SECTION III
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THE POEM: ELEMENTS AND STRUCTURES

The central axis in versification is the same line of force which cuts through the larger domain of general aesthetics, the distinction between aesthetic object and aesthetic experience. Most of the problems in English metrical theory, for example, can eventually be traced to category mistakes about precisely this distinction, or in other words to confusions about the ontological status (situs) of "the poem." Modern criticism has not come to recognize the essential terms (and implications) of its conception of poetry either very clearly or very directly, in part, I suspect, because of the rigidly inductive methods of New Criticism, yet it is particularly obvious in versification that, in regard to clarity about assumptions, a gram of prevention is worth of kilogram of cure. Modern criticism has also stacked its deck very heavily in favor of the objective perspective (as opposed to the experiential), a stacking
which may be effectively gauged by comparing the size of the present Section to Section IV. We really know very little about reader processing of literary texts. Yet there are clear signs of change in the wind, and we may hope for not only a rectification of the imbalance but also an eventual synthesis of this diremption in versification and aesthetics—and epistemology.

As for the present Section, I need only say that it is one of the principle functions of versification theory to identify the primary or material elements which comprise the poem (Aristotle's material cause) and the structures or patterns (formal cause) in which they regularly array themselves. Questions of effect are another matter. The elements, simply put, are the specific features of sound, in the aural dimension, and the shape, size, spacing, and positioning of letters and words in the visual dimension of the poem. The structures, in English verse, have traditionally been called "rhyme," "meter," "enjambement," "quatrain," and so on, though most of these terms turn out to be very blurry on close inspection; they overlap a good deal. No typology has been worked out yet for visual structures, mainly because until very recently the visual mode of the poem was generally considered only a "copy" or "record" of "the poem" and hence not a primary category of attributes. Critics and theorists, faced with the prospect of an aesthetic phenomenon apparently manifesting itself in two equilibrated modes, have consistently preferred some other model for poetry instead, such as score-and-performance (as music), or norm-behind-all-realizations (whether copies or performances), or even idea-behind-any-realization. The traditional concepts and terms seem badly in need of rethinking, but such a reorganization will have to proceed from an even more pivotal rethinking of our most general assumptions about the nature and modes of poetry.
And wash the dusk with silver.
--said to be the most mellifluous line in all of English poetry

Despite the treatment of Poetic Sound usually given in the handbooks, this category of prosodic patterning ultimately cannot be separated from Meter. In the case of rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and the like we have a patterning of one feature or aspect of the very complex phenomenon we usually think of simply as “sound,” i.e. the so-called “segmental phonemes” (the vowels and consonants, which are actually formed of bands of pitches), whereas in the case of meter we have an organization of another aspect of the sound-
complex, the "suprasegmental phonemes," which in English specifically means stress. Both
of these dimensions are meaningful in speech (hence poetry); abstractly speaking, neither
has any precedence over the other. They can be isolated for separate analysis if we so desire,
but in production they are combined, which suggests that the end result of our analytical
isolations ought to be synthetic too. The problem in versification, though, is simply that we
do not have any convenient term for segmental patterning as we do for the suprasegmental
(i.e. "meter"), a fact which accurately indexes the primitive state of our analytic. Prosodists
in the past have been interested mainly in haggling over terminology and in devising classi-
fication schemes either too gross or too fine for any pragmatic value, though more recently
they have begun to pay attention to structural and semantic function and effect, so we may
expect that a holistic theory will eventually be forthcoming. Such a theory will be complex
in precisely the way that sound itself is complex: it will recognize that in the production
and recognition of the soundstream a hierarchical, multiple overlay of discrete phenomena
is being presented simultaneously then varied successively as the utterance proceeds. The
implication for versification will be not only that no rigid diremption between sound and
meter will need to be made, but that we will be able to discern more precisely (via frame
analysis) the order and degree of meaningful units as they are elaborated into the serial and
synchral patterns of the poem. But at present we are still a very long way from any coherent
statement of such a theory, and so we will have to concern ourselves more immediately
with clearing away as much as possible of the great mass of complacent, confused, and
grossly simplistic treatments of rhyme, alliteration, and onomatopoeia which have been
perpetrated in the past. We will require not only new categories and terms, but also new
methodologies, new understandings of organization, new ways of seeing. One such per-
ceptual re-vision will be the recognition that what we used to think of as specifically "po-
etic" devices are in fact simply specially conventionalized instances of wider processes in the
language as a whole, processes that are surprisingly common and familiar. The present
chapter is arranged so as to encourage further investigation of this phenomenon. The
chapter also includes more generalized studies, and it begins with a section on pronuncia-
tion, since an understanding of the correct vocalization of a poem, (essentially in historical
terms rather than for authorial dialect or idiolect, though these may pertain) is the absolute
first requisite for any valid analysis. Poetries other than English (see Appendix A) use differ-
ent strategies for sonal patterning, of course, as for instance assonance in Spanish verse. A
comparative perspective is essential. For this reason, be sure not to overlook D. I. Masson's
late, perhaps summative monograph on sound-patterning in Western poetry (L102)--a very
refulgent work.

PROUNUNCIATION

The First Axiom of prosodic analysis is that one is studying the sound a poem makes-
not the letters of its graphic representation but the sounds that comprise the syllables, and
especially the precise sounds (so far as we can recover them) that were made when the
poem was written, in a period prior to our own, when the phonetic structure of the Eng-
lish language was different--in large part or small--from what it is now. There is some ar-
gentum on this last point, yet no critic to my knowledge has argued that an understanding
of historical phonology is entirely irrelevant to versification. Certainly the converse is true:
much of our information about pronunciation in the early stages of the language, for which
reliable texts are rare, comes from the evidence of rhymes, and even though that approach
is potentially circular (we assume that true rhymes were the rule rather than near-rhymes),
the bulk and consistency of the evidence argue in its favor. If then rhymes can tell us about
phonology, phonology may be able to tell us about other matters, such as elision. So the
prosodist must be willing to garner at least a functional familiarity with historical phonol-
ogy. If, though, the proper historical pronunciation of a poem is at least relevant to full un-
derstanding, is authorial dialect or idiolect (think of Yeats, or Keats) relevant as well?
Opinion here is more sharply divided. I cite below only the standard works in the field and those smaller studies that are obviously relevant; many others have been passed over.

So far as I know an untapped cask of examples of rhymes which earlier English poets thought acceptable but which seem unnatural to us now, after changes in pronunciation.

Based on his dissertation at New York University in 1948.

Treats not only pronunciation and spelling but also meter, rhyme, and puns.


The standard authority. The first volume surveys the work of the English orthoepists and phoneticians between 1500 and 1700 and is valuable for cross-checking evidence of spelling or pronunciation from poems against the authorities of the period (note the prefatory principles of transliteration). Volume 2 provides a systematic Phonology.

C8    -----.


C11   -----.

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C13 Hanley, Miles L. Index to Rimes in American and English Poetry, 1500-1900. Madison, Wis.: Microcard Foundation, 1959. The set of microcards simply reproduces a card-file (over 100,000 cards) of rimes drawn from a large number of miscellanies and anthologies; no analysis or synthesis. The work was unfinished at the author's death.


C18 Lange, Alexander F. "The Vowel Signs and Sounds in Tottel's Miscellany." Diss., University of Michigan, 1892.


sections on Stress and Quantity in Old, Middle, and Modern English—(respectively) sections, 356-411, 609-40, and 939-44. Précis: "But in practice it is impossible fully to harmonize the natural quantity and stress of a language with the artificial quantity and stress of metre; one or the other must go to the wall."


See also: C205, C214, C321, K8-9, K49, K77, K126, K141, K155, K201, K256, K385, K401.

**GENERAL STUDIES**

C33 Axelrod, Joseph. "Cummings and Phonetics." *Poetry* 65 (1944): 88-94. The visual deployment of type in the eighth poem of *1 x 1* is a movement not toward graphic design, as many would have it, but a strategic evocation of sound patterns themselves. Cummings never relinquished a "direct concern with sound."


1. Style as Detail of Meaning
2. Qualities of Style
3. The Sound of Poetry
4. Verse
5. Sound and Sense.

In the third of these, Beardsley provides a schematization of structural relationships in the sound-stratum of a poem which is more cogent than anything else I have seen.
There are, then, six relations, which Beardsley groups as Sound Quality (timbre), Sound Similarity (sonal mimesis or "homophony"), and Sound Pattern (meter). The account which he gives of meter is the traditional one articulated in his seminal essay written with Wimsatt (E700). "A stressed syllable introduces a kind of phonetic punctuation in the flow of speech, and breaks up that flow into groups, or feet." Verse consists of two independent organization systems—meter and line. The function of line-division lies in "dividing up the flow of prose into rhythmic sections, thereby introducing new and sometimes very significant emphases and suggestions—slowing it down in smaller units," though divisions on the page are not real unless they "correspond in some way to differences that can be performed and heard." Meter, however, is "neither necessary nor sufficient" to verse.

On sonal mimesis Beardsley is willing, cautiously, to go as far as Ranson, asserting that poetic language seems to aspire to a condition of total mimesis, wherein the sound of the words would "dramatize and enact" their meaning.

From his earlier study of poetic Grammar, Berry extends his horizons to the wider significance of the concept of voice in poetry. We know that every man alive has a distinctive voice, in terms of pitch, duration, volume, timbre, intonation, overtones, register, reverberation, and echo. We know that a man's voice may change over time. We know that poets are supremely sensitive to the textures of sound. And in the case of some poets we have recorded information—written or taped—on the nature of their physical speech. We may assume that a poet's intonational idiolect will be manifested in his lines, when he is not writing under a persona. Hence, the poet's physical voice ought to be recoverable from his surviving poetry. What a pity it is that Berry did not consider the now largely forgotten speculations of Eduard Sievers on precisely this point, intonational idiolects, which he termed schallanalyse.


In Birkhoff's system the measure of aesthetic value is that of order to complexity, or \[ M = \frac{O}{C} \]. He reviews the theories of Sylvester (E402) and Poe (E315), then derives an equation for measuring sound-patterning,

\[
M = \frac{O}{C} = \frac{aa + 2r + 2m - 2ae - 2ce}{C}
\]

where

\[
aa = \text{number of alliterations (<4),}
\]
2r = number of rhymes (doubly weighted, as one sees),
2m = musical vowels,
2ae = alliterative vowels
2ce = consonantal excess.

The first stanza of "Kubla Khan" scores a resounding .83, while, happily, E. A. Guest scores a miserable .45.


Remarkably minute explication of "the poem as it unfolds itself, phrase by phrase," as "each following phrase develops, modifies, or opposes what has gone before," shows that the evolving pattern of sound, qua sound, bodies forth the meaning in a manner that is "something analogous to thematic transformations." The changes in the metaphorical progresses, too, "are felt directly as progressions of analogies with sensation: visual, auditory, tactile, kinetic." Texts: "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves," "Mariana.


A very sensible observation that much of the sonal texturing or "musicality" of verse inheres not in overt echoes of identical sounds but rather in concealed alliterations and repetitions of phonemes in the same family, e.g.

- d --- th (voiced) b --- v
- n --- th (unvoiced) and m --- f
- p --- f

The four primary types of sonal figuration are repetition, chiasmus, augmentation, and diminuition. All of these are common in Coleridge, as is the ablaut rhyme (heaven-haven).

C43 Burklund, Carl E. "Melody in Verse." Quarterly Journal of Speech 39 (1953): 57-60. A no part of versification has been "so meagerly explained" as melody. Always working very close to his examples, Burklund emphasizes the central concept of repetition and identifies some patterns: ABBA, ABC/ABDC, and AABA/BCCDB.


C45 Chatman, Seymour. "Linguistics, Poetics, and Interpretation: the Phonemic Dimension." Quarterly Journal of Speech 43 (1957): 248-56. A survey of the applications of (1) segmental and (2) suprasegmental phonology to poetics. O n the first level Chatman devalues the importance of "sound symbolism"-i.e. specific phonemes having associated meanings-but emphasizes the neglected counterview, that "segmental sounds occur in patterns and clusters which have aesthetic effects if not readily discernable meanings." He also upholds the concept of "formal saliency"-i.e., a sound-pattern will inten-
sify the lexical import of a phrase regardless of whether it denotes exuberance or grief—and the importance of unusual patterning of sound, e.g. "transitional probabilities" of tempo in Keats. On the suprasegmental level, Trager-Smith's elucidation of pitch, stress, and juncture can resolve ambiguities of interpretation.

C46 J. C. McLaughlin is nearly contemptuous in reply (44 (1958): 175-78), accusing Chatman of demonstrating (1) causes, not effects, which are (2) true but trivial.

Studying timbre, intonation, stress, and duration, Collins identifies four functions—symbolic, emphatic, paralinguistic, and aesthetic—concluding that the whole field is "still largely in the prescientific stage." Given the high precision of some other studies in comparison with this one, one sees why that is so.

To speak of melody in verse is to draw on the analogy of the serial ordering of pitches in music, and Cook appropriates the names of the notes to indicate the melodic contours (pitch patterns) of lines of verse. Also discussed at length are the other three elements of music—rhythm, harmony, and timbre.


The meaning of this old idiom of approbation the author finds to be "the artful collocation of sounds," especially rhyme and assonance. But the other pattern receives the whip near the end, where the author spurns "the egregious and palpable affectation. . . . the disgusting habit of alliteration."

A critique of Masson's analysis of this poem (C89) complaining of inattention to the Irish features of Yeats's voice, a methodology that Masson himself criticizes, ignorance of the probabilities for random occurrence of patterns, and unreasonable conflation of sounds being analyzed. Cf. Venter (C106).

Rather mechanical analysis of (1) the rhythm of the poem, using La Drière's (E570) scansion system, (2) "quantitative structure" of sound, and (3) "qualitative structure" (the patterning of sound in six sensitive positions in the line, such as line-end, before the caesura, ends of rhythm groups, and on stressed syllables).

C54 E., A. "O n Q uality of Sound." T L S 19 (May 1921, p. 323.
Citing mellifluous examples, the author wonders aloud why certain sequences of sonants are pleasing; he notes the more firmly established laws for harmony and contrast of colors in music and suggests that the same should be worked out for combinations of sound.

Forty-nine isolated sounds were rated as either Pleasant, Indifferent, or Unpleasant by student subjects in this experiment. Five sounds were found to be
Pleasant, two Indifferent, and two Unpleasant; after statistical significance tests and after removal of the Indifferent category, fourteen sounds were Pleasant, five Unpleasant. See next entry.

Which sounds will (congenitally vs. adventitiously) deaf persons consider pleasant and unpleasant? Respectively, m, n, /i/, and /ei/; zh and wh. Relatively few sounds were judged downright disagreeable.

Observations on the general sense of ambience or mood, as well as the "hints" and "impressions of character," which may be conveyed by the verbal medium of Shakespearean drama considered purely as sound-stratum. Exemplified in All's Well and Coriolanus.

"The articulatory stratum of its speech stream is artistically present in the total meaning of the poem." Includes a chapter on stress and metrics.

Cites over fifty instances of -ss- occurring in Tennyson's poetry, in direct contradiction to the Laureate's statement that he never allowed such a repetition. But then our Homer only nodded these fifty times in 5000 lines. Comparative statistics for Milton and Arnold. Cf. L. L. (C69) and Shewan et al. (C100).

Insists that the sound of words rather than their visual form is crucial in certain poems.

This odd study attempts to measure the motor response of individuals to the sounds in lines of verse, as compared with norms of nonsense syllables and "transmogrified" lines of verse, via the method of measuring subtle variations in finger-tapping movements on the sounds of stressed syllables in iambic lines. The issue is whether or not the sounds of poetry produce some greater amount of, or gestalt of, "effect" in auditors than the sum total of nonpoetic sounds in equivalent "dummy" configurations. The author had hopes of discovering a "tonal calculus." No conclusion is reached (see p. 128).

Trager-Smith transcription and computer tabulation of phonemes and distinctive features in the poetry, sorted by three chronological periods in Thomas's development. Thomas used sonal mimesis most effectively in his middle period, and he seems to have had certain preferences among sounds.

In a preliminary study, ingenious sound dummies of poems were constructed, very similar in sound but semantically empty, and subjects then matched these to descriptive adjectives. Agreement on which sounds were mellifluous was generally good. In the main study similar matching was performed on a far more complex model—a dummy eight-line pentameter stanza rhyming a b a b b c b c in which simple patterns of light vs. dark vowels and smooth vs. harsh consonants were deployed, three to a stanza, the patterning recognizably repetitive but also varied, the test sounds placed only on stressed syllables. Commonmetrical variations of the pentameter were also built in to test the influence of meter, and the inflections of the reader's voice were also considered. A fascinating curiosity.

On the relation of sound to meaning in metaphor. Hewitt draws upon neurophysiology research of the past century to try to show that the best ("opaque" rather than "transparent") metaphors constitute a "coupling" [her term, and Levin's though she does not draw upon him] between aural complexity and semantic density or opacity. In short, the left hemisphere of the brain responds to the verbal/semantic aspects of the metaphor [all speech, in fact] while the right one responds to the nonverbal, purely aural patterning. That is why an appeal to either side of the brain is unsatisfying to us; in the best verbal art both hemispheres are engaged simultaneously. Further, poets may turn this neurological state of affairs to advantage, whenever the sense of their verse is particularly formidable, "by fusing parts or series of difficult lines with a strong sound pattern which persuades us, even when we cannot see clearly the sense pattern, that the lines have an integrity, a wholeness as poetry." These two features, sonal and semantic complexity, may be set as the axes of a Cartesian graph for purposes of mapping relations of poems.

Lines dense in l or m sounds are often "pointed" with one strong and contrasting consonant.

Despite all critical justifications and apologetics, Arnold's discordant imagery and word-sounds were an important, intentional aspect of his aesthetic.

Analysis of sound and rhythm in three poems.

An extension of Lynch's work on "summative words" in sonnets (C78): Hymes surveys the recent literature, giving the whole question of the sound-meaning nexus in poetry and in language a much more penetrating and careful consideration than his predecessors, then concludes from analysis of ten sonnets each from Wordsworth and Keats that the phenomenon Lynch postulated is generally valid (six of the twenty had an unquestionable summative word, seven had some approximation of one, and five had none).

Discussion of lines in Tennyson and others, showing effects and difficulties of too many s's, especially ending one word and beginning the next. Cf. Franklin (C59) and Shewan et. al. (C100).
"The elements of which literary structures are composed are of course the linguistic elements of sound and meaning." In the older tradition, all the relations between these elements were classed as Grammar (i.e. Linguistics), Rhetoric, Logic, or Poetics (Aesthetics). The latter, poetic, function is simply "coherence of structure" per se, and thus the poetic impulse will organize any or all of the aspects of language available to it indiscriminately and without any a priori order; these aspects are sound, qua sound, and meaning. The purely aesthetic structuring may be of the intrinsic features of sounds, or of meanings, usually both, and the structuring of the one may lie in parallel, contrast, counterpoint, or other relation to that of the other. At present, however, we know the elements and structures of sound far better than any of those for meaning. Yet, La Drière concludes, "the semantic structure of poetry is more like the poetic structure of sounds than it is like the semantic structures of logic, or of rhetoric, or even of grammar so far as those exist." At a high level of abstraction, the essay ranges widely; the reader may wish to begin on p. 97.


Locock, Charles D[elatry]. Notes on the Technique of English Poetry London: H. & W. Brown, 1938. 32 pp. Pamphlet. A compressed statement of some inductive "rules" for the melody of verse, specifically in the endings of blank verse lines and in various sequences of vowel sounds (beyond question some sequences are more sonorous than others). He also suggests that much of the "melodious" effect of a verse line depends on the position of the line in the stanza. All of this merits further pursuit.

Logan, H. M. "The Computer and the Sound-Texture of Poetry." Language and Style 9 (1976): 260-79. We may never be able to extract the god from the machine but we can adapt its immense capacity for counting and sorting great masses of data. Logan program tabulates (1) the rank-order of frequencies of consonants (are certain distributions of sounds "poetic"?), (2) the patterns of sonal repetition, and (3) distinctive-feature distributions in poetic texts. This last analysis is explored further than the other two.

Lord, John B. "Of Frost, Cats, Poetry, and Distinctive Feature Analysis." Language and Style 11 (1978): 173-80. Systematic analysis of the distinctive acoustic (as opposed to articulatory) features of the sounds in a short versifying exercise by Frost (or is it an exercise in "the sound of sense"?) seems to show, if we can believe it, that he was interested in manipulating not whole sound-patterns but isolable features of individual sounds.

Lord -----. "Two Phonological Analysis of Poe's 'To Helen.'" Language and Style 3 (1970): 147-58. A phonemic-semantic relationship analysis and a distinctive-feature analysis of the poem reveal some trivially obvious features and some that are neither: two themes in the poem are supported by sound-patterning—H Helen-dasic and poet-wanderer—and two unobtrusive prepositions—from and with--turn out to have unusual significance. Lord's presentation, though technical, is simple in design and very clear.
An examination of (1) the functions which sonal patterns serve within the contexts of four Hopkins poems, (2) some broader generalizations which may be derived, tentatively, therefrom, and (3) the effects which such patterns have on the rhythm of the verse.

Briefly notes possible strategies for sound analysis. Notices that in some pentameters of Shakespeare's Sonnet 60, metrically unstressed syllables have higher acoustic intensity than those stressed.

Lynch devises a procedure for assessing the degree of "compound phonetic effects" in poems: by marking each occurrence of a phoneme as 1 and adding 1 every time the phoneme (a) falls under metrical ictus, (b) bears linguistic stress, or (c) is conspicuously repeated, a ratio of its quantitative to qualitative importance may be derived. In Keats's sonnet on Chapman's Homer, five vowels and two consonants predominate, and six of these seven appear in what is the thematically summative word of the poem, "silent." Thus the purely aural pattern peaks at precisely the same nexus as the semantic. Lynch looks for confirmation of this principle in seven other poets. But note that he reads the Keats poem with standard American pronunciation. See Hymes (C68).

Extended analysis of Dryden's sense of the term "numbers," as meaning not so much meter or syllabic regularity as "word-sound" in general, especially sonal texture. Dryden's "numbers" thus compares very closely with Eliot's "auditory imagination." And even more extended and minute analysis reveals Dryden's frequent choice of a word for its contribution to a mellifluous Vergilian sound-pattern.

Effects of sonal patterns, especially in the s-sound. Note: "The numerous iambic feet in a poem extremely anapestic in its effect . . . originally fitted into the four-three iambic bars of the music."

Detailed consideration of the methods and value of this article may be found in Stephen Booth's An Essay on Shakespeare's Sonnets (B20), pp. 66-69 and 193-95. Masson here extends his analysis of the more diffused sonal patternings in verse to Shakespeare, eschewing a battery of statistics in favor of a batallion of terms instead.

Tripartite: Masson (1) establishes the nature of Keats's pronunciation, along
with (2) a correlate prefatory synopsis of his own concepts and terminology for
sound-patterning [Ooccam ], in order to (3) perform a detailed analysis of "concatenation"--"tightly-linked or extended chains of sound, analogous to the
repetition or inversion of a melodic line in music"--in the late Odes and The
Eve of St. Ages, especially the seventh stanza of the "Ode to a Nightingale" and
the nineteenth of the Eve.

C83  -----, "Some Problems in Literary Phonaesthetics." In Literature and Science:
Proceedings of the Sixth Triennial Congress [of the International Federation for
Modern Languages and Literatures], Oxf ord, 1954. Oxf ord: Basil Blackwell,
1955. pp. 61-64.
Masson prefers using the term "phonaesthetics" to denote not the study of
sonal mimesis but rather the study of all the "effects and functions of sound in
literature." Toward this end the employment of statistics, psychoanalysis, articu-
lation measurement, and tabulation (profiling) of data will be of no help whatso-
ever, while the use of research on cerebral-neural processes, child language acquisi-
tion, phonetics, and linguistics will, he judges.

70-72.
Hopkins' line "And frightful a nightfall folded rueful a day" shows a theme of
sound which is manifested in three sonal motifs and two submotifs.

Very likely the best available synopsis of this area, but better used as reference
than as introduction; the categories will overwhelm the novice. Treats Sound
as Structure, Texture, and Function, followed by a historical Survey of sound-
patterning in Classical (Greek and Latin), Romance (French, Italian, Spanish),
English, Germanic (Dutch), and Slavonic verse. The Functional Typology
correlates five Aspects with eighteen Types:

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See also s.v. "Phonetic Equivalence" (pp. 617-18), "Tone-Color" (pp. 857-
58), "Echo" (p. 212), and "Repetition" (pp. 699-701). Note too L102 and
L485-86.

Masson sorts into twenty categories perhaps two hundred terms, which very
quickly overwhelm even the most assiduous reader. Is this an index of the paucity of our cranial capacities?

Five extended analyses of sound-patterning in poems, intended to show a correlation between certain localized patterns (or motifs) of sound and thematic elements and their development. The first twenty-six lines of Paradise Lost, Donne's seventh Holy Sonnet, a German poem, a Swiss poem, and two stanzas from Victor Hugo are the exhibits. Though some generalizations are drawn, however, the emphasis falls on the mechanism--if such it may be called--of analysis. The introductory discussion of "Bond Density" and pattern-types is more generally systematic.

Masson posits three fundamental types of sound patterning in poetry: sequence (AB . . . AB), chiasmus (AC . . . BA), and bracket (AB . . . A or B . . . AB), each of which may be compounded nearly to infinity by subpatterning.

Sonal expressiveness he finds may arise from three sources: acoustic, kin-aesthetic, or lexical (i.e., associative, either normal-lexical, nonce-lexical, or impressed elements). Copious examples from all the European poetries.

Attention to verbal repetition, rhyme, vowels, consonants, and patterning (especially in the first two lines), and a review of Grammont's and Macdermott's theories of sonal mimesis or expressiveness--the question of what sounds are considered appropriate for what situations or subjects. See Davison (C52). See also Masson's "The 'Musical Form' of Yeats's Byzantium." Notes and Queries 198 (1953): 400-1. And cf. Venter (C106).

Mooney's analysis of the permutations of syllabic echoing results in a table that ought to be more widely reprinted. He offers terminology as well, explicating "near rhyme," consonance, "alliterative assonance," "analyzed rhyme," "suspended rhyme," and "apocapated rhyme."

C 92 Addenda by Jeremy Ingalls, "Chromatic Rhyme," in 25, 1 (1949): 1-3 (she proposes that term as a categorical for all varieties of near-rhyme); John Caffrey, in 25, 2 (1949): 3; and Jacques Barzun, W. H. Archer, Frank Davidson, and Laurence Perrine, in 25, 4 (1950): 2-3. The commentators, as usual, are completely incapable of reaching agreement on terminology. Caffrey's letter, however, shows clearly that the matter is much more complex than Mooney suggests.

In his late poems Dylan Thomas came to view sound as the aesthetic principle in poetry that superseded all others. Here Moynihan details Thomas's developing craft and control in (1) meter and intonation ("from a poetry of strong metrical stress to a poetry of flowing, rhapsodic cadence"); (2) phonemic symbolism (vowels especially are given values and associations in the context of a poem); and (3) agnomination or "affinitive patterning" (a larger configuration spun out of the sounds of a few key words).

C95 -----. "Sound and Sense: Some Structures of Poetry." College English 23 (1962): 291-95. Some elementary exhibitions of rhyme, alliteration, assonance, consonance, and onomatopoeia, to show that "sound is its own sense," and some not-at-all-elementary exhibition of distinctive-feature control and "textural intensity" in poetry. The seven distinctive-feature oppositions (polarities, scales) are: vocality/consonantality, tenseness/laxness, interruption/continuity, gravity/acute ness, compactness/diffusion, nasality/orality, and strictency/mellowness. Why has no one else extended such an analysis?

C96 Oras, Ants. "Spenser and Milton: Some Parallels and Contrasts in the Handling of Sound." Frye (A15), pp. 109-33; rpt in Chatman and Levin (A21), pp. 19-32. Comparison of sound-patterning. The most significant discovery is that Spencer consistently prefers consonant clusters first in a syllable (letting it taper off at the end), whereas Milton achieves his subtle but extensive effect of massiveness by preferring consonant clusters at the ends of syllables and also lines. The Miltonic syllable, over and over again, is a crescendo of phonetic force.

C97 Ricks, Christopher. "Sound and Sense in Paradise Lost." Essays by Divers Hands (Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature), n.s. 39 (1977), pp. 92-111. Not an essay for theory, categories, or the techne of technic, but rather the closest of appreciative and discriminating readings of Miltonic lines vis à vis their sounds and sense. Ricks sets Milton's style and method against Shakespeare's and aligns it somewhat with Johnson's. A superb essay on our greatest poetic stylist by perhaps our finest living critical stylist.

C98 Roblee, Louise and M. F. "The Affective Value of Articulate Sounds." American Journal of Psychology 23 (1912): 579-83. Fifteen women rated the pleasantness of initial vowels and final consonants in nonsense syllables on a scale of 1 to 7. Most pleasant were /l/ and the /a/ of "father"; most disagreeable were the schwa and /g/.

C99 Schlauch, Margaret. Modern English and American Poetry: Techniques and Ideologies. London: C. A. Watts, 1956. 200 pp. Part Two, p. 129-75, contains a chapter each on Sound and Rhythm, providing elementary notes on sonal and metrical analysis of verse. The treatment of meter is mundane enough to escape our attention and also eccentric (she allows the molossus, spondee, choriambus, etc.). But the analysis of sound (in both chapters) is both rigorous and accessible; the fundamental phonemic transcription system is provided, justified, and explained, followed by analyses of varieties of rhyme. The section on vowel harmonics (based on sound-spectrograms) is particularly interesting.

C100 Shewan, A., Paget Toynbee, Henry Broadbent, and George G. Loane. "Sibilation in Poetry." Correspondence in TLS, 10 January-7 February 1924, pp. 23, 40, 65, 79. Shewan's initial queries about the extent of s's allowed in a verse line by the major poets is not answered or even pursued by the other correspondents. But cf. Franklin (C59) and L. L. (C69).

The similarities of technical devices between the devout poet and the playful versifier (Edward Lear) arise from the fact that in nonsense poetry the arrangement of the words is governed by sound (not grammar), a fact which has extremely interesting implications for understanding the process of composition.

Cites examples to show that poets can find unexpected resources for poetic composition in the seemingly intractable arbitrariness of the sounds of words in the language. The restraints of the "givens" become an asset: "the crystalization . . . is executed by means of free association within the confines of prosody."

Experiments with both the visual and aural forms of (1) legitimate words, (2) nonsense words, and (3) separate sounds. Results are inconclusive. But among the recognizable words, on a scale of preference from +16 to -16, the most odious words (-13) were "abut" and "belch." "Bobolink," in contrast, did very well indeed (+12).

Brief abstract of a paper read at the 1934 American Psychological Association annual convention, the gist of which is that the pleasantness or unpleasantness of words is mainly a matter of wider cultural associations rather than anything inherent in the sounds themselves.

Patterns of distinctive features in fourteen sonnets and ten strambotti by Wyatt are compared with those in one sonnet each by Petrarch, Surrey, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Owen. Three types of patterns are discovered--two types of "initial-terminal symmetry" and one of "mirror symmetry." Wyatt uses the first two but not the third.

A brief, diffuse, metacritical essay which laments the lack of an adequate notation for poetic sound-patterns, discusses a few stray lines, and even omits the full phonetic transcription of the poem it is based on. Cf. Masson (C89) and Davison (C52).

The value of Denise Levertov's work lies in her deep interest in "an intense melopoeia" including, as its elements, idiomatic speech, a "rhythmic norm" and its center a "horizon note" based on the length and weight of heard syllables, long vowels, monosyllables, short lines, and assonance.

Revised by Robert M. Ogden, this typescript essay examines the "styles" (i.e. types, patterns) of sound in verse, but unfortunately no typology or organizational scheme whatever is given, so the author simply cites a great many examples at random in his chapters on Chaucer and Spenser; Shakespeare; Milton; Donne, Dryden, and Pope; Poe and Whitman; and Eliot.
Identifies (and exemplifies, copiously) six types of sonal repetition which may appear either initially, medially, or finally within the line: (1) single sounds, (2) sound-groups, (3) syllables, (4) words, (5) word-groups, and (6) mixed forms.


ALLITERATION, ASSONANCE, CONSONANCE

Apt alliteration's artful aid has been sought by English poets either structurally or ornamentally since the eighth century. For reasons we may never quite unravel it has seemed more congenial a device to the Germanic tribes than assonance (so in demand by the Spanish) or consonance (that scarce-glimpsed stream of occlusion), and though at times its excesses may betray an unnatural taste for the over-obvious, it recalls as well another, earlier stage in our sensibility when alliteration fixed and affirmed poetry as oral ritual. But a recent study by Adams (C127) reveals both in the center and on the peripheries of its focus the close and complex interpermeations of all three types of sonal patterning, as well as their more generalized diffusion in the world's poetries. Other studies, if not any common advertisement, will remind us too that by embedding similarity within difference (as Coleridge would have it) these devices serve mnemonic, functional, and even aesthetic ends in verbal discourse as a whole: they are common in ballads, songs, catch phrases, slogans, proverbs, and logos. In such conspicuous ways as these does language elect to indulge the order and delight of poetry.

IN LANGUAGE

Collitz, Klara H. "Alliteration in American English." American Speech 7 (1932): 204-18. A useful list of banal, blatant, blundering, botches of bad alliterations, mainly from newspapers. If aesthetics treats of the beautiful, is its province not also that of the ugly?

Dundes, Alan. "The Henny-Penny Phenomenon: A Study of Folk Phonological Aesthetics in American Speech." Southern Folklore Quarterly 38 (1974): 1-9. Fascinating research into "folk phonological esthetics." Dundes finds preferential consonant patterns in the formation of the three types of reduplicative phrases--identical (e.g. beep beep), ablaut (zig zag), and rhyme (mumbo jumbo). By far the most common initial sound is h.


On the "present slump toward alliteration" in advertising jargon. Kopious klutzy klangers.

Addenda and corrigenda to W illert (C126).

Cf. Spies (C121).

A seemingly endless collection of examples from both literature and proverbs, alphabetically arranged.


C120 ---. Die Alliteration im N euenglischen vor und bei Shakespeare. Marne: Altmüller, [1875].

Varieties of alliterating, rhyme-formed, and ablaut-formed phrases found in books, advertisements, linguistic usage, etc. Many examples. Cf. Schwartz (C117).

"Alliter" is the art of arranging letters melodiously, letters representing sounds [sic]. There are two laws—all vowels alliter together, and all consonants alliter alone—and two kinds—precedent and succedent [rhyme]—if alliter.


A study of one aspect of the general phenomenon of phoneme alternation, which the author dubs apophonology, as compared to phoneme repetition, which is termed echoistics.


IN POETRY


A timely yet durable book: Adams has caught us at a blind spot—we have had no full-scale study of the three commonest forms of structural sound-patterning—and his gracefully harmonious rectification of our lapse spans a gulf much wider than 1660-1800; indeed, though his primary focus is the eighteenth century, his reach extends with ease from Chaucer to the present, and even beyond English. Chapter 1 presents definitions, a wide-ranging survey of the importance of these devices, and a long side-glance at "phonetic symbolism" (pp. 24-35): Chapter 2 treats Dryden; 3, Pope; 4, the minor 18th century poets; and 5, 19th and 20th century poets, especially Browning. Adams wears much learning lightly (do not fail to see the three long background Notes in the footnotes to chapter 1), matching the neatness and precision of informed scholarship with a colorful, dapper style and a keen ear for poetic resonance. Note the definitions of the three key terms given on pp. 3, 9, and 15: significant patterning is confined to stressed syllables.


C 129 ------. "This Historical Importance of Assonance to Poets." PMLA 88 (1973): 8-18; revised as part of chapter 1 of his Graces of Harmony (C 127). Replies by N. B. Smith (pp. 1182-83) and W. B. Finnie (pp. 1183-84); rejoinder by Adams (pp. 1184-85). See also Finnie (K 116) and Adams (K 2). Assonance has been neglected in literary studies because it is more difficult to perceive (modern readers are uncertain of the sounding of historical vowels), but Adams adduces innumerable examples from classical Greek, Roman, French, German, British, and American poets to justify the equal rights of assonance, then considers the question of "sound symbolism."


Over the course of his career Thomas moved from an intense interest in consonance, to later, more subtle patterns of assonance, and, near the end, back to true rhyme. In general his last-line sounds are not easy near-rhymes but a highly sophisticated, complex, and exacting system of varieties of consonance which he developed. These, "dreary to enumerate," Astley maps out here: from Yeats Thomas learned consonance; from Owen he learned "zero consonance" (all syllables ending in open (though different) vowels have identity of absence of following consonants) and "frame rhyme" (alliteration + consonance); to these Thomas added "partial consonance" and "close consonance" to complete his inventory. (All terms are Astley's.)

Haggling with De Selincourt over whether or not w-alliteration suggests "vastness and desolation", B. finds that only 30 of the 225 w-alliterations in Book I of The Faerie Queene give such an impression.

Lobbies for its increased use in English and Irish verse, seconding Larminie's motion (E192). Slight.


C136 Douglas-Lithgow, R. A. "English Alliteration from Chaucer to Milton." Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature, series 2, vol. 18 (1897), pp. 115-50. Follows J73 and K91, extending the history of the form in England and Scotland from Chaucer's time into (primarily) the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These later instances of alliteration the author terms "Neo-Alliteration" so as to distinguish them from the Pre-Chaucerian staple form, since their function is essentially ornamental rather than structural. Copious examples but a paucity of discussion.

Patterns of alliteration in the poem connect qualities and their opposites in a relation of similitude, with theological implications.

Describes the local effects, especially of alliteration. Notice also the preceding article (pp. 159-82) by the same author on "The Role of Lexical and Syntactical Repetitions in the First Act of Richard II," which shows the general increases of emphasis achieved by these devices, the echoing particularly occurs in one character's quick, sharp responses to the lines of another.

An excellent synopsis having international scope. See also s.v. "Assonance," "Consonance," and "Onomatopoeia."

Supporting Stoll (C166) against Skinner (C160), the author (1) sketches in the general sixteenth-century context for the use of alliteration, (2) distinguishes ten varieties of alliteration, some with subvarieties, all copiously exemplified, and (3) argues for the close relation of alliteration and assonance.

Pope admired Sackville's verse. Griffin finds considerable phonetic repetition, augmentation, diminution, and reversal in the Complaint, and the verse of the Induction "so relentlessly alliterative as to seem reminiscent of Anglo-Saxon verse." And in order to show pitch-patterning in assonance, Griffin sets the vowels of one stanza on a musical staff, using the phonetic distinction high/mid/low.

C142 Jackson, Elizabeth. "Quantitative Measurement of Assonance and Alliteration in
Criticism of Skinner (C161) for counting only ictic alliterations, for excluding repeated whole words, for construing the "coefficient of alliteration" on the basis of single sounds rather than on the basis of whole lines, for not giving extra weight to multiple alliterations, for taking too small a sample, for ignoring combinations of effects, and for denigrating the intentionality of so overt a device as alliteration.


C144 Koziol, Herbert. "Die Alliteration in der modernen englischen Dichtung." Archiv 184 (1943): 49-53. No matter how much English poets may sneer at "rum, ram, ruf, by letter," alliteration is a common device, though its function is now ornamental rather than structural (cohesive). Koziol likens it to eye-rhyme and onomatopoeia: the outer form is intended to show the inner. Examples.


C147 Loane, George G., et al. "Some Varieties in Alliteration." TLS, 22 August-3 October 1918, pp. 392, 405, 418, 429, 441, 456, 469. The first and fourth letters offer many examples with interesting comments on the relative success of mimesis and expressiveness when certain ideas are tagged by certain alliterating sounds.

C148 McNally, James. "Varieties of Alliteration in Whitman." Walt Whitman Review 13 (1967): 28-32. Identifies four additional types of alliteration--rhetorical (i.e., to point up parallelisms or inversions), terminal (at line-end in successive lines), integral (within single words), and interlinked (the second pattern begun before the first is completed).


C150 -----, Wilfred Owen's Free Phonetic Patterns: Their Style and Function." J A A C 13 (1955): 360-69. A schema of varieties of non-structural alliteration and assonance in Owen, somewhat weighted by Masson's characteristic penchant for nomenclature. Owen is best at creating complexes of phonetic subpatterns, and he seems to prefer assonance of the "short u." Altogether, it is remarkable to what degree he labored for order and beauty in the design of his aesthetic objects, given the starkness of his subject and the horror of his situation.


C153 -----. "Surrey's Technique of Phonetic Echoes: A Method and Its Background." JEGP 50 (1951): 289-308. Though stiff, Surrey's blank verse shows us "a certain severe dignity," especially in vowel echoing, which Surrey is better at than we think he is. His limitation in using assonance (consonance also, to some degree) subtly is that he confines it nearly always to ictic (stressed) syllables, rarely letting the resonances of the echoes flow all across the verse. But in elevated passages (of blank verse, remember) Surrey allows a very copious usage of rhyme and near-rhyme. This wide attention to vocalic echo is preserved in the MS revisions made for Tottel's edition of Surrey's poetry, and its presence in those poems put into Tottel's Miscellany had a demonstrable effect on the verse of Surrey's contemporaries and successors. His music was noticed, emulated, and refined. What were his sources? Not Virgil or Wyatt but the Italian writers of versi sciolti. An admirable essay.

C154 Pirkhofer, Anton M. "'A Pretty Pleasing Pricket'--On the Use of Alliteration in Shakespeare's Sonnets." Shakespeare Quarterly 14 (1963): 3-14. Three matters are addressed: (1) devising an adequate system for analyzing alliterative patterning (double, triple, and quadruple echoes of single alliteration, double alliteration (these are all horizontal patterns), and vertical patterns spanning two, three, four, and more lines); (2) the adequacy of such information as evidence for dating and chronology; and (3) correlations with thematic development in the poem. Sonnets 1 and 129 are analyzed closely. Shakespeare was more skillful and subtle at alliteration than his contemporaries; his patterns in general are "as remote from inane plethora as they are from indiscriminate ornamentation." He was particularly adept at interface and at loading the crucial, summative couplet of the sonnet with the weighty ore of alliteration. Chronologically his technique developed toward wider spans of echoing. N.B.: Pirkhofer only counts alliterations on metrically stressed syllables.

C155 Scott, Fred N. "Vowel Alliteration in Modern Poetry." MLN 30 (1915): 233-37. Vocalic alliteration is not exactly the same thing as assonance, but seems, from Professor Scott's examples and statistics, to be rather common. Unfortunately, though, the letters alliterate more frequently than the sounds, spellings of vowels being so erratic in English, so that when Scott finds himself pressed for an explanation, he exhumes the sonority theory and the glottal-catch theory of Classen (L322), preferring the latter. Such an extremity seems not only unlikely but also unnecessary.

Opening with a reminder that Hopkins' pronunciation differed from our own, the author comes to his point, the manifold effects of Hopkins' principles sound-device, consonant clusters.

"To Bed I Goe," dated ca. 1580. The computer searched not only for intralinear patterns but also for "anticipation" and "carry-over" of alliterants.


Computation of Shakespeare's actual alliterations in one hundred of his sonnets, deletion of those echoes deriving from the repetition of whole words for rhetorical or thematic purposes [a questionable choice in method on Skinner's part], and comparison of the resultant figures with those that would result from completely random echoing reveals very little variance between the two. Conclusion: "there is no significant evidence of a process of alliteration in the behavior of the poet . . ." Only alliterations on ictic syllables were counted.

Comparison of the instances of alliteration and assonance in ictic syllables of the first five hundred lines of A talanta in C alydon with expected random frequencies reveals the obvious: Swinburne's echoing is anything but unpremeditated. Assessment of degree of intention, however, is something else. Skinner tabulates not only frequencies of echo by line but also the distribution of the spans of echoing; the functional limit of span seems to be four syllables though echoes do occur as far away as eight syllables from the original. Swinburne uses more alliterations and at wider spans than Shakespeare does (the "coefficient of alliteration" for the former is four times that for the latter), but on the other hand he seems not to develop consonance at all and actively suppresses assonance.

A response to Jakobson and Jones (C105). Still interested in the nature of meaning when intentionally deployed in a pre-determined (poetic) structure, Skinner reviews the statistical evidence on actual vs. theoretical probabilities for random occurrence of alliteration in Shakespeare and Swinburne, and he also constructs an interesting "density-of-meaning scansion" for the typical Shakespearean sonnet.

C163 Spencer, Virginia E. Alliteration in Spencer's Poetry, Discussed and Compared with Alliteration as Employed by Drayton and Daniel. Diss., Zurich, 1898. 96 + 48 pp. (In two Parts in paper covers.) Using the scheme established by Regel in his essay on Layamon (K311),
Spencer catalogues examples of consonant and vowel alliteration by:

1. Etymological Relation
2. Association
   A. Concrete ideas
   B. Abstractions, or abstract + concrete
   C. Emphasis
   D. Contrast
3. Grammatical Relation
   A. Substantives, with modifiers
   B. Verb or Adjective, with modifiers
   C. Substantive + Verb (Subject + Predicate)
   D. Verb + Substantive (Predicate + Object)


C165 Stephens, W. H. "Alliteration in Strokes." Poetry Review 26 (1935): 307-10. One can only wish that the sole copy of this essay had lain at the library in Alexandria, or in one of the monasteries in front of Henry the Eighth's soldiers.

C166 Stoll, E. E. "Poetic Alliteration." M L N 55 (1940): 388-90. A sharp rejoinder to B. F. Skinner on alliteration in Shakespeare's sonnets (C160), criticizing his methods and conclusions. Skinner's tabulations of occurrences led him to conclude that the alliterative effects were mainly random; Stoll insists they are artful, noting that in order for alliteration in one line to be conspicuous, its consonants must be suppressed (unobtrusive) in others, which is what the tabulation showed--low frequencies in a number of lines. Further, Skinner confined his analysis to the single line, whereas it is commonly known that poetic alliteration extends itself more widely. And even though it is important to bear in mind the base-line of the chances for random occurrence, poetry proceeds by appearance and effect not by frequencies or probabilities.


C170 Zeuner, [?]. Die Alliteration bei neuenglischen Dichtern. Diss., Halle, 1880.

RHYME

Rhyme—the "vertical" axis of English verse, historically its single most consistent characteristic, functionally the most common marker of line-end, and structurally the most obvious indicator of stanzaic design. The chances of rhyme vary from age to age, yet whether in affirmation or opposition, poets seem to have recognized the device as a constant presence too potent, too much entailed to be entirely foregone. Its influence has even extended so far as to permeate that greatest bastion of rhymeless (blank) verse in English, Paradise Lost—as Diekhoff and Oras have shown. The exact details of its genealogy, its point of introduction into Indo-European verseforms, and its ultimate origin in the poetries of the ancient world are still unknown, though one explanation was mapped out some time ago by Draper (L27-28, L1576) and Whitehall has recently conducted researches (L159). Even if it would also have arisen indigenously in the West as a natural linguistic process, it seems to have been imported from the Orient, perhaps China. Highly inflectional languages such as Latin and Russian find rhyme too easy to be esteemed; it is only in positional languages such as English, where morphemic similarities are much scarcer, that the difficulty of rhyming establishes its value. We seem to admire both novelty (a striking unexpectedness) and inevitability in a good rhyme, not minding the paradox, so that a rhyme that is unusual yet entirely appropriate without strain and that seems literally unavoidable within the natural word-order of English yet still manages to say something new will have an immense semantic impact and can redeem an utterly disastrous stanza or even poem. One final recognition to be made about poetic rhyme is that, like alliteration, it is in fact not an artificial "poetical" device at all but simply one manifestation among many of a far broader process in language itself, whereby (for example) rhyming is a crucial strategy in reduplication and word-formation. Poetry is not, we realize, made out of language; poetry is language.

A sharp distinction in theory between rhyme and meter would be difficult to maintain. It is not easy to say, for example, how much of the "texture" of the couplet is dependent on the repeated rhyme (that is, on the fact that the poet must compose in two-line units, knowing at least part of the second line before he completes the first) and how much on the iambic pentameter. (It is even harder to separate syntax and rhyme, for obvious reasons, and harder still to screen out rhyme from stanzaic structure.) Readers interested in rhyme should therefore also consult the subsection on Couplet Verse in Chapter Six on Meter, as well as chapter Seven on Syntax and Chapter Eight on Stanza. Considerable raw data on specific rhyme-sequences (as orthoepic evidence) is also available in the works listed in the first section in the present chapter, Pronunciation.
If one screens out for the moment the etymology and diachronic development of morphemes and examines them synchronically, wholly new and significant clusters of association and similarity (based on rhyme/assonance of a base morpheme) appear, many of which are quite striking, though the interpermeability of meanings in the language is so extensive that certitude is quickly reduced to a kind of pattern game. But "if we can show enough regularity in use, a rime or an assonance should be, or come very near to being, a morpheme." If so, that would be very significant. See also p. 130 ff on phonosthemes.

Examples of alliteration and rhyme in the formation of catch phrases, clichés, and expressions, for example "fair and square."

Examples of phrases created by rhyme-formation. Note the evidence cited here for the phenomenon in other languages as well.


W rites rules for R epetition in general and End-, Initial-, and Internal- R hyme in particular. Most interesting is the argument that such rules ought to apply at the deep-structure level not at the surface.


A list of examples of two particular types of formulaic phrases often formed idiomatically in English: (1) rhyme-formation, i.e. C1 V1 C1 + C2 V1 C1, e.g. "hodge-podge," and (2) ablaut-formation, which is C1 V1 C1 + C1 V2 C1, e.g. "pitter-patter."


C178 Stetson, R. H. "R hythm and R hyme." Psychological Review Monograph Supplements 4 (1903): 413-66. (Series also titled Harvard Psychological Studies, vol. 1.) Experiments with simple sounds to discern what effects rhyme has on a rhythmical line: beats were represented by simple clicks, end-rhyme by two simultaneous clicks differing in pitch. Conclusions (p. 464) note both advantages and disadvantages of rhyme, which is here taken as "a highly specialized form of [rhythmic] recurrence."
IN POETRY

An instructive exposition of what Pound learned, achieved, and failed to achieve in his exercises at translating the sonant arabesques of the troubadour stanzas.

Addendum by A. Dickson, p. 76.
Notes occurrences in Keats and Wordsworth, dismay at those by Amy Lowell, and recognition of the commonness of the practice by Grandgent and Wyld. Conclusion: not a proper practice in "serious" nineteenth-century poetry.

One can more readily imagine the answer (No) than one can imagine taking the question seriously.


Rhyme not an essential element to verse.

Mather's attack on rhyme in verse in the preface to his translation of the Psalms represents the first influence of Milton on the New World. Mather himself chose the septenary couplet rather than blank verse for the meter of his metrical psalter.

That Milton returned to rhyme in his late drama is much less troubling than the fact that the specific rhymes themselves show no discernable or consistent pattern. The only rationale we can provide is that they appear "in areas of increasing tension, in major and minor climaxes." Cf. Cohen (C199).

C186 -----. "Yeats the Rhymer." Papers on English Language and Literature 1 (1965): 338-50; rpt as chapter 8 of his The Poetic Art of William Butler Yeats (B12).
Numerous examples of Yeats's virtuosity. His chief characteristics seem to be a striking abundance of near-rhymes and a paucity of feminine rhymes. He liked the naturalness and the slight dissonance of the slant rhyme, and the particular emphasis and attention which it drew to the line-end: the rhymes alone often carry a surprising amount of the poem's argument. And Yeats developed his sure touch for the near-rhyme without any major, sustained tradition for it behind him.

Notices inconsistencies in the the rhyming dictionaries of Bysshe, John Walker, and Tom Hood, then gives some phono-logical analysis of types of rhyme. Biddle's principle is that rhyme is "no essential part of poetry, but is a mere question of taste." He would allow all vowels to rhyme interchangeably,
as with the great range of harmonic chords possible in music. Some final pages on music and rhyme in song.

In part an inquiry into standards: on what grounds may we assume that rhymes are intended as comic? On (1) wrenching of accent, (2) contrivance of a string of monosyllabic words to fit a polysyllable (this is the principle strategem in Byron as well as M arlowe), and (3) incongruities in diction, register, metaphor, or image. Source? P ulci and A riosto.


C190 Brown, H untington. "T he M odern D evelopment of M iddle English -ly, -lie in R hyme." Harvard Studies and N otes in Philology and Literature 17 (1935): 43-45. Surprisingly, the suffix -ly (from OE -lid(e)) has only rarely been rhymed with the final vowel -e, unlike the -ly, -lie ending (from O F) which is often rhymed with -i, sometimes also -e. T his oddity suggests a very late retention of secondary stress on the O E-derived -ly; instances such as advisedly/be only appear in the nineteenth century.

Byron's "brilliant, outrageous" rhymes reveal an intense interest in the word, contrary to Eliot's view, and they serve important ends: showing "ingenious compliance with arbitrary laws"; presentation of "the alogical as if it were logical"; ironic or comic rhyme-yoking of dissimilar things; and "tightening" of the constant, controlling octave stanza. Lively.

C192 C., R . J. "Yeats's 'T he W ild Swans at C oole.'" Explicator, 2, 4 (1944), question 20. Inquires as to the poet's pronunciation of the rhymes in this poem and in "U nder the R ound T ower." Answers supplied in 3, 1 (1944), item 5 and 3, 2 (1944), item 17.

C193 Carpenter, Frederic I. "E mily D ickinson and the R hymes of D r eam." University of K ansas C ity R eview 20 (1953): 113-20. E. D. used imperfect rhymes to indicate the tensions of fantasy vs. reality, life vs. death, and beauty vs. banality.


C196 -----, "R hyme and N o R hyme." In his Studies in Literary M odels. Edinburgh: O liver and Boyd, 1946. pp. 178-210. A discursive general review of the uses and effects, chiefly in English but also in the continental languages, both ancient and modern. Judges the appropriateness of rhyme for various poetic genres and types--e.g., narrative, dramatic,
lyric, philosophical. Historically informed (there is a long digression on Dryden).


C198 Clark, Elizabeth M. "A Study of Rhymes in Browning." Poet-Lore 2 (1890): 480-86. For those interested, there are 34,746 rhymes in the Riverside edition of Browning; Clark thinks 322 (1%) of them "bad"--i.e., "imperfect" or "forced." And many of these are apparently used in only a few poems to present or de-serve "rough, odd, uneducated, or unbalanced characters." Cf. C282.


C201 Combs, Bruce E. "A Linguistic Analysis of Rime with Studies in Chaucer, Donne, and Pope." DAI 30 (1970): 4963A (Oregon). The traditional typology and taxonomy for rhyme are too inexact, cumber-some, and inconsistent to be serviceable. From a phonological point of view, the rhyme-structure begins with the core syllable and generates therefrom toward the right, allowing for stress-shift. Combs examines the historical pronunciation of final -e in Chaucer and the rhyme-pair -y/-ie in Donne, as well as variation of rhyming precision in Pope.


C203 Covington, Dale R. "'Echo to the Sense': A Study of Semantic Elements in Pope's Rime." D A 28 (1968): 4121A (Vanderbilt). As a correlate to the "counterlogical" rhymes in Pope described so incisively by Wimsatt, Covington describes an even more prevalent type, the rhymes "which are so semantically coordinated with [Pope's] verse logic that they stand as glosses, direct or oblique, upon his couplet sense," producing an effect of semantic miniaturization of couplet logic within the rhyme words.

C204 De Selincourt, B. "R hyme in English Poetry." Essays and Studies 7 (1921): 7-29. A very illuminating discussion of the nature of rhyme in English verse; perhaps the best part of the essay is the comparison (pp. 10-12) between English, Classical, and French verse-structures as they allow for and encourage--or discourage--rhymes. R hyme in English is "readily dispensed with" even though its main function is to "reinforce accent"; hence "the art of versification in English might almost be summed up in the one word--compensation." "The delicacies and intricacies of the subject" are indeed "inexhaustible."
Dewey, Thomas B. "Some 'Careless' Seventeenth-Century Rhymes." Bulletin of the New York Public Library 69 (1965): 143-52. Curious whether John Cleveland made appropriate or "careless" (rough) rhymes, Dewey examines seventeenth-century and modern authorities on pronunciation, then compares Cleveland to Cowley, Crashaw, Vaughan, and Waller. All five turn out to be careful and conventional in their rhyming.

Diekhoff, John S. "Rhyme in Paradise Lost." PMLA 49 (1934):539-43. Citations of rhymes: there are seventeen couplets, forty-five rhymes separated by one line, fifty-two separated by two, and twenty-seven by three, over twenty instances of "caesural rhyme" (words just before the caesura in successive lines), and several internal rhymes. Additional citations are provided by Purcell (C271). See also Oras (C263).

Dobrée, Bonamy. "An Experiment with Rhyme." Life and Letters 10 (1934): 66-72. What happens when rhyme is added to blank verse, or deducted from rhymed verse? Even allowing for slight divergences in sense, does echo of ending improve verse, or not? Several experimental transformations suggest that: (1) the better the poem, the less it needs rhyme, (2) lyrics need rhyme but metaphysical poems do not, and (3) rhyme can intensify poetic effect.

Rhyming a stressed final syllable (masculine ending) with an unstressed double or triple one (feminine). Examples from Chaucer to Chapman. The author's rather feeble grasp of Elizabethan pronunciation and stressing obviates a number of his examples.


Two functions are served by the rhymes of the Chorus's speeches: one is ironic, undercutting their credibility ("they state their confusions in assured rhymes, as though they were speaking imperishable truths"); the other occurs at the conclusion, conveying a sense of wisdom gained, finality, and tranquility.

Samuel Chew's objection to the "ugliness" of the run-over "king/dom . . . riding" rhyme should be mitigated by the fact that the rhyme helps fulfill the regular Petrarchan scheme, which Chew apparently failed to notice. But one could perceive the scheme quite clearly and still judge the rhyme a strained one; Fussell's comment is irrelevant.

Notes instances of apparent manual or mental slips in rhyming; Spenser for example rhymes play with support and resort, but the first of these clearly should be sport.
This poet (1570-1630) manipulated variant spellings shamelessly, idiosyncratically, and inconsistently in order to achieve eye-rhymes. Many examples.

An inductive approach to The Rape of the Lock, Paradise Lost, and Hugh Selwyn Mauberley. "The primary function of rhyme is the creation of meaning."

Valéry thought that language--given its serial, linear syntactic structure--could never equal the simultaneously multivalent communication system that is music, but the finely honed, close reasoning here may indeed persuade us that "poetry has all of the elements of musical melody" (in the acoustic-tonal structure of its phonemes) and "the richness of musical tone-colors, the logic of cadence, the subtlety of modulation, and the symbolic values of harmony" (in rhyme). The history of rhyme is mapped out, and considerable importance is placed on the visual effect of rhymes (i.e. as vertical structures).


[This must mean "split" rhyme, since he instances both mosaic (two monosyllables with a disyll.) and double rhyme, i.e. bound me/ sound me. At Chicago, PE1076 or so]

Lists extensive data on the probable sounds of Marlowe's vowels; he seems to have spoken a Kentish dialect.

Good rhymes, like living things, are mixed equally, as Donne might have said--equally of inevitability and of vigorous novelty. Syntactic variety is indispensable. Herbert tabulates the distribution of syntactic categories in the rhymes of fifty poems in iambic pentameter couplets by fifteen major poets and then "grades" the results (by three different sets of criteria). Browning shows greatest variety, followed by Chaucer and Pope; Keats and Swinburne show greatest monotony.

An apologia, with side-glances at Ransom and Dickinson. Paraphony is defined as the "modulation between two dissimilar sounds" in a run of rhymes. Link-rhyme is a run of three rhymes, the second picking up the first consonant and the third the last consonant of the first. Dissonance-consonance preserves the vowel sound though both initial and final consonants change. In suspended rhyme the final consonants are the same no matter what precedes them and regardless of whether accented or not.
Owen was the first English poet to use pararhyme (repetition of both initial and final consonantal sounds in the rhyming syllable—i.e. C1 V2 C1) at line-end throughout an entire poem. He devised the technique by himself and first employed it in 1917, using it strictly in the beginning but relaxing somewhat by 1918, the year of his best work.

A formulation in linguistic terms of the conditions for both true- and near-rhyme in English verse, with extensive simplified phonetic explanations; summary on pp. 114-15. Various deviant forms are also treated, though many of these are obviated by mere variances in pronunciation. In contrast to rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and repetition prove relatively easy to define (pp. 116, 117, 119).

Hollander, John. "R rhyme and the True Calling of Words." In his Vision and Resonance (A13), pp. 117-34. A lambent excursus on the manifold ends of rhyme. There is something here for everyone: those who must insist on precision will find a clean-well-lighted anatomy of functions and effects (mnemonic, schematic [structural], musical [textural], and semantic); those solaced by lands yet unexplored will be able to map out the entire region of sound-to-spelling relations that Hollander gestures toward; those (readers of the present book) desperate for amusement will be delighted by Hollander's feats of etymological legerdemain; those energized by polarities will be attracted to his rhyme-distance continuum; those of lapidary inclination will value his foils for the rare occasional rhyme. Altogether, the crucial features of rhyme turn out to be accentuation and sequential order.
"Writing in rime is like wearing a hairshirt: it irritates your skin, it mortifies the hell out of you."

Not only do the most common rhymes seem the most obvious and facile, they also suggest certain predetermined, necessary, invariable semantic relationships in the language or even, almost, in the world beyond referential language; "every real language, every language accessible to poets, affirms hints of a shattered perfection. Order, congruence, universal truths, these a poet might hint at by careful exploitation of such few congruous rhymes as his tongue placed at his disposal." Pope was a master at this, especially in The Rape of the Lock, but a further beguiling sidelight on the whole issue appears in the peculiar artificial languages devised by Bishop Wilkins and others and so faddish in the eighteenth century.

Sidney's claim in the Defense that Italian has no masculine rhymes is false.

"Of the 169 poems in The Temple, 'Man' is the only one in which the rhyme scheme is consistently varied in stanzas of equal length," but Koretz finds a motivation for its rhyme-scheme in some aspects of Renaissance cosmology and Christian doctrine.

Application of dialectology and historical phonology to explicate many of the seemingly improbable rhymes.

Assonance in the place of true rhyme is extremely rare in Shakespeare, but its frequency in Perides and a comparable usage in a contemporary play, The Travails of Three English Brothers, when analyzed in detail, suggests that one of the co-authors, George Wilkins, was the author of a considerable portion of Perides. Metrical evidence is also examined.

Mainly on rhyme and diction; metrics is set aside with the observation that Keats did not follow Chapman's septenaries. A very minute examination of Keats's lax and Chapman's utterly wanton rhyme-practice ensues; since Keats could not have known what we know of Elizabethan pronunciation, doubtless he found Chapman's liberties extreme, but in general his own excesses are his
own. Chapman’s influence has perhaps been overrated.

An early draft of his later monograph:

C240 ------. The Physical Basis of Rime: An Essay on the Aesthetics of Sound. Stanford:
Rev: in TLS, 14 May 1931, p. 384; by Baum in South Atlantic Quarterly 30
This hefty volume was originally conceived as an inquiry into the acoustical-phonetic basis of rhyming, and experimental researches were indeed carried out. But the results is more discursive than anything else, Lanz rarely descending to specific analysis. However, the work is by no means limited solely to English poetry; Lanz makes every effort to be truly comparative in method. Chapter 6 discusses rhythm, 8, free verse. Perhaps the most useful chapter to us now is 5, which outlines a number of major theories about the nature of rhyme. But there are valuable examples throughout, and the Bibliography is also noteworthy.

Just as life contains "random episodes of suffering, so the poem has its random episodes of rhyme." And the metrical movement in the poem--from "good prose almost seeming to carry out the threat of order" to a faint, ambiguous pattern of mixed rising meters--parallels the movement on the thematic level of quotidian events, from free choice to determinism. Somewhat muddled.

This is the first rhyming dictionary to appear in English. Wheatley provides a useful short Preface, corrections (there were many errata), and an alphabetical Index longer than Levins's original, which is organized (roughly) according to the order of the vowels, and includes short phrases as well as single words. See Weisker (C312).

Cites several examples and suggests that fastidious printers may have altered many more. Cf. these notes with another in TLS, 15 January 1938, p. 44 entitled "Final -s in Ryme," where he cites examples of plurals which "spoil" the rhyme.


"Configurational" rhyme is defined on p. 36, for those who prefer a paragraph to a mere adjective such as "polysyllabic" or "permutational." An exceedingly elaborate anatomy of "After the Funeral" is performed thereafter, but this approach shows not the slightest sign of utility, much less heuristics, except for
the interesting schematic on p. 52. Spatial deployment is a useful means of denoting complex sonal "family resemblances."


C247  McEuen, Kathryn A. "Emerson's Rymes." American Literature 20 (1948): 31-42. Though Emerson wrote many admittedly defective rhymes, he also wrote a great many perfect rhymes in complex patterns; perhaps, then, he should be seen as a pioneer in rhyming voiced and unvoiced consonants, visual rhymes, and "suspended" (slant) rhymes.

C248 ------. "Whittier's Rymes." American Speech 20 (1945): 51-57. Recollection of Whittier's New England pronunciation will legitimize some of his rhymes, and though admittedly both his ear and education were deficient, his derelictions seem more the result of indulging freedoms hoary with age in English poetry than any simple, personal, desperate groping for a rhyme.

C249  McLean, L. Mary. "The Rimming System of Alexander Pope." PMLA 6 (1891): 134-60. Mainly an index of masculine, feminine, and false rhymes in Pope, but a frequency-of-occurrence list is also given. Of 7874 rhymes, 6847 are true, 6732 being masculine, and 115 feminine. Of the 1027 false rhymes 379 are eye rhymes.

C250  Marsh, George P. Lectures on the English Language, First Series. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1859; 4th ed. rev. and enlarged, 1863. pp. 499-570. In Lectures 23, 24, and 25, Marsh makes the case in full for the old view that English, being a positional rather than an inflectional language, suffers a paucity of rhyme words. Taking, then, a very broad purview, he urges a return to the devices of the archaic Anglo-Saxon poetry--alliteration, assonance, consonance, internal rhyme--as well as a wider employment of Romance and Latinate words. Also sketched is the history of accent-shift in English. Final note: in Marsh (p. 553) one can see the clearest example of the semantic shift in the term consonance during the last century.

C251  Matthews, J. Brander. "An Inquiry as to Ryme." The Bookman 8 (1898): 32-38. Citing Herbert Spencer's Principle of Economy of Attention, Matthews examines the conventional dictum that although many rhymes are not technically perfect still they are "allowable" (in contrast to some others, less exact, which would be simply inadmissible), rejecting that idea entirely. Conservative, he judges that if a rhyme be not white it must be black.

C252 ------. "Ryme and Reason." The Galaxy 18 (1874): 618-24. Observations and examples of end-rhymes, complex internal rhyming, worn-out rhymes, bouts rimés (given the rhyme scheme, can you fill out the lines? interesting specimen of a remanufactured Byron stanza here), extravagances, and impossible rhymes (month, silver, chimney, orange; coffee lees with Mephistopheles?).


C254  Miller, Edwin S. "Rime Counterpoint." Annali Instituto Universitario Orientsale,
The "counterpointing" arises from varying the vowel sounds of the rimes while holding the final consonants identical through them all, or vice versa. Many varieties of the phenomenon, with many examples.

C255 Miller, J. Hillis. "The Linguistic Moment in 'The Wreck of the Deutschland.'" *The New Criticism and After: John Crowe Ransom Memorial Lectures*. Ed. Thomas D. Young. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1976. pp. 47-60. "Linguistic moment" meaning that point at which "language as such . . . becomes a matter to be interrogated, explored, thematized in itself." Language qua language was crucial to Hopkins because the structure of languages was derived from the divine Logos, even as Nature was derived from the Godhead; therefore, "everything else, his vision of nature and the self in their relations to God, hangs on the question of the nature of language." So too the nature of rhyme--similarity-within-difference--becomes a metaphor for the relation of man to God, and hence a central focus of this central poem.


C258 Nemoianu, Virgil. "Levels of Study in the Semantics of Rhyme." *Style* 5 (1971): 246-64. A purely phonetic analysis of rhyme is markedly inferior to a semantic analysis in a semantic typology of rhyme three levels are discernible: (1) on the diffuse level one perceives the "channeling" from the sonorous stratum to the semantic stratum which the rhyme effects, and one can distinguish degrees of rhymedness in poems; (2) on the vertical level the rhyme establishes the principles of recurrence and analogy wherein each rhyme-couple, by generating a narrow "framework" of semantic oppositions or categories, constructs one part of the stylistic-semantic field comprised by the whole text. (3) on the horizontal level the chief effect of the presence of a rhyme is "the disintegration of word-order." In terms of content, four situations obtain: (1) the classical rhyme suggests semantic similarity via sonal; (2) ironic rhyme reverses that direction; (3) substantial rhyme controls the ordering of content within the line by its inherent semantic weight or "brilliance"; (4) secondary rhymes, by contrast, are unobtrusive and weak. These four content relationships correspond to the four functions of rhyme--(1) Demarcation between lines, (2) Break of syntactic order, (3) establishment of Parallelism, and (4) Cementation of the aesthetic object--in the following manner:

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(secondary = ) D <----------> P ( = classical)
         |                      |
  (substantial = ) B <----------> C ( = ironic)
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The first two functions are directive, the latter two cohesive. Breaking opposes Cementation as Demarcation opposes Parallelism, while Demarcation is reinforced by Breaking and Parallelism by Cementing (fusion).


C 260 Ness, Frederic W. T he Use of R hyme in Shakespeare's Plays. Y ale Studies in English, vol. 95. N ew H aven: Y ale U niversity Press, 1941. 168 pp. Based on his dissertation of the same title at Y ale in 1940. R ev: by J. W. Draper in M L N 57 (1942): 379-80; in J EGP 42 (1943): 587-89; in M LR 38 (1943): 50-51; see also T annenbaum (C 305). S till the best available study on the nature (types), distribution, and causes for the decline of rhyme in Shakespeare. (For a definition of the ten varieties of rhyme isolated here and a catalogue of all occurrences in the canon go directly to Appendix B.) Ness concludes that Shakespeare decreased his reliance on rhyme not in response to any contemporary critical or theatrical fashion but because as he matured he came to see its effects as distinctly limited (mainly to augmentation and to clinching or tying off a speech or scene). See also chapter 5 and Appendix C for an analysis of metrical variation, rhyme forms, and structure in the couplets of each play.

C 261 Newcomer, Alphonso G. "License in English R hyme." T he N ation 68 (1899): 63-65, 83-85. A s if there were some question of permissibility or decorum, Newcomer de fends the use of off-rhyme. E xamples.


C 263 Oras, Ants. "E choing V erse E ndings in P aradise L ost." S outh A tlantic S tudies for S. E. L eavitt. Ed. T homas B. S troup and S tirling A. S toudemire. W ashington, D. C.: S cacre crow P ress, 1953. pp. 175-90. A landmark study which takes its origin in the data of Diekhoff (C 206) and then proceeds to demonstrate that end-rhyme in Paradise Lost is merely part of a larger, firmer, more complex, more subtle pattern, "a co-ordinated, highly organized treatment of terminal phonetic echoes" which Milton learned from Italian verso sciolti. Oras gives a detailed analysis of phonic patterning in Paradise Lost, Book I ll. 1-83, and ll. 547-62, and Book VI, ll. 56-74. Such proof of Milton's attention to the ends of his verses implies that he had a firm sense of the line as metrical unit, as well as the verse-paragraph. F inally, his echoing technique may also be considered the "assonantal equivalent of his rhyming technique in L ydias." Cf. P ohjola (C 270).

C 264 ------. "I ntensified R hyme L inks in the F aerie Q uene: A n A spect of E lizabethan R hymecraft." J EGP 54 (1955): 39-60. T his e ssay should be a full counterweight to the prosodic platitude that identi cal rhyme or rime riche is a technical fault: Oras identifies three groups of fifteen types and one miscellaneous group of five principal types of "phonetic correspondences preceding the 1st metrically stressed vowel," then gives a detailed typological and statistical analysis of each. Oras more than amply makes his point that Spencer considered multiple correspondences a thickening of the aural texture of his verse. Orderly, sensitive, elaborate, undogmatic analysis.

Seeking to revise the older view of Miltonic rhyming as desultory and vestigial, Oras documents a "calculated complexity" of rhyme architechtonics in Lycidas; the poem varies its verse paragraphs, subpatterns of rhyme, strategies of experimentation, and structural "blurring" with artful sprezzatura, each paragraph imitating in its crescendo movement the movement of the poem as a whole. Milton seems to have learned these devices in his study of Italian verse, especially Tasso’s pastoral drama Il Rogo di Corinna and the Italian madrigal. Df. Wittreich (C318).

C266 Pace, George B. "On the Octave Rhymes of 'The Windhover.'" English Language Notes 2 (1965): 285-86.
Though the eight terminal words in the octave rhyme aaaaaaaaa, if one examines the stress-pattern of the repeating -ing endings, one finds it to be /xx/ /xx/, or, by analogy, the Petrarchan abbaabba. This brilliant strategy "prevents the effect of identical rhyme."

Calling itself "a comparatively slight study," this book focuses on the functions of rhyme ("pointing" and "binding"). Not a historical approach.

T he work consists of roughly 150 pages of text and 100 pages of appended tables of forms and statistics. Similar to Dougherty (D273) yet considerably denser in both fact and generalization, Perloff’s work is invaluable for the study of semantic patterning in rhyme. Of the 386 poems in the Variorum Yeats, only 16 are in blank verse, and as Delmore Schwartz noticed, rhymecraft was apparently indispensable for Yeats’s creativity. Perloff establishes some ten semantic categories of rhyme (open to some question, I think), which allow her to explore the strategies of advance and development which rhymes provided Yeats in the writing of a poem.

Poe’s actual practice in rhyming was flagrantly inconsistent with his critical dicta censoring "license." He often resorted to slant rhyme, variance of pronunciations, contrived proper names, rich rhymes, and heavy internal rhyme. But most distressing of all is the "fundamental poverty" of his rhymes, so glaringly obvious, expected, and repetitious.


Additions to Diekhoff (C206).

It is fairly clear that compositor B, at least, sometimes altered the spellings of rhymes in his copy-text (quarto) for similarity of orthography as well as of sound.

Suggested etymologies. Cf. Rankin (E74).
The author's original intent of showing "the perversion of sense for the sake of the rhyme," due to the paucity of useful rhymes in English turns into a perambulating review of successes and failures in a number of Classical, Romance, and English poets. Also Shakespeare's pronunciation.

And also alliteration and assonance. The bulk is historically organized, from Caedmon to the late nineteenth century, with some note of classical antecedents. A primer.

An extensive survey of prosody manuals produced a list of their inconsistent terms for 10 primary and 38 secondary characteristics of rhyme. From this compilation Rickert produces a long-overdue and exceedingly simple codification: "R rhyme, Slant R rhyme, and eight primary and nine secondary terms." He may now add himself to his lists. Bibliography.

Three purposes are pursued here: establishing a typology of varieties of rhyme, discriminating the functions of rhyme (melody, structure, and meaning), and determining the proper place of rhyme within a philosophy of performance.

Though this monograph lacks the scope of a full-length work of scholarship, its thesis is carefully reasoned. Analysis reveals that Crashaw's rhyme vocabulary was surprisingly small, yet he frequently elaborated only a few rhymes (and often the same words) into enormously complex schemes; these preferential repetitions of words and sequences reveal that certain words became, in rhyme, "compressed versions of the complexes of association" which were central to Crashaw's thinking.

Tabulation of stanza-patterns and rhyme-schemes for both George Herbert and Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury shows that the older brother (Edward) had greater range (44 patterns in 62 stanzas) though a smaller corpus (George used 48 patterns in 169 stanzas). Both poets easily outdistance their contemporaries in inventiveness; only Donne and Wyatt compare. Too, both of the brothers show similar characteristics: pattern poems, the echo-device, rare stanza-forms, and shifts of form within a poem.

In stanza-form but especially in rhyme-devices Vaughan is more heavily indebted to Herbert than is the case for any other two major English poets.
Interesting observations here: rhymes can serve as evidence for historical pronunciation; in the case of imperfect rhymes often "similarity of spelling is now accepted as covering the want of any real identity in the vowel sounds"; more than a fifth of the imperfect rhymes in a thousand lines are in words where the vowel is followed by an -r; Tennyson thought the utility of rhyme to be that "it helps the memory"; and the spelling of rhyme with an -h is both recent and erroneous, based on false etymology with rhythm (of Greek origin)--the old spelling for echoing sound was rime, with the variant rhyme meaning simply "verse."

Follows Clark (C198), but claims that many of the alleged "bad" rhymes are actually eye-rhymes.

Concludes from this internal evidence that Kyd wrote the former but not the latter; he may have learned the device from Garnier. the Ur-Hamlet is also discussed.

Criticism has always disparaged Taylor's rhymecraft, but computerized analysis reveals that a great many of his seemingly inept rhymes may be accounted for by (1) the standard features of Taylor's Leicestershire dialect, and (2) systematic application of a rule which allows "as near-rhymes or off-rhymes words which end in consonants that differ by only one phonetic feature, either place or manner of articulation."

Acoustic measurements show that part of the "melody of verse" inheres in the fact that rhymes tend to be pronounced at the same pitch even when that requires some articulatory effort. This research is summarized in:

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Not technical analysis but an inquiry into the motivations and contexts deemed appropriate for rhyme: in both poets, when the subject is considered elevated or sublime, rhyme is abdicated in favor of blank verse.

These are voicing (beneath/breathe), juncture (equine/weak wine), and stress-shift (dust hole/just whole).

C291 Simpson, Percy. "The Rhyming of Stressed with Unstressed Syllables in Elizabethan Verse." MLR 38 (1943): 127-29. Following Legouis and Stein on this practice in Donne, Simpson notes that Marlowe and Shakespeare avoid it; Peele uses it, as well as Chapman and Jonson. No final explanation is offered. See addendum by Maas (C246), then cf. G. C. M. Smith (C295).

C292 Sinclair, Giles M. The Aesthetic Function of Rime in Dryden's Verse. University Microfilms Publication no. 5734. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1953. His dissertation at Michigan in 1953. A detailed analysis of the rhyme-words in Absalom and Achiophel in terms of sense, word-class, and syllabicity (single or double) in order to differentiate the couplets into (1) co-ordinate, (2) subordinate, or (3) continuation forms. In comparison with Pope and Goldsmith, Dryden uses more continued forms and prefers rhymes which are different parts of speech and differ in syllabic length. The "counterlogical" semantic relationship established in the rhyme-words is emphasized.


C294 Smith, Fred M. "Mrs. Browning's Rhymes." PMLA 54 (1939): 829-34. Defends her much-criticised rhyme practices as experimentation, a pattern perfectly acceptable in other nineteenth-century poets such as Emerson and Dickinson. Examples of her masculine and feminine consonantal and assonantal rhymes.


C297 Snyder, Edward D. "Poe and Amy Lowell." MLN 43 (1928): 152-53. Miss Lowell's approbation of rhymes at unexpected intervals in her "polyphonic prose" is paralleled by remarks by Poe in "The Rationale of Verse" on the virtues of rhyme at "unanticipated intervals."

C298 Steffan, T. Guy. "M S R rhyme R evision of Canto I of D on Juan." Notes & Queries 193 (1948): 244-26. In the work of polishing the complex ottava rime stanzas of the first Canto into finished luster, Byron generally preferred to retain a rhyme-word when he was forced to recast a line, and when he was forced to change an entire rhyme he
usually did so in the final couplet, since that alteration had the least effect else-
where in the stanza. A very interesting study.

C299 Stovall, Floyd. "Feminine Rimes in The Faerie Queene." JEGP 26 (1927): 91-95. Statistics and interpretation: Spencer eschewed feminine rhymes almost en-
tirely in Books I-III as undignified but reversed his policy and allowed them
very liberally in Book IV, with the usage declining steadily thereafter through
Book VII. Where they do appear, such rhymes fall most frequently on lines 1
and 3 or the stanza.

C300 Strachan, L. R. M. "Pope's Rymes." Notes & Queries 182 (1942): 51. "W ars' ears" (Essay on Criticism) was a bad rhyme even by Popesown standards

C301 Deleted.


C303 Stryjewski, Kurt. Reimform und Reimfunktion: Untersuchungen zum Problem des reinen
und unreinen R eims in der englischen Dichtung des 20 Jahrhunderts. Breslau:
Far more sophisticated than the usual treatment: the author (a student of
Wilhelm Horn) examines the ways in which the language plays with sound
through rhymes, via their K langkorper, construing similarity and difference si-
multaneously, the effect of rhyme being related to that of the joke. Structurally
the rhyme weights the movement of the line toward its end and leads it into
other lines, unlike alliteration. The impediment of the rhyme-sound forces the
poet to think in terms of the larger stanzaic architecture. The dialectic of
"pure" and "impure" rhymes is carried on deep in the structure of the lan-
guage--e.g. in sound-shifts--and though most poets are inclined toward con-
servatism in rhyming (since legitimacy here is defined socially), some poets are
fairly radical--e.g. Keats. Rhyme also entails a balance of strophic unity against
echo-purity. The twentieth century, though, has been content with only ap-
proximate echo. This is a study showing both a subtle understanding and also
methodological expertise.

C304 Taboureux, Etienne. "Of R hyme in English Verse." Revue de l'enseignement des

C305 Tannenbaum, Samuel A. "Shakspeare's Rimes." Shakespeare Association Bulletin 16
(1941): 255-56. A review of Ness (C260); Tannenbaum's stricture is that Ness ignored the
scholarly work on the subject, and so he appends a bibliography on rhyme in
Shakespeare.

C306 Tatlock, J. S. P. "The Hermaphrodite Ryme." MLN 32 (1917): 373. Also:
response by G. Fraser, "Chaucer's Accents," on p. 242. Tatlock uses the term
for a masculine-feminine rhyme-pair (i.e. a stressed syllable rhymed with an
unstressed).

C308 Taylor, David W. "End-W ords in Richard W ilbur's Poems." Publications of the
A short corollary phenomenon to rhyme: the final words in the lines of Wilbur's poems (the poet confesses it) may offer an elliptical synopsis or ironic commentary on the argument of the poem.


Working systematically through the rhymes of the poem, Turner shows that the ten unrhymed lines are all strategically placed structurally and that all ten endings are slant rhymes with other important internal sound repetitions in their local environments. These practices originate in Tasso.


A notice of Lanz's book (C240) and a rhyming dictionary by Burges Johnson, followed by an exposition of seven varieties of rhyme: full or perfect, imperfect, "suspended" (final consonants identical, initial consonants differ, vowels differ), alliteration, assonance, and "analyzed" (exchange or reversal of the vowel or consonant over four lines).


A study of Levins (C242).


Half-rhyme (e.g. cold/called) was used prior to Owen by Hopkins, Dickinson and Vaughan; possibly he learned the technique from Welsh, but a more likely source is the French poet/prosodist Jules Romains. Functionally it both suited Owen's temperament and conveyed the sense of frustration, dissonance, and unease so appropriate for the war-poems. Moreover, Owen chooses his rhyme-pairs so that almost invariably there is a drop in pitch from the first to the second, the drop that we associate with despair, or incompleteness. . . .


The term is used as an umbrella for all sound-repetition; nine varieties are cited and illustrated in sample poems by Hopkins, Owen, and Thomas. Identifies four major periods of rhyme-practice in English. Interestingly, "full rhyme is not indigenous to any European language" and "the majority of the world's poetic literatures have never used it." Simplified explanations.

C315  Wicker, Nancy R. "The Golden Echo: A Linguistic Study of the Thought and Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins." DAI 38 (1978): 6751A (Pennsylvania). In the philosophical framework of Hopkins' beliefs, love equals God, God equals beauty, and beauty is manifested in rhyme. Hence the complex patterning of sounds and figures becomes a mode of bodying forth the spiritual design of creation.

A classic essay on the semantic functions of rhyme, especially in Chaucer and Pope. Wimsatt sets himself the task of explicating the "counterpattern of alogica l implication" established in rhyme (as exemplar of all formal devices in verse) against or above the lexical-logical meanings built up by the words in the lines. Indeed, his point is precisely that the "logic" of the verse-forms must run counter to the sense of the lines or else the whole complicate tissue of "tension and resilience" is lost.

Rhyme-structures examined are homoeoteleuton, true rhyme, and chiasmus. Of Pope, Wimsatt concludes that his rhymes are characterized chiefly by the use of different parts of speech or by the same parts of speech used in different functions.


Section I of the essay enumerates five possible relations of theory to poems; the essay thereafter expands on that relation chosen by the Augustans. Principally Wimsatt discusses rhetoric (figures) and rhyme in Puttenham and Pope, pointing out the central paradox that rhyme represents in Augustan poetics: though a very fixed and accepted convention, it was nonetheless considered "barbarous."


An argument that (1) the rhymes in Lycidas extend continuously into one integral, highly intellectual pattern, (2) the rhymes at the end of the poem dovetail into those at the beginning to complete the circular structure, (3) leaving only three unrhymed lines in the whole poem--one for each of the three major thematic crises, (4) the whole amounting to a coherent progression from disorder to order. Precedent: the madrigal tradition. There is a subsequent exchange:


Low objects that the rhymes are much too far apart to ring in the reader's ear, and that not only did Milton not intend them as one continuous pattern, he seems to have deliberately avoided continuous stanza-linking. Cf. Oras (C265).


The focus on Death in this Sonnet does not blur a broader focus on the Christian's faith in a life beyond death; both are held in place by a momentary ambiguity over the proper pronunciation of the final syllable in the rhyme-word of the penultimate line, eternally.


An indispensable historical study of rhyming practice and accuracy in English
verse. Wyld set himself the mammoth task of identifying those historical
trends in pronunciation and spelling which obscure older perfect rhymes to
our eyes; given the great bulk of data, his book struggles for organization, and
is in fact less useful for reference (there is a rhyme index) than it is to read
straight through. After an introductory review of the validity of various kinds
of evidence, four chapters cite pronunciational changes—vowel quality and
quantity, consonant quality, and whole words—giving numerous examples.
Organization is by sound, not by author or spelling. Entirely non-technical
treatment: no phonetic transcriptions.

und romanischen Philologie, 50, germanische Abteilung, no. 37. Berlin: Emil
Ebering, 1917. 166 pp.
Collects and summarizes the views of 47 major and minor English critics, from
Ascham down to the end of the eighteenth century, on rhyme in English
verse, unfortunately without untangling the knotted-up skein of usages that
the term has accrued. Organized by critic, giving brief synopses, with a full

See also: B.13, B.30, B.83, B.218, B.226-27, B.230, E.2, E.6, E.74, E.470, E.709,
E.1037, E.1119, E.1215, E.1227, E.1381, E.1398, F.80; G.22, G.67, G.69, G.76, G.84,

SONAL MIMESIS

"S'io avessi le rime aspre e chiocce . . .
— Inferno, Canto 32"

"Sonal mimesis" is used here as a covering term for a class of phenomena known
more commonly as "onomatopoeia," "phonetic symbolism," "phonethemes," or sometimes
verbal "expressiveness." By this term I do not mean to imply any actual miming in the sense
of a gesturing, a figuring-forth, but rather--and more accurately--a correlate in another
mode, a kind of abstracted simulacrum (think of the shaded blocks recognizably Lincoln's
picture) wherein, as Hugh Kenner has put it, "relationships between sounds will map rela-
tionships of sense." (This is more precise than some other formulations, such as "the word
means what it sounds.") It is fashionable these days for literary critics to sneer at the poetic
variety of sonal mimesis as a crude device if not worse, but that is a judgment based on
nothing other than ingrown ignorance, for in fact the linguistic evidence for the existence
(on a global scale) and subtle complexity of the whole process is, quite simply, overwhelm-
ing and irrefragable. Few linguists would today question the fact that speakers associate cer-
tain specific physical qualities of the sounds of words with certain specific qualities of natu-
ral objects or processes. The specific submorphemic features vary from language to lan-
guage, but the mimetic process itself seems to be a linguistic universal.

To recognize this last, however, is to see that the degree of conventionality in mim-
etic processes is actually quite high, and that the range of associations must therefore ex-
tend far beyond that narrow band wherein the sound of a word can imitate or reproduce
the sound of a natural process. In America we say that our dogs say "Bow Bow" or "Arf Arf," but the French say their dogs say "Ouah Ouah." Are, then, French dogs another species of dog? No. The conventionality inherent in each language and culture can never be entirely filtered out, and the confusions are legion. But the effects which are most of interest, of course, are not these coarser one but rather the finer discriminations of nuance, gesture, association, and imitative enactment that language becomes capable of in poetry. These "poetic" effects stand unexpectedly close to the evanescent sureties that Jespersen and Sapir pointed to and called "symbolic."

IN LANGUAGE (PHONETIC SYMBOLISM)

A series of four informal experiments modelled after Sapir. In the first three, only three subjects were used, in the fourth, twenty-six. Affirmative conclusions.

On the interesting phonemenon of "reverse onomatopoeia," wherein "not only is the word assimilated to the sound, but the sound is also assimilated to the 'wordness' of the word." Words are imitative of sounds and natural processes, but more importantly, they are more like other words (being related conventionally) than like things, so they come to take on "affinitive suggestiveness"; they change so as to resemble each other, even as old people long married come to resemble each other. Their similarities of sound and induced similarities of meaning come to form larger constellations of affinity, via affixing, visual simularity, rhyme and alliteration, consonance, and pairing. Many examples to add to Jespersen's.

English subjects were asked to match the order of English antonym pairs with translations of the pairs in Czech, Chinese, and Hindi ordered randomly. They guessed right twice as often as they guessed wrong, and in fact performed slightly better when given written translations than when they heard them read aloud. See Maltzman, Morrisett, and Brooks (C338), and also Brown and Nuttall's revised experiment (next entry).

Procedural refinements over Brown, Black, and Horowitz (above), including deletion of one language (Czech). More precise results suggests more subtle limitations of symbolism in language.

Finds some support for this single-dimension continuum as a description of vowel quality.

C328 Carton, Irving S. "Initial /SL/ in English." DA 17 (1957): 1078A (Columbia).
Compilation of 250 words beginning with sl- reveals a semantic field comprising 15 overlapping "meaning areas," including: stigmatization, inertia, viscosity, smoothness, percussion, and declivity. Statistical analyses and discussion of phonestheme theory included. In short, this initial cluster does convey a
range of varied—though narrow and fairly fixed—associations.

A peculiar study: subjects were to select nonsense syllables to match simple visual forms displaying the specific sets of semantic dimensions rounded/angular, complete/incomplete, and homogeneous/heterogeneous. Not surprisingly, repetition in the structure of the syllable correlated with higher order in the figures.

C330 Firth, J. R. "Modes of Meaning." Essays and Studies n.s. 4 (1951): 118-49.
Firth illustrates the categories of phonetic, prosodic (suprasegmental), syntactic, and collocational meaning—these are distinct modes wholly isolable from the higher levels of linguistic organization—in Swinburne. See pp. 121-23 for his discussion of phonemes, which he insists are not instances of sound-symbolism but simply of "the association of sounds and social and personal attitudes."


Conflicting results. Tests based on the thousand most common English words revealed a firm correlation between the attitudinal meanings of phonemes and lexemes (words). But the same results were not found when artificially contrived words were used. One of the possible interpretations of this situation is that a given phoneme takes part in several spheres of meaning, dependent on context, rather than only one.

Caveats and strictures. Hill admits that the phenomenon exists but argues that its influence is very limited (in language) and localized (in texts). What we believe is symbolism is often mere association of paralanguage. And in logical terms, its occurrences in lexicon and in literature are necessarily related. Literary symbolism may be "lexical," "contentive," or "grammatical."


Synopsis of a study of the clusters of meanings associated with the schwa in English stressed monosyllables: nine clusters are identified, unfortunately rather extensive in semantic range, but one general signification seems to be the pejorative.

The results of these experiments, in which subjects are asked to name referents, judge the degree of expressiveness (in several dimensions, e.g. size), and
judge the appropriateness (as names) of thirty-five arbitrary sound-patterns, were equivocal.

C 337 Jespersen, Otto. "Symbolic Value of the Vowel I." Rpt in his Linguistica: Selected Papers in English, French, and German. Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard, 1933. pp. 283-303. The old master thinks sound-symbolism more authentic and more extensive than most would admit, and so here proceeds to give twenty pages of examples for a connotation of "small, slight, insignificant, or weak" attached to the sound /i/.


C 339 Marchand, Hans. "Phonetic Symbolism in English Word-formation." Indogermanische Forschungen 64 (1958-59): 146-68. 256-77. N.B.: Marchand is interested only in the factors affecting word-formation, not in words which have acquired some phonetically mimetic force by association. The study is a seemingly exhaustive set of notes on initial, final ("rhyme-formation"), and medial ("ablaut-formation") constructions, their relatives, and association (symbolism), the great bulk of the study being given over to the initial forms.

C 340 See also his Categories and Types of Present Day English Word-Formation. 2nd ed. Munich, 1969.


C 344 Newman, Stanley S. "Further Experiments in Phonetic Symbolism." American Journal of Psychology 45 (1933): 53-75. Three experiments, the first of which was performed by Sapir, the first and second of which affirm the existence of fairly stable and well-defined scales of vocalic symbolism correlated with largeness-smallness and brightness-darkness. In the third, two groups of words denoting largeness and smallness are analyzed by the phonetic indices obtained in the preceding experiments, but "the actual distribution of sounds in the two denotative categories [turns out to be]
fairly random, as far as phonetic symbolism is concerned. . . . the phonetic content of English words takes practically no account of magnitude-symbolism." That is, symbolism is not produced by association within a given semantic class.

C345 Deleted.


C348 Sapir, Edward. "A Study in Phonetic Symbolism." Journal of Experimental Psychology 12 (1929): 225-39; rpt in his Selected Writings of Edward Sapir on Language, Culture, and Personality. Ed. David G. Mandelbaum. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949. pp. 61-72. The classic study which inaugurated an entirely new field of interest among American psychologists, the study of the relation of sound and meaning in language. Sapir, wanting to know if native speakers instinctively discerned degrees of magnitude in speech-sounds regardless of meaning, constructed sets of minimal-pairs of nonsense syllables contrasting one phonetic feature (mainly /a/ with /i/) and asked subjects to specify which of the pair was the larger and which the smaller. Sapir speculated that the causes of symbolism might be "acoustic or kinesthetic or a combination of both . . . the factor of linguistic interference being set aside [very significantly] for the present."


C350 Stevens, C., J. A. DeVito, and N. Issacson. "Phonetic Symbolism and Audience Perception." Southern Speech Journal 34 (1969): 185-86. Predominance of front vowels over back vowels is associated by hearers with lower competence, reliability, and energy. Tense and lax vowels were also tested on a number of scales.

C351 Taylor, Insup K. "Phonetic Symbolism Re-Examined." Psychological Bulletin 60 (1963): 200-9. Following a critical review of the literature on the subject (suggesting faults in experimental design) and a synopsis of the author's earlier work, Taylor formally states her theory that phonetic symbolism is not to be found in any analogy of the physical properties of sound to the physical properties of real objects (as a universal linguistic phonemenon) but rather in the "language habits" specific to each language [the term is undefined, but seems to mean no more than "conventions"], so that the basic process is one of association rather than imitation: "once a certain sound has thus become associated with a certain meaning, then within that language a cluster of words of similar meaning may come to employ similar sounds." See the detailed criticism of this theory by Wiss (C361), especially his point that Taylor's view begs the whole question.

about phonetic symbolism, considered both subjectively and objectively and both in single languages and as a linguistic universal, questions for which they map out answers by reviewing the relevant literature on each thoroughly. Near the end (after p. 424) they reassert their own theory provocatively.


Phonetic symbolism is discernable in all four languages (English, Japanese, Korean, and Tamil) but is not a universal linguistic phenomenon. The connotation tested for was (spatial) size. In English, the length of the syllable is significant for suggesting size but stressing is not. Left-to-right ranking for small to large:

- initial consonants: /t d f v z g /
- vowels: /i schwa u /
- final consonants: /t d g z v f/.


Happily, there are careful distinctions here--between expressive sound and expressive versification, for example. Four kinds of sonal miming or expressiveness are defined: muscular imitation, muscular analogy, sound imitation [onomatopoeia], and sound analogy. Excellent examples illustrate, and all four types are subsumed under a single general principle: "likeness of motion."


And, more importantly, in poetry (particularly Poe's "The Bells"). Many examples, though not systematically arrayed. Tolman considers the expressive features to be pitch in vowels and duration ("prolongation") in consonants.


Demonstrates that words expressive of harsh, rough, jarring, grating, or vibrating sounds have the distinctive and indispensable feature of the folled r.


Retesting of Wertheimer's hypothesis (C362) revealed an unnoticed differential between the symbolism of nouns and verbs, which brings to mind Jespersen's observation that words denoting movement would be the most likely symbolic. Conclusion: "phonetic symbolism cannot be seen as having in any sense an existence prior to, or independent of, meaning categories, but must instead be considered a psychological response, initiated or suggested by (word) meanings, which then allows such meanings to become attached to otherwise meaningless sounds."

C360 ------. "Phonetic Symbolism and Perception of Connotative Meaning." Journal of -- 102 --
Verbs are shown higher in symbolic power than either nouns or adjectives. Criticizes the method of Wertheimer (C362).

A critique of the literature review, assumptions, methodology, and conclusions of Taylor's theory (C351) that phonetic symbolism is language-specific and not really symbolism at all, but rather an assimilation of certain words to words with a similar connotation. Weiss objects that this theory begs the whole question, contains an unexamined assumption, and is based on highly selective evidence.

Two hypotheses, both confirmed: (1) words "fitting" their meanings should have more clear-cut tertiary qualities, which will appear at the extremes of the Osgood semantic-differential scales; and (2) such words when continuously repeated aloud [as we did when children] should retain their meaning for the speaker longer before lapsing than non-fitting words would. But see Weiss (C359-60).

On two short pages (267-68) Whorf makes three deft points: humans "seem to associate the experiences of bright, cold, sharp, hard, high, light (in weight), quick, high-pitched, narrow... with each other, and conversely... dark, warm, yielding, soft, blunt, low, heavy, slow, low-pitched, wide, etc."; we are likely to notice if the words for such experiences share similar characteristics (esp. vowel features) with them, but we usually do not notice a relation of contrast or conflict; even if a word has a "sharp" sound, if it denotes "tender-ness" it will be heard as "sounding," subjectively and culturally, tender.


IN POETRY (ONOMATOPOEIA)

Of all the various methods of word-formation, Hopkins preferred the onomatopoeic one; of all the various purposes for such words, he seems to have preferred the purely sonal and metrical functions to the semantic ones; the fact is that "the sound of a new word by Hopkins is no guide to the meaning of it." There is a diremption of sound and sense.

This important new approach to the problem of phonetic symbolism offers much more refined results than the crude traditional terminology by treating the symbolic potential of the phoneme as a regular element in generative phonology. Assuming that "while phonemes always 'have meaning' they are not always expressive of their meaning," Anderson proposes tagging each phoneme with an "Affect" feature, which operates by regular rules unless it is "masked" by other lexical features. Rules are derived. Since the symbolism of a morpheme does not appear in isolation but only within structures, four possible relations may obtain between its lexical features (meaning) and phonological features, giving four degrees of "fit" between the two:

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Other Stylistics rules mark repetitions of symbolic features to produce a hierarchy of eight degrees of value for types of structural repetition within or across lines. Anderson's treatment is a quantum leap over the methodology of earlier studies.

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C 368 Bugge, John. "Rhyme as Onomatopoeia in 'The Dry Salvages.'" Papers on Language and Literature 10 (1974): 312-16. In the second section of the third of the Four Quarts "Eliot seems to have intended that the line endings of each sestet, taken in sequence, should echo certain prominent sounds made at regular intervals by the surf."

C 369 Ehrenpreis, Irvin. "The Style of Sound: The Literary Value of Pope's Versification." The Augustan Milieu. Ed. Henry K. Miller et al. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970. pp. 232-46. A critique. Ehrenpreis makes the salient point that imitative effects in poetry are critically valued almost automatically these days, just as "purely musical qualities" used to be, but without any critical recognition of the structural and narrative sacrifices that are necessary in order to achieve mimesis. And is the mimesis all that effective in most cases?

C 370 Epstein, E. L. "The Self-Reflexive Artefact: The Function of Mimesis in an Approach to a Theory of Value for Literature." Style and Structure in Literature. Ed. Roger Fowler. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975. pp. 40-78. Elaboration of a full-scale theory of verbal mimesis: "there are basically only two types of formal relationship to content, mimetic and nonmimetic." The latter show two subtypes, absolutely nonmimetic (total absence of grammatical organization at any level; possibly a nonexistent type) and relatively nonmimetic (showing some phonological organization such as sound-patterning, figures, or meter, but unrelated to any analogous lexical-semantic structure). Mimetic refers to "the presence of analogous schemata in the lexical level and one or both of the lower levels of syntax or phonology (or graphemics)," and also shows
two subtypes, objective (miming of objects or processes) and subjective (miming of "sequences of emotion": the mind imitating its own activities, observing itself).

C371 Fenderson, Lewis H. "The Onomatological Element in Paradise Lost." College Language Association Journal 9 (1966): 255-64. Adduces a number of examples in Milton which are said to be mimetic, without explanation how or why.

C372 Gibson, Walker. "Sound and Sense in G. M. Hopkins." MLN 73 (1958): 95-100. Explanations advanced for alliteration and convoluted consonant clusters in Hopkins the latter produce the desired effect of a man in torment, under stress, speaking passionately, while the former, by displaying different meanings under the same sound, projects perfectly a sense of the joint necessity of both the unique individuality of all things and their union under God's hand.


C374 Herbert, T. Walter. "Sound and Sense in Two Shakespeare Sonnets." Tennessee Studies in Literature 3 (1958): 43-52. Full analyses of Sonnets 12 and 30 in support of two propositions: (1) similarity in word-sounds implies some similarity in meanings; (2) hearing word-sounds associated with some aspect of a previous context calls up that aspect or context.

C375 Hrushovski, Benjamin. [Do Sounds Have Meaning? The Problem of Expressiveness of Sound-Patterns in Poetry.] Ha-Sifrut/Literature 1 (1968): 410-20. (In Hebrew; English summary on p. 444). Identifies four types of sound-meaning relationships: onomatopoeia (the sound of the word denotes its meaning), expressive sounds (an abstraction from the sound of the words is parallel to an abstraction from the meaning), focusing sound-pattern (no relation exists between specific sounds and words, but the relation of sounds in a word-pattern is parallel to the relation of meanings in the pattern), and neutral sound-pattern (sonal patterning in itself is perceived as aesthetically pleasing, and no sound-meaning correlation at all is intended).


C378 Lotspeich, C. M. "The Metrical Technique of Pope's Illustrative Couplets." JEGP 26 (1927): 471-74. Analyzing the five couplets in Pope's Essay on Criticism beginning with the famous line "the sound must seem an echo to the sense," Lotspeich interprets the line to mean that sounds are important not in being mimetic but insofar as they "modify the metrical movement of the whole line." And "sense" he takes to mean not only thoughts or images but moods and feelings as well. So the
rhythm must parallel the contour of our emotive responses. Very muddy language here.

C 379 Macdermott, Mary M. Vowel Sounds in Poetry: Their Music and Tone-Color. Psyche Monographs, no. 13. London: Kegan Paul, 1940; rpt Folcroft Pa.: Folcroft Library Editions, 1973. 148 pp. Rev: in M L R 38 (1943): 387-89. Highly technical phonetic analysis of vowels in some 250 passages of verse using the difference between points of articulation (front, mid, or back) to test for association with various connotations. The aspects "long" versus "short" and open versus closed are ignored, as are consonant clusters. The effects of the metrical pattern on stressing and reducing vowel intensity are also taken into account. In part the assumptions and methodology here are open to question (sorting verse into Good Verse and Bad Verse, for example), but there is useful information here: see pp. 11-19 and 88-93.

C 380 Mace, D. T. "The Doctrine of Sound and Sense in Augustan Poetic Theory." Review of English Studies n.s. 2 (1951): 129-39. The rise of science and deterministic philosophy in the seventeenth century, the explicit analogy between poetry and music so central to the Renaissance, and the Augustan social doctrine of "correctness" all led to the doctrine of "harmony of Numbers" in Baroque poetic theory, a doctrine all the more curious because it entailed a complete emphasis on sound over sense, on sound as pure sensuous pleasure, and hence on the irrational over the rational in poetry. In contrast, the Augustan view, as seen in Pope's statements in the Essay on Criticism, represented "a transformation of that tradition [so as] to bring poetic imitation in accord with nature as revealed by Hobbes." Mearingless sound, so esteemed in the seventeenth century, had reversed its fortunes entirely by 1711.


C 382 Moynihan, William T. "The Auditory Correlative." J AAC 17 (1958): 93-102. Moynihan, who has read the major psychological experiments on sound symbolism, offers here a number of short, clarified examples in poetry of vowel features (high-low, front-back) suggesting non-linguistic features such as size or shape (large-small, round-angular, smooth-rough), then turns to the Paget-Johannesson-Blackmur theory of "language as gesture" (i.e., language evolved as the tongue, mouth and speech-organs imitated gestures in the external world). Sapir, for example, thought that sounds which suggested size correlated roughly with the size of the mouth-cavity required to make them.

C 383 Murdy, Louise B. Sound and Sense in Dylan Thomas's Poetry. The Hague: Mouton, 1966. 172 pp. Based on her dissertation at Florida in 1963. Rev: in J AAC 27 (1968): 104-5; in Etudes Anglaises 21 (1968): 433-34. A study valuable both for theory and criticism. Brief, yet methodologically astute, the work analyzes stress and sound patterns in relation to meaning, in 28 poems over Thomas's career, tracing patterns of development: Thomas's poetry evolves from an earlier idiom that is "staccato in its rhythm and compressed . . . to a later poetry that is legato in its rhythm and expansive--often uncomplicated--in its sense"; from highly regular meters to more diverse, varied, irregular stress-patterns; from strongly end-stopped to usually enjambed lines and larger units of thought; from sound used to point up a phrase or line, through sound used to contrast or characterize passages, to sound-patterns highly autonomous, extended, and complicate; from an early style dense in
consonants and plosives to a late reliance on vocalic resonance and extension; Throughout, Thomas used his tools of stress, pitch, intensity, and pattern to body forth, chiefly, his sense. Very extensive Bibliography and Appendices of sound-graphs from Thomas's many recordings.

Pope went a little further in developing kinesthetic mimesis than his sources (Racheter and Milton) for the three lampoons in Arbuthnot: the patterning of sibilants in one passage draws the lips into a sneer and produces unmistakable hissing; the frequent plosives in another passage on the spitting Sporus force the reader to spit himself in dramatic affirmation.

The spectacular mimetic effects in 11. 337-83 of the Essay (pp. 276-84 here), though now a locus classicus, are still not entirely understood, despite studies by Mace (C380) and Lotspeich (C378), and the Twickenham text provides copious notes on sources. It is important to remember that in this passage not only does Pope skewer the features of incompetent versification (hiatus, monosyllabic clutter, filler words, easy rhymes, pretentious alexandrines) for all to see, and not only does he remind us that the verse must enact, sonically and metrically, what it describes, but he also insists, first and last, that Numbers are not the final value of verse—what counts above all is the Thought.

Beginning at the eighth paragraph, Ransom faces squarely the possibility of sounds in poetry suggesting meaning, knocking it flat to the ground: "I am compelled to believe that the sound effects... are remarkable but do not 'promote' any particular meaning at all." His method of proof entails replacing the phonemes in the lines with very similar ones in the same order, but making up different words, then asking if the supposed meanings remain. This is a visible blow, yet one may remember that in logic, arguments by analogy have no logical validity.

The steady increase in nasals through the three stanzas of the poem, and especially in the rhyme-sounds, enacts the "ringing" in the ear being discussed (Ray misreads the sense of the passage).

Computerized analysis of the distinctive features in the sound-patterns of poems by Shakespeare, Pope, and Thomas.

A delicately subtle defence of the virtue of all types of arbitrariness in poetic sound-devices, from assonance to palindromes. Indeed, in the face of the cold sense of philosophy (most directly Locke), poets have always clung to the necessary fiction that the sounds of words are magically accurate and adumbrative

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names, and anything but arbitrary assignments. Ricks' wonderful examples show that poets exploit both the visual and the aural arbitrariness of word-shapes for "manifesting significance."

  Several hundred examples of echoic words from Greek, Latin, and (primarily) English.

  Notes three theories of phonetic symbolism: O nomatopoeia (vowel sounds imitate sounds in nature); Gesture (the movements of the vocal muscles imitate motions in nature); and Synaesthesia (heard sounds trigger other sensory impressions--pure sound symbolism). Then suggests another variety--Kinesthesia.
  A careful analysis of Dr. Johnson's strictures on "representative meter" in The Life of Pope discloses that he misunderstands the phonetic causes of Pope's mimetic effects in the Sisyphus passage in The Odyssey.

  Onomatopoetic effects are here termed "word-music." See schema on p. 151.

  In Stein's view, modern criticism has erred in its fixation on semantic content, which regulates style to a dependent position. He finds Milton's verbal harmonies more subtle and sweeping than Donne's, elaborating on imitative sound-patterning in five examples (ranging from such elementary mimetics as "the extravagant mouthing necessary to read the words" to more sophisticated fugues of vocalic enunciation, "propelled outward with great energy and then sustained in a widening sound"), taking the trouble to scourge D. R. Roberts (N113) repeatedly for "shallow" analysis, and concluding finally that the sounds are in fact not imitative at all, but constitutive: "the pattern of sound does not reinforce an already established meaning so much as it helps shape and modulate that meaning."


  A sturdy defense of sonal mimesis against the Ransomites; Woodring is happy to admit that single sounds have little color of their own but insists that patterns of sound have much, both mimetically and kinesthetically.