like the above, are the most frequent in English, but iambic tetrameter couplets were popular in the Middle Ages 5th century to 15th century and are used in modern times. They are called octosyllabic couplets Greek okto, "eight" , because each line has eight syllables: For his Religion it was fit To match his learning and his wit. Not all English verse is rhymed. A notable type of unrhymed verse often used in English is blank verse, unrhymed lines of iambic pentameter. It is the basic type of verse found in the plays of William Shakespeare and in the epic poems of John Milton. The Stanza When the pattern of rhymes, or rhyme scheme, extends beyond two or sometimes three lines, the entire group of rhymed lines is called a stanza. In poems containing more than one stanza, the pattern of the first stanza is usually, although not invariably, repeated in each succeeding one. The rhyme scheme of any stanza is commonly indicated by a series of letters, in which each recurring rhyme is designated by one letter, as in this example, in which the rhyme scheme is abab: At daybreak on the hill they stood That overlooked the moor, And thence they saw the bridge of wood, A furlong from their door. Stanzas may be composed of lines of the same length or of varying length, as in the example above, in which iambic tetrameters alternate with iambic trimeters. Stanzas of four

lines, like this one, are called quatrains; when the rhyme scheme and line lengths are as above, the stanzas are called ballad stanzas, because many English and Scottish ballads follow this form. Other traditional stanzaic patterns are used in English verse. Terza rima, a verse form consisting of three-line stanzas in the rhyme scheme aba, bcb,cdc, etc. Quatrains sometimes are arranged in other rhyme schemes, such as abba. A stanza of seven iambic pentameter lines rhyming ababbcc, known as rhyme royal, was frequently used by Chaucer and his followers and was often imitated by later poets. Ottava rima, an eight-line stanza rhyming abababcc borrowed from Italian verse by English poets of the Renaissance 14th century to 17th century, subsequently became highly popular. The sonnet, perhaps the most popular stanza form in English poetry, almost invariably contains 14 lines of iambic pentameter.

Variable Elements The actual appeal of verse to the ear depends only in part on the regular, theoretical patterns of syllables, accents, and rhyme. Even if it were possible in the English language to produce an unvarying pattern in which all of the accents had the same strength, poets would consider such a pattern monotonous and would avoid it. The degree and kind of departures from and additions to the basic patterns of verse vary widely from poet to poet; such variations contribute to the richness and diversity of the English poetic tradition.

Stress Among the possible variations and nonpatterned effects, one of the most important is stress, or differentiation in the degree of accent. Some phoneticians claim that four degrees of stress are distinguished by ordinary speakers of English; others claim that only two degrees are meaningful to speakers and attended to by them. It is usually assumed by students of poetry, however, that degrees of stress intermediate between fully accented and unaccented syllables in a line of verse are important to its verbal music. Thus in the iambic pentameter line accents 2, 4, and 5 are strongest, 1 is weaker, and 3 is weakest. Reading this line with approximately equal stress on each accented syllable produces a monotonous, singsong effect and puts an unnatural emphasis on the less important words *Amid* and *on*. Most good English poets produce an interplay between the natural stresses of speech and the basic verse pattern. Another and more obvious kind of variation in stress is produced by occasionally introducing an extra syllable or a foot differing from the regular ones in the line. In the following example, in which the theoretical pattern is iambic pentameter, the third is made an anapest by introducing a second accented syllable, and one more unaccented syllable is added beyond the regular pattern at the end of the line: A line ending with an unaccented syllable is said to be feminine. Lines ending in accented syllables are called masculine. In the following line, also iambic pentameter in pattern, the accent patterns of the first and second feet are reversed, producing two trochees: Two accented syllables or two unaccented syllables may also be substituted for a conventional iamb or trochee. A foot of two accented syllables is called a spondee, as in the first three feet of this example, in which the theoretical pattern is actually iambic pentameter: A foot of two unaccented syllables is called a pyrrhic foot, as in the fourth foot below: The most extreme departure from the theoretical stress-pattern of English verse is free verse, which is composed in lines of irregular length, according to expressive need, but approximating the balanced cadences of music.

Pause Apart from degrees and shifts of stress, another kind of variation from the theoretical pattern must be accounted for in terms of the length and phonetic character of the pauses, or intervals, between syllables of verse. Almost any particular line of iambic pentameter, no matter how regular, will depart slightly in rhythm from the absolutely regular pattern that can be produced by uttering "da-dum, da-dum, da-dum, da-dum da-dum. Traditionally, however, poets, hearers, and readers have thought of this interval simply in terms of time. A strong pause in a line is called a caesura, indicated by double bars in the following lines of iambic pentameter: When the pause comes at the end of the line, the line is said to be end-stopped, as in the second line above. When the sense of the poetic statement continues from one line into the next, however, so that no pause occurs at the line end, the first line, as in the example above, is said to be a run-on, or enjambed, line. The tension and complex interplay created when a syntactic unit does not coincide with a ten-syllable line unit is especially featured in blank verse. **Sound Quality** Like the variations in the stress of syllables and in the character of the intervals between them, a third factor independent of the theoretical pattern becomes very important to its enrichment. This factor is vowel and consonant quality. In general the quality or coloration of sounds has much to do with the effect of a line or of a poem in ways that have not been fully investigated. Harsh sounds, for instance, like the word *harsh* itself, may suggest pain or effort; soft ones, like the word *pure*, may suggest joy or peace. Specifically, however, the patterns resulting

from resemblances between vowel and consonant sounds are based upon traditional or conventional interpretations. The repetition of the same sounds in the first syllables, or first accented syllables, of words is called alliteration: Looking and loving our behaviors pass The stones, the steels and the polished glass, The repetition of the same stressed vowel sounds with different consonants is called assonance: And all the summer through the water saunter. Here the n-sound in saunter prevents the two words from rhyming perfectly, which would spoil the effect. The repetition of consonantal sounds when the vowel sounds differ is called consonance: And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes. The use of sounds that supposedly echo or suggest the meaning is called onomatopoeia: The moan of doves in immemorial elms. Finally, rhyme, which was discussed as part of the theoretical pattern of English verse, is of extreme importance in contributing to the sound quality of poetry.

Other Systems of Versification Other systems of versification include the quantitative, the syllabic, and the accentual.

Quantitative Versification The versification of classical Greek and Latin poetry is said to be quantitative because its main principle of patterning is the length of time taken to utter syllables, in contradistinction to the stress, or degrees of energy with which they are uttered, as in English. In the typical foot of a dactylic hexameter, for example see Latin example in the accompanying table , the first syllable is thought of as being longer than the other two and not as being accented more strongly than the others. End rhyme was not used in such verse. This system is called syllabic because within the line the number of syllables, and not their accent or length, is the most important factor. In French poetry the line most often used is the alexandrine, which contains 12 syllables with a caesura after the sixth syllable. Although the line is not constructed on a pattern of accents, two basic stresses are felt. These stresses fall on the final syllable of the line and on the syllable preceding the caesura see accompanying table. End rhyme is a frequent feature of Romance-language verse. In all probability the features of syllable counting and rhyme in English verse are a heritage from French and Italian verse.

Accentual Versification The verse of the ancient Germanic peoples, including Old English verse, was accentual. Four stress accents are distributed through each line of Old English verse, but the number of unaccented syllables to the line is not fixed, so that a variable number of unaccented syllables, or none, may intervene between stresses see accompanying table. Furthermore, alliteration in two or three of the four stresses per line, another invariable feature of this verse, was both a guide to the accent and an embellishment. Accentual verse remained popular in English as late as the 15th century. It exhibited end rhyme only in the later phases of its history, when its rules had become considerably relaxed.

Chapter 2 : Study of versification Crossword Clue

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A foot is a group of syllables combined in one of several fixed patterns. These syllables, usually one to three in number, have a definite value in relation to each other. In the Classical languages the difference in the value of syllables depended upon what was known as quantity—that is, the amount of time required to pronounce the syllables; the syllables were called long or short and were so indicated in any scheme of metrical analysis. In English poetry, however, the basis of determining the value of syllables is not quantity but accent. Several systems of notating accent are used, including the Classical long and short marks: The iambic foot is the most common in English poetry; it is found chiefly in tetrameter and pentameter lines. In scanning poetry, one must pay attention to the meaning as well as to the rhythm and must be careful not to mispronounce words or to distort the emphasis of the sentence. Reading poetry aloud is one of the best ways to catch the rhythm. The prose sense of the poem indicates the true meter, and in turn the meter heightens the sense. Of course, some words allow more than one pronunciation, and words like heaven and even may be pronounced in one syllable or in two syllables, as the meter demands. Final nonsyllabic edis sometimes pronounced as a separate syllable, and syllabic vowels coming together are very frequently telescoped or elided, into one syllable. Note the scansion of the following lines: Some lines may have two or more pauses, but only the more emphatic one is the caesura. Although it is usual for this pause to come near the middle of the line, it may occur anywhere, between feet or within them. Indeed, variety and effectiveness are gained by a constant shifting of the caesura in succeeding lines. As a rule, the caesura coincides with a pause in the sense. If the pause follows an accented syllable, the caesura is said to be masculine; if it follows an unaccented syllable, it is said to be feminine. A caesura is commonly indicated thus Each of the two segments of a line of poetry so divided is called a hemistich. Feminine caesuras occur in lines 2 and 10; the others are masculine. Although widely used in France, it has never become popular in England. It was used in the Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester c. As far as we know, the Earl of Surrey c. Moreover, it is rather consistently end-stopped a natural pause falling at the end of a line, and hence has the quality of conventional couplets without rhyme. With Milton's blank verse achieves broad rhetorical variety, partly through the run-on line the end of a line does not correspond to a natural pause in speech; see enjambement, p. Wordsworth shows a certain Miltonic influence, but adapts blank verse to serve his purpose of more simple and direct communication. Tennyson elevates it to a new eloquence suitable for the variety of themes with which he concerned himself. The essential naturalness of blank verse has been felt sufficient justification for its continued use by many modern poets. No other set meter in English lends itself so well to the characteristic expression of individual authors. Who can express the slaughter of that night, Or tell the number of the corpses slain, Or can in tears bewail them worthily? The ancient famous city falleth down, That many years did hold such seignory. With senseless bodies every street is spread, Each palace, and sacred porch of the gods. And if thou pitiest Tamburlaine the Great, Come down from Heaven, and live with me again! It is the east, and Juliet is the sun. Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon, Who is already sick and pale with grief That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she. Shall they hoist me up And show me to the shouting varletry Of censuring Rome? Rather a ditch in Egypt Be gentle grave unto me! On one side lay the ocean and on one Lay a great water, and the moon was full. Often you must have seen them Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning After a rain. Indeed, if they were, in a poem of any length the result would be not only obviously monotonous but also rather unnatural in phrasing. Thus variety in metrical pattern is both essential and pleasing. Sometimes a line contains more or fewer syllables than the prevailing number. The addition of one or two syllables at the beginning of a line is known as anacrusis; a weak or feminine ending. The omission of syllables at the beginning of a line is called truncation; at the end of a line, catalexis. A line terminating in an imperfect foot is thus called catalectic. If the line ends with a complete metrical foot, it is acatalectic. In the scansion of a line of verse a caret ^ may be used to indicate the omission of a syllable. Though the number of syllables varies from seven to twelve, there are only four accents. The principle, however, can be seen as far back as Old English poetry. Hopkins noted the existence of reversed

feet; these, he said, involved "putting the stress where, to judge by the rest of the metre, the slack should be and the slack where the stress. Hopkins used the sign to denote the existence of such counterpointing. Hopkins pointed out that sprung rhythm emerges when a regular metrical pattern is obscured by the amount of counterpointing. The stress regularly falls on the first syllable of each foot where there is only one syllable the stress falls on that. Sprung rhythm is marked by four principal types of feet—the monosyllabic, trochaic, dactylic, and First Paeonic, marked -xxx. The most obvious feature of sprung rhythm is extreme metrical irregularity. Hopkins felt that two important advantages in this type of rhythm were that "it is nearest to the rhythm of prose" and that it combines opposite, and one would have thought, incompatible excellences, markedness of rhythm. It depends for its effect upon cadence, upon subtle variations in rhythm and in length of line, upon recurring images, and upon what Amy Lowell, an ardent exponent of the form, called "a delicate sense of balance. Some literary prose has a rhythm that makes it almost indistinguishable from free verse. Of equal or more importance in this connection are countless portions of the English Bible, particularly passages from Isaiah, Job, Psalms, the Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. These were originally Hebrew poems, unrhymed but rich in rhythmic flow. The King James translators recaptured much of the Hebrew music, and only the slightest rearrangements are necessary to turn the verses into poetic form. The Lord reigneth; He is clothed with majesty; The Lord is clothed with strength, Wherewith he hath girded himself. The world also is established, That it cannot be moved. Thy throne is established of old: Thou art from everlasting. It is seen in the irregularity and the vigorous swing of Anglo-Saxon verse, with its varying alliterative design; and it appears also in Middle English poems, like *Piers Plowman*, that were written in alliterative pattern. Any poem that relies only upon rhyme as its distinguishing metrical mark and derives its peculiar power from irregularity of rhythm and form suggests a tendency toward the structure of free verse. The American poet Walt Whitman is one of the greatest masters of free verse. When I heard the learned astronomer; When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me When I was shown the charts and the diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them; When I, sitting, heard the astronomer, where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room, How soon, unaccountable, I became tired and sick; Till, rising and gliding out, I wandered off by myself, In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time, Looked up in perfect silence at the stars. Lawrence have been particularly successful. Pound believed that the poet should "compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of a metronome. Lawrence said there was one type of poetry which concerned itself with the ideal and the abstract, and another which concerned itself with "the immediate present. In free verse, he wrote, "there is no rhythm which returns upon itself, no serpent of eternity with its tail in its own mouth. There is no static perfection, none of that finality which we find so satisfying because we are so frightened. In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark rob-tree I came down the steps with my pitcher And must wait, must stand and wait, for there he was at the trough before me. Although it does not appear commonly in English verse until after the Norman Conquest of , it was frequently used in Latin poetry as early as the fourth century along with the traditional quantitative measure. Because rhyme was common in Latin folk poetry, it became a distinctive mark of the Latin hymns of the Church, and as these were early used in Britain, they exerted considerable influence upon English verse, which, before the Middle English period, had employed the Germanic system of alliteration. Rhyme is the similarity of final sounds in two or more words. Words are said to rhyme if the accented vowels have the same sound, if the sounds following those vowels are the same, and if the consonants preceding the vowels are different. Examples are deep sleep, shade-made, orn-forlorn, swallow-follow, snow-flow. Usage allows so-called imperfect rhymes, sometimes referred to as slant rhymes or pararhymes that is, words with slight variations in the accented vowels, such as earth-hearth, heaven-given, love-prove, guest-feast. A rhyme in which only single syllables correspond is called a masculine rhyme, as home--roam; one in which two syllables correspond is called a feminine rhyme, as otion-potion; one in which three syllables correspond is called a triple or multiple rhyme, as tenderly-slenderly. Rhyming words usually come at the ends of lines, but sometimes internal rhymes are used in which the last word in a line rhymes with a word near the middle of the line. And through the drifts the snowy clifts Did send a dismal sheen; Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken The ice was all between. The rhyme scheme of a poem or a stanza is indicated by letters of the alphabet, rhyming lines being designated

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with the same letter. The rhyme scheme of the stanza quoted above is abcb, with the second and fourth lines rhyming. Two other terms, homonym and homophone, should be noted in connection with rhyme. The Anglo-Saxon line of verse is broken into two parts, each of which contains two strongly stressed syllables. The third stressed syllable in the line alliterates with the first or the second stressed syllable, or with both. Only identical consonants alliterate, but all vowels alliterate. With this prominence given to stressed syllables, there is considerable freedom about unstressed syllables, both in number and in position. Middle English poetry revived for a time, often excessively, the alliterative verse form. It is seen at its best in some of the poetic romances like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and in *Piers Plowman*, the opening lines of which are scanned as indicated below. But trusteth wel, I am a Southren man, I kan nat geeste "rum, ram, ruf" by lettre, Ne, God woot, rym holde I but litel better; And therefore, if yow list, I wol nat glose, I wol yow telle a myrie tale in prose. As such it was used freely in early Elizabethan lyric poetry, and has been commonly employed in subsequent verse; indeed it has been something of a stylistic instinct among all English-speaking peoples. The skillful introduction of alliteration can greatly intensify the effect of even a matter-of-fact passage. Yet the oak is left That grew beside their door; and the remains Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

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