TEMPORAL METRICS

The crux of the temporal view of meter, I suspect, is a conception of the poem not as aesthetic object but as aesthetic experience. "Timers" hold that lines of verse are organized ("metered") not by stresses or syllable-count but by duration. More recent temporal theorists have taken as support for this position the postulate in linguistics that English is a "stress-timed" language, so that the time elapsing between any two stresses in speech is roughly equal regardless of how many syllables intervene—a phenomenon called "isochronism." But very recent evidence is mixed, and the more one looks at the whole theory the more it seems one enormous category mistake. Timing may well inhere in the language and hence be properly termed an aspect of linguistic rhythm, but not therefore an aspect of that abstract paradigm meter. The temporalists themselves use these two crucial terms indiscriminately, often preferring Rhythm for their domain, but the chief modern theorists Omond and Smith make a clear bid for the status of Meter, hence they are so categorized here, though my own preference would be to remove the entire enterprise to the category of Poetic Rhythm.

Temporal theories are of three sorts, differentiated (not very clearly) in method and notation but agreeing in principle. They commonly overlap and their similarities far outweigh their differences. The oldest theory insists on a precise scansion notation to denote the precise durations of the syllables—i.e. music. A more conservative group than the Musical theorists has arisen more recently, disdaining the needless over-specification of timing but preserving other basic tenets. A third group appeals not to its ears or to reason but to the results of scientific experiments in acoustic phonetics. These differences of notation and methodology seem to be disagreements about degree of descriptive adequacy and about what will count as verification.

The temporal theory is confounded in earlier centuries—especially the eighteenth—by efforts to conflate it with the classical (quantitative) account, apparently on the belief that in the dim mists of antiquity Greek poetry and music had been irrefragible, and that the classical metrical rules were rules therefore of timing. But "one long equals two shorts" and "length by position" were quite arbitrary conventions and had nothing whatsoever to do with actual timing. It is logically impossible to support both theories simultaneously, as T. S. Omond sometimes shows signs of doing, since the timing theory entails equality of metrical units regardless of how they are filled, whereas the classical theory entails the equality of the constituents of the units, so that longer units are longer. The equality of lines varying in length would be unthinkable in the classical system.

E269 Alden, Raymond Macdonald. "English Rhythm." The Nation 93 (1911): 442-43. A response to Goodell's review essay (E36); Alden discusses the problems of metrical pause (he accepts it) and lengthening of the syllable, and he emphasizes the necessity of the abstract concept of the (disyllabic) metrical foot.

E270 -----.. An Introduction to Poetry for Students of English Literature. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1909; 2nd ed. 1937. In contrast to Alden's earlier English Verse (A1), a collection of examples and extracts, the Introduction sets forth his theoretical views on the nature of poetry; the salient chapters are 4 and 5 (on metrics) and 6 (on rhyme and stanza forms). His central position is that "two elements are equally necessary to the
forming of rhythm: the equal time-intervals and the stresses which mark them." Meter, then, simply fixes the number of syllables regularly repeated in the rhythmic frame. Secondary accent on syllables is allowed, which may be either a stress or a slack for metrical purposes, and wherever metrical ictus conflicts with normal word-stress, "hovering accent" will resolve the clash into compromise. And "in general, stress is relative rather than positive." (All of Alden's stress-rules (p. 172) are ahead of his time.) Quantity, though more variable, is relevant too: when the quantity of a syllable is too short for its time-interval, either lengthening or a compensatory pause will fill the deficiency; "pauses may also fill the place of wholly missing syllables, in order to complete the approximate equality of the time-intervals between stresses." The function of meter and the apparent interconvertibility of iambic and trochaic meters are explored in detail. Alden reviews several scansion systems, evasively, finally settling on the old macron-and breve. Four meters are considered basic, and metrical variation is discussed at length, one such device being infrequent substitution of pyrrhics and spondees.

Far from being a mere student's manual, Alden's treatise tackles nearly every major issue in versification head-on, in a sensible yet astute approach, with frequent long digressions to review the scholarship on a subject, as well as summaries of his own developing arguments.

'To pronounce in one way and scan in another" is not at all unreasonable, because meter is a pure abstraction, assumed by the knowledgeable reader, even though it may be "wholly discarded or only partially represented in actual utterance." This axiom will account for "metrical rests" and explain how stresses outside of ictus are demoted in utterance while slacks under ictus may be promoted. Isochronism is only a subjective reality, even though the metrical foot has both a temporal and syllabic character, Alden admits. He agrees with Omond that "rising and falling rhythms" are essentially the same meter, and he deplores the whole conception of acoustics research as a legitimate method in metrics.

E272 ------. "The Time-Element in English Verse." M L N 14 (1899): cols. 478-94. Reprinted as Part Three of his English Verse: Specimens (A1). Summary, cols. 491-92. Criticizes J. M. Robertson (E320). Though Alden would "certainly not try to name feet or describe lines on any basis other than that of accent," he takes up here the matter of time in verse--that is, rhythm--and examines specifically the Musical Analogy and Quantity. He argues that Lanier carried the analogy too far and gives a detailed account of the contrasts between verse and music. Variable quantities in English syllables are granted, even though they are not metrically ordered, yet Alden argues (this is the crux) that just as speech-accents are adjusted in the reading of verse under the pressure of the meter, so too the natural, various syllabic quantities may often be adjusted (we know that stressed syllables are commonly prolonged, for example), in order that the time-periods between accents will be held equal. Even if it were not so cogently prepared for, that conclusion seems reasonable beyond much cavil.

E273 Anderson, Johannes C. "Classification of Verse." T r ansactions of the New Zealand Institute 42 (1909): 481-533. In the exceedingly complex (and convoluted) metrical system presented here, Anderson identifies and elaborates on nineteen different types of "stress units" (the term chosen to supplant the traditional "foot"), the prototypical unit being a fixed period of time demarked by stresses and containing from one to four syllables. The very term itself entails a broader premise, which Anderson
argues directly: English verse is metered with a basic unit of quadruple members. Such a premise naturally forces some unusual scansions, as for example when feminine endings are considered the first half of a stress-unit completed at the beginning of the following line. Very much attention is given to metrical pauses, and the nineteen types of units are eventually reduced to only seven for practical purposes. Section 1 of the treatise argues that no real distinction can be drawn between "iambic" and "trochaic," and after the subsequent section essays the same for anapest, dactyl, and amphibrach, Anderson concludes in the third that "absolutely no line of demarcation can be made between duple and triple" meters. No other metrists has ever been willing to go that far.

E274 -----. "The Development of the Four-syllabled Metrical Unit in the Australian Modification of the English Ballad." Translations of the New Zealand Institute 41 (1908): 418-21. Anderson's metrical system admits only feet of either two or three syllables, with the stress always falling on the last (iamb or anapest). But he considers that a unit of three initial slacks is possible, though very rare, and here he cites examples from ballads.

E275 -----. The Laws of Verse. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928. 227 pp. Reviewed in TLS, 17 May 1928, p. 375; by Sonnenschein in the Oxford Magazine, 14 June 1928, p. 641; in English Review 47 (1928): 371; by Tempest in Review of English Studies 6 (1930): 116-20. Anderson, a New Zealander, was a correspondent with T. S. Omond both in letters and in metrical theory. That theory distinguishes poetry from prose by a "temporal metre"--"a rhythm of time underlies the words, and once this rhythm has been perceived, syllables can be omitted or inserted, accents suppressed . . . without the perception of that rhythm being lost. It is this rhythm of time that is metrical. . . . the words and accents float upon the metre." Critical of the methods of Guest (E543), Bridges (E491), and Saintsbury (E636), Anderson identifies the eight-crested "Romance verse" [i.e., Long Meter] as the stable lyric measure in English. The foot is here termed a "stress-unit," and though it seems to him irrelevant whether a stress begins or ends the unit, Anderson takes it to end, for the sake of convenience. His scansions place a grave accent above the line for "syntactical accents" and a short vertical mark below the line for "metrical wavecrests," the coincidence of two marks above and below a syllable denoting, then, the "metrical stress." Three basic rhythms of verse are identified--those consisting of disyllabic, trisyllabic, and quadrissyllabic units--yet strangely enough, Andersen argues that the effects of the disyllabic [duple time] and trisyllabic [triple time] rhythms are the same; indeed, he thinks that iambic rhythms can become trochaic almost insensibly, based on "a variable sonant hover" on every stressed vowel not ending a word: the accented syllable is shortened, he thinks, while the following syllable is lengthened (or another syllable inserted in the same duration). The four-syllable rhythm is also discussed at length, it being a compound form of the disyllabic rhythm. Line and stanza forms occupy the remainder of the book.

E276 -----. "Metre." Translations of the New Zealand Institute 40 (1907): 466-85. Defining rhythm as "an uninterrupted succession of equal divisions of time, each more or less filled with sound," Anderson devotes considerable attention to ballad meter, which he persists in (mistakenly) analyzing by the apparatus for foot-verse (rather than stress-verse), the foot. To analyze stress-verse in feet is a category mistake, of course, but what is more surprising here is that Anderson makes very little of his Temporalist assumptions, instead

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emphasizing that "all blank verse, all ballad verse . . . is essentially iambic" and
arguing that all the other meters are secondarily derived from the iambic,
which itself is modelled on our internal cardiac rhythms.

E277 -----. "A Natural Classification of English Poetry." Transactions of the New Zealand
The scheme does seem natural enough; it has three categories -- the eight-
stressed (sixteen syllables) Ballad line, which by variations of initial and final
syllables can be transformed as far as the six-stressed (twelve-syllabled) line; the
five-stressed Heroic line, including Couplet and Blank Verse forms; and
Irregularly lined forms, e.g. Odes and pattern-poems. Both the Ballad and
Heroic verse may be found in continuous and Stanzatic arrangement. Table of
forms and subforms appears on p. 412; many examples with scansion follow.

E278 -----. "The Verse-Unit." Transactions of the New Zealand Institute
43 (1910): 606-55.
Follows E273. The next higher level of metrical organization, above that of
"stress units," is the "verse unit," consisting (in the full form) of eight stresses
and often printed in two halves, each half more commonly known as a "line."
The native British meter was of course the Ballad verse (seven stresses), but it
was joined after the Conquest by the Romance verse (eight stresses), which
had two offspring, the Nibelungen verse and the Alexandrine (each of six
stresses). Anderson works out all the rhythmical and typographic (i.e. stanzatic)
variations of these verses, but really, unless one wants examples, the whole
genealogy is summarized (rather technically) in the dense concluding section
(pp. 642-55).

E279 Anderson, Johannes C., and T. S. Omond. "The Limits of Verse-Length" and
"The Reversed Foot." Letters to The Academy 75 (1908): 284-85, 306; 76
(1909): 856-58, 903-6, 927.

E280 Barham, Thomas Foster. "On Metrical Time, Or, the Rhythm of Verse, Ancient
Omond (A5) thought this "a remarkable paper," primarily I think on account
of its scope. Barham accepts that modern meter is based on "tone, or accent,"
though he ushers in the old quantities as well by noting the "obvious" fact that
"the syllable which contains most articulate utterance will occupy the longest
time in pronunciation." But he also defines "the due observation of time in the
recitation of metre" as Rhythm [this indeed is very exact], he admits metrical
rests, he recognizes isochrony, and he thinks scansion by dipodies simpler. Yet
the treatment of ancient meter in the last half of the essay surely colors heavily
that of modern in the first, and we can hear not far behind all this the
schoolboy doctrines of a classical prosody applied to English verse. Here is the
best instance of the conflation and confusion of Temporalist and quantitative
theories.

Ostensibly an attempt to explain the eight items in Housman's famous
footnote (E297), the article actually ranges very far afield from direct answers
to Housman's questions to a more general account of the processing of
temporal events in human perception, which is the real subject here. Several of
Housman's questions remain effectively unanswered. But the account given
here of the precedence effect is simply fascinating.

E282 Boomsliter, Paul C., Warren Creel, and George S. Hastings, Jr. "Perception and

Opposed to all objective theories or measurements of verse, the authors hold that metrical pattern inheres "in the perception not in the signal," wherein the mind engages in an active perceptual patterning, a pattern of expectation (of stressing recurring at equal intervals) projected. As support for this temporal theory of meter the authors record schematically some "unled choral reading" of verse by a group [consider the socio-dynamics and assumptions behind this method]. The verse is "Pease Porridge Hot," Dickenson, Tennyson, all of it close to if not actually stress verse, so we are not surprised when they "discover" the metrical pause.


An attempt to answer three of Housman's provocative questions (E297), and with due notice of Prall (E318) and Schramm (E428), Bracher argues that every pentameter line is followed by a test of one foot (he will not allow metrical rests shorter than a full foot); indeed, all lines having an odd number of feet are followed by such a rest, though even-footed ones are not, on the grounds that humans naturally tend to compound simple rhythmic impulses, but odd-numbered rhythms cannot be resolved into simple groups. Thus blank verse is six-footed in actuality. As for the paradox of line-combinations: lines having the same number of feet should combine easily whether entirely filled with sound or ending in a rest; verses of different feet will combine well if both end in rests but not otherwise. Thus tetrameters and trimeters, and pentameters and trimeters, but not tetrameters and pentameters. Finally, tetrameter verse, being entirely filled with sound, requires a rhyme to mark the line-end for the ear. Beguiling sense or nonsense?


An unsatisfying argument that there exists a type of line we may call the "heroic tetrameter," consisting of ten syllables but having only four equal time-measures (and hence only four strong stresses, the medial syllables in the line all being weak). Cf. E1122.


Demonstrates weaknesses in definition of metrical terms in Saintsbury (E636), Bright and Miller (E500), and Lanier (E364), in order to stipulate some definitions himself (scansions by equal time). Proposes a theorem: "Some readers read heroic [iambic pentameter] lines tetrameter (i.e., four major stresses marking time-periods instead of five). Then reports results of "objective " time-analysis of a passage read aloud by several subjects, supporting Cobb's argument that decasyllabic lines often have four parts not five.


Presents charts divided into blocks into which lines of verse are set so that the reader can learn to tap out beats, hear rests, syncopation, and so on. Conveniently, most of the verse chosen is dipodic (which as stress verse, is meant to be heard aloud), and so the snake bites its tail. Creel can still have a go of it forty years later; see E281.

A verse depends on the order and nature of its accents. There is no good ground for withstanding the common doctrine, that accent depends on the relative sharpness of tones. Their sharpness depends upon time; upon the number of their vibrations in a given time. . . . Such, then, is metre in its simplest form—time heard. To the units of meter Dallas applies the term "bars," and he associates the three principal types of poetry—Dramatic, Epic, and Lyric—with three modes of metrical organization—(respectively) the foot, the bar, and the stanza.


E290 ------. Specimens of English Accentuated Verse, wherein the Intensity of Pronunciation only is measured and the Length of the Syllables is unnoticed. London, 1813.

E291 ------. Specimens of English Non-Accentuated Verse, or Verse measured with a Regard solely to the Length of Time required in the Pronunciation of Syllables, the Accent and Emphasis being entirely unnoticed. London, 1813.

Omond believed that these must have been small tracts and that none of them was extant, but John Prudhoe reported in TLS, 7 April 1950, p. 215, that the first and third had been found. Edwin Guest (see E543; 1838 edition, vol. 1, p. 111) simply repeated that Edwards measured verse "with a regard solely to the length of time required in the pronunciation of syllables, the accent and emphasis being entirely unnoticed." Edwards also held the preposterous view that since correct verse required rules, and since no one before himself had written the rules correctly, that therefore he himself was the first English poet.


Gurney, Edmund. "The Sound-Element in Verse." The Power of Sound. London: Smith, Elder, 1880. pp. 423-50. Saintsbury (History of English Criticism, p. 512) approved of Gurney's work because it recognized that the "music" of poetry is quite different from music itself, that metrical rhythm is imposed upon, not latent in, speech," and that the sound-stratum of a poem can augment its meaning—"the setting includes a new substance." His book is a study of musical form and the psychology of acoustical perception, and in chapter 19 he sets forth a theory of meter based on his studies in music. Stresses occur at equal intervals of time, feet may contain from one to five syllables, and rests may fill up deficient measures. But the distinction (which Saintsbury noted) that Gurney draws between verse-music and tonal-music proper is sharply made: the ictus in music normally falls first in the bar, whereas in verse it often falls last; "there is no significance in this difference, which in no way affects the common feature of regular accents." If iambic verse were set to music, the accented syllables would fall first in the musical bars but still last in the meter. "The difference. . .is a mere matter of the eye.

See also the essay on "The Appreciation of Poetry" in his Tertium Quid. 2 vols. London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, & Co., 1887. Vol. 2, pp. 191-250; the
subject in general is "the position of [a reader's] native language in respect of his appreciation of verse." On the "musicality" and meter of verse, see pp. 203-16.

For critical discussion, see:

E296 M. cKerness, E. D. "Edmund Gurney's Tbe Power of Sound." M u s i c & L e t t e r s 37 (1956): 356-67.
E297 Housman, A. E. Tbe N a me and N ature of P o e t ry. C a m b r i d g e U n i v e r s i t y P r e s s, 1933. 51 pp. R pt 1961. R pt in Tbe N a me and N ature of P o e t ry and O ther S e l e c t e d P r o s e. Ed. John C ar t e r. N e w Y ork: N e w A m s t e r d a m, 1989. Tbe reputation of the famous footnote (p. 8) to Housman's 1933 Leslie Stephen lecture at C ambridge is justly deserved; even Pound in his glowing review in Tbe C r i t e r i o n was forced to admit its value. T here Housman enumerates eight particular metrical phenomena which still remain unaccounted for by theorists, the "latent base, comprising natural laws by which all versification is conditioned, and the secret springs of the pleasure which good versification can give. . . ." See Boomsliter and Creel (E281), and note E956 and E991.
E298 Hunt, (James Henry) Leigh. A n A n s w e r to the Q u e s t i o n "W hat is P o e t r y?" including R emarks on V ersification. Ed. Albert S. Cook. Boston, 1893; rpt N e w Y ork: G. E. Stechert, 1926. 98 pp. Tbe essay is the opening one of Hunt's Imagination and F a n c y of 1844. Much of the piece upholds the distinction between Imagination and F a n c y, but versification is discussed on pp. 37-63: verse is held essential to poetry as "that finishing, and rounding, and 'tuneful planeting' of the poet's creations, which is produced of necessity by the smooth tendencies of their energy or inward working, and the harmonous dance into which they are attracted round the orb of the beautiful." Its virtues are "strength, sweetness, straightforwardness, unsuperfluosness, variety, and oneness." "Strength is the muscle of verse, and shows itself in the number and force of the marked syllables. . . . U n e x p e c t e d locations of the accent double this force, and render it characteristic of passion and abruptness. . . . W eakness of versification is want of accent and emphasis." Hunt detests inverted syntax but praises Coleridge for "dividing [verses] by time, instead of syllables.

E299 Jenkin, Fleeming. D r . G e s t u e t o n R h y t h m" and two other essays in S a t u r d a y R e v i e w 55 (February-M arch 1883): 248-49, 270-71; rpt in condensed form as "O n R h y t h m in E n g l i s h V e r s e" in P a p e r s L i t e r a r y, S c i e n t i f i c & by the late F leem i n g Jenkin. Ed. Sidney C olv i n and J. A. E w i n g. 2 vols. London: Longmans, G reen, 1887. pp. 149-70. Jenkin's judgment of Guest: "under a new name we meet with the old false law, classifying verse by the mere number of accents; and in place of scansion we are offered new and far more complex rules which, notwithstanding their great laxity, are inapplicable to much good verse. W e conclude that the new theory is of small value." Jenkin himself is a T i me r, though he speaks most often of stress, yet he also wishes to preserve the old terms of long and short [it is not clear if he means these as simply ictic and non-ictic], allowing "a pause followed by a weak syllable" to count as a long. But he will allow spondees and pyrrhics to be stronger and weaker varieties of the iamb, and he shows an astute recognition that two systems operate simultaneously in the metrical line-"grouping by section" (syntactic-semantic units) and "grouping by feet" (meter). W ithin his catch-all theory that recognition (see pp. 159-60) is an island of surprising clarity and cogency.
A primer of sonal, metrical, and stanzaic forms. Meter is said to rest on bars of equal times, and Kent calls iambic and trochaic meters 3-time rhythm, but he does not go so far as to scan with notes, and he admits that English verse, unlike music, is essentially iambic.

A scansion system is proposed: the foot will begin on the stressed syllable (following Ellis), and five degrees of stress as well as three degrees of length will be marked. "Thus metre, rhythm, and verse [are] all dependent on proportions of quantity or time, marked off by pauses or by variations of stress." Lecky speaks frequently of quantity, which he eventually defines as temporal. See Sumera (E401).

The book represents a theory of meter which was derived from M's original study of Campion's Observations but subsequently assumed larger proportions, so that the final result is bivalent in character but essentially theoretical. M. draws heavily on Omond, but surpasses him in drawing, as the axiom of his whole approach, an explicit distinction between Song-Verse and Speech-Verse. Both are comprised of accent and quantity, in isochronous periods, but in speech-verse the units are additionally regulated by "weight" (undefined). Song-verse originated in music, whereas speech-verse arose from discourse even though it may become oratorical. The present volume treats only song-verse. Also discussed: music and meter; quantitative and accentual verse. MacDonagh, a well-known Irish poet, was executed by court-martial for activities in the Sinn Fein revolution before the subsequent volume could be written.

An idiosyncratic notation system and nomenclature is introduced here for a worn and familiar theory of meter: equal timing between stresses. We have asterisks or "basic syllables" (stressed syllables) preceded or followed by dots ("sub-basic syllables," i.e. unstressed), to wit: .*, compounded by colons as bar lines, double colons, heavy dots, dashes, and such like, all to denote Basic, Major, and Minor Meters in this homespun account of the "physio-psychological basis of verse." This work has been tactfully ignored by metrists since its publication.

"It is not syllables that recur, nor accents, but the time-spaces or periods occupied partly by syllables, partly by pause. . . . [these] periods I hold to be the basis of English verse-structure."

E305  Omond, T. S. "'Dactylic' Verse in English." The Spectator 129 (1922): 635.
Cites examples of dactylic and anapestic lines, arguing that between them there
is no essential difference whatsoever.


In his first monograph Omond posits his axiom that the "period" not the "foot" is the unit of English meter. Our verse exhibits quantity (metrical quantity is not to be confused with natural linguistic quantity), accent (too fickle to serve as a basis for meter), and pause [here Omond fails to distinguish stress-verse from syllable-counting verse], but its crucial feature is time not accent. There is no real distinction between iambic and trochaic, or anapestic and dactylic, meters; the only true meters in English are "common time" and "triple time." But in any event all that the prosodist can hope to elucidate are the Principles of verse, not any fixed Rules. Omond surveys briefly the theories of Symonds, Bridges, Guest, Poe, Jenkin, Sylvester, Steele, and Ellis. Note his rather over-emphatic denial (on p. 54) of any character that he is confusing meter with rhythm; that tone of defensiveness is indeed justified.


The first half of this essay reviews Thomson's The Basis of English Rhythm (E405), which presents a system of temporal metrics even more extensive than Lanier's (E364) or Steele's (E394). Omond himself accepts Time as the key to verse-structure but rejects the Musical analogy, so he allows himself the latter half of this essay to succinctly propound his own theory of meter.


In an elegant and engaging prose style, stripped of tendentiousness and technicalities, Omond proffers, succinctly, his views in favor of "time-structure as the basis of metre," isochrony, "Common" and "Triple Time," pyrrhic feet, line-length [he believes the tetrameter to be our most native form], free verse [opposes], terminology [awkward], "metrical pause," alliteration, and "inversion."


The Temporalist theory of verse-structure, deriving from Sir Joshua Steele in 1775 (E393), has been most forcefully promoted in our own century by Omond, who is very likely also the most articulate spokesman in the entire tradition. This monograph is the formal statement of his theory, as opposed to his other works of a historical/bibliographical nature.

"All meter is essentially rhythmical. That is to say, it consists of equal units ["periods"], uniform as regards duration. . . . If periods constitute rhythm, they must do so by uniform succession. Syllables do not supply this absolute recurrence; their order of succession is changeful, capricious. They need to be contrasted with underlying uniformity. That substratum seems afforded by time. Isodronous periods form the units of metre" (italics original).

The axiom of the theory, then, is that the verse-line is a temporal
phenomenon constituted of equidurational segments. Accents are mainly "signaling elements" used simply to mark or signal periodicities. Accent cannot be the constituent or base of meter, Omond argues, because stress rules in English are too fickle to regulate verse: word-accent is too easily disfigured by sentence-accent (but see p. 24). Omond cautiously accepts Blake's theory of monopressures (E484) to explain the physiology of accent. Quantity is acknowledged a fact of our language and our verse, though ornamental rather than constitutive; poets who write verse "based solely on quantity may be said to sin against the genius of their language." Metrical pause is a crucial component of meter as well, this to be distinguished from the various pauses for effect in performance. Of metrical types Omond allows four: two measures, duple and triple, in two modes, rising and falling. (Blake's theory allows a maximum of three syllables per monopressure.) Readers with keen noses may detect here the bouquet of old wine in new bottles. Short Appendix on "Pseudo-Classical Measures."

E311 Omond, T. S., et al. "Inverted Feet' in Verse." The Academy 75 (1908): 329-30, 351-52, 401, 429, 451-52, 475-76, 498-99, 524, 548-49, 571. A vigorous demonstration that at least two common fallacies in metrics--first, that inverted feet are not to be explained as inversions but as trisyllabic + monosyllabic feet, and second, that only speech-accent are required for scansion--may be entirely dissipated by clearly distinguishing between speech stress and metrical idus. Inversions are to be explained by (1) ignoring the natural accent in favor of the meter, or (2) actual substitution in the meter. Excellently useful examples.

E312 Omond, T. S., et al. Letters to TLS, 23 September–23 December, 1920, pp. 619, 702, 858, 877; 6 January–30 June 1921, pp. 11, 28, 76, 126, 179, 259, 276, 308, 355-56, 388, 404, 420. There is little exchange; Omond takes the occasion to promote theories of his own on the necessity of measured language to express emotion, the temporal basis of meter, isochrony, metrical disregard of speech accents, the difference of prose and verse ("purely a matter of our mental relation to the words"), the mischief of using classical terminology, and the irrelevance of quantitative verse in English ("piquant . . . scholars' toys").

E313 Parsons, Rev. James C. English Versification for the Use of Students. Boston: Leach, Shewell & Sanborn, 1891; rpt Boston and New York: 1891, 1920. 155 pp. Rev: by Tolman in MLN 8 (1893): 219-22. A student's handbook with chapters covering all the conventional subjects, but marred by confusion of terms: what most prosodists would call the domain of meter is here termed rhythm, which is defined as the recurrence of accents at regular intervals of time, the accented syllable being either followed or preceded by as many as two unaccented ones. Meter then becomes merely the building-up of lines from such "rhythmic" "feet." He allows nine such "feet," finding the pyrrhic "very frequent." Worse still, it seems to matter little whether the accent is marked at the end of the foot or at the beginning. Parsons reiterates his concern for equal-timing but in practice only marks stresses. Such ambivalences are the seeds and sprouts of anarchy.

E314 Perry, John O. "The Temporal Analysis of Poems." British Journal of Aesthetics 5 (1965): 227-45. This is unquestionably the best available discussion of the general nature of temporality in the form of the poem, with its implications for our understanding of the ontological status of "the poem," and hence the modes of response which are available for criticism. Critics as a rule have been more than
reluctant to even admit that a poem might have a temporal dimension, formally
(some metrists have argued quite the reverse, of course), even though they
recognize obvious temporal structuring in narration or plotting. But such a
reluctance constitutes a confession of ignorance, and the perpetuation of it an
appeal to ignorance. Some recent codifications in metrical theory offer hope of a
solution, and the key to the whole problem might well be "abstract metre
appréhended as a temporal construct." But in fact there are a number of
"clocks" simultaneously regulating the timing of poetry (though note: the
notion of isochonous lines in verse is false). Too, timing effects may arise from
lexical and semantic levels as well as formal, if not all of these together. A
proper temporal analytic should be operable at both the macro- and the
micro-levels of the art-work. An extraordinarily dense yet cogent essay.

Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Rationale of Verse." The Southern Literary Messenger 14
(October-November 1848): 577-85, 673-82; rpt in The Complete Works of
The Rationale of Verse: A Preliminary Edition, Incorporating Cognate Documents by
Gold Brown, William Cullen Bryant, and James Davenport Higley. Ed. J.

This last edition is reviewed in a very perceptive article by Richard B. Eaton,

Eaton takes issue with Greenwood's opinion of Poe's prosody by showing in
detail the difficulty--and necessity--of an accurate historical understanding of
prosodic thought in Poe's time, or any time. Poe "marked stresses, he confused
them with quantities, and he counted syllables." Thus the temporalist theory of
one age overlaps the stress theory of another age, and both are only partly or
vaguely understood by poets as well as grammarians of the time. Is it any
wonder prosody is so hard to read aright?

The "Rationale" essay is an amplification of an earlier study, "Notes on
English Verse," published in The Pioneer for March 1843. With his accustomed
vigor of tendentious rhetorical argumentation, Poe takes up the standard of the
old longs and shorts, insisting on the quantitative terminology for English as
well as Latin. Accent determines length, but Poe's system of prosody really
rests on time. Admitting that quantity is infinite in gradation yet clutching the
dogma of one-long-equals-two-shorts, Poe is driven, by the fact of
extrametrical syllables in lines, to devise a cumbersome--nearly ludicrous--
system of halves, thirds, and sixths, indicating syllabic duration in scansion with
numbers and fractions, and allowing, besides the only feet he recognizes--
iamb, trochee, anapest, dactyl, spondee, and "caesura" (a single long syllable)--
a host of other misbegotten siblings: "bastard iamb," bastard dactyl," etc., and
the "quick trochee." His refusal to admit pyrrhics into the system is
transparently casuistical. And Poe differentiates rhythm from meter only in that
the former identifies the feet while the latter denotes the number of feet per
line, which is scarcely any cutting distinction. Altogether, the conservatism and
the confusion in Poe's thinking produce an extravagently indefensible system.
Yet against this one must say that the "Rationale" essay has been fertile ground
for subsequent work: we find here the notion that a poetic line must "read
itself" (be incapable of misarticulation), and concept of the "variable foot," and
the abstract principle of "equality" (also termed "proportionality" and
"equivalence" developed so importantly a century later by a distinguished
Slavist and linguist.

The "Philosophy of Composition" and "Poetic Principle" essays contain
some remarks on versification that are too familiar to require notice. The
"Marginalia" (vol. 16, pp. 111-12 in the Complete Works) reiterate Poe's
fascination with strict laws of mathematics, and he reminds us that laws deduced from observable effects are by no means identical to those controlling composition. The salutary effect of rhyme is said to depend on recurrence at "unanticipated intervals." Finally, Poe's 1843 review of *The Poets and Poetry of America* contains a short synopsis of his views of versification (vol. 11 of the *Works*, pp. 225-36).

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**E317** Prall, D. W. "Rhythm as Temporal Structure." In his *Aesthetic Judgment*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1929; rpt 1967. pp. 138-77. Section 6 is on verse. The ideas presented here are developed more amply and closely in Prall's later work (next entry). Suzanne Langer's analysis is heavily indebted to Prall.

**E318** -----, "Temporal Patterns: Verse Rhythm." *Aesthetic Analysis*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1936; rpt. 1967. pp. 93-134. A discursive yet meticulous analysis of temporal ordering by an eminent but now-neglected American philosopher. We give form to time by measure. Nothing can be gained for scansion by "misapplied classical terms or loose musical analogies"; verse is ordered by measures and "counts" (beats). Iambic pentameter is nothing of the sort, but rather "three measures to the line, each measure divided into halves, and each half further divided into three counts.

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**E319** Robertson, John M. *Essays Towards a Critical Method*. London: T. F. Unwin, 1889. Expanded as:

**E320** -----. *New Essays Toward a Critical Method*. London and New York: J. Lane, 1897. 378 pp. In this latter see "Appendix: Accent, Quantity, and Feet." Omond (A5) observed drily that Robertson simply "perpetuated Poe's confusion of Quantity and Accent in *The Rationale of Verse*.

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**E322** -----. *The Principles of Rhythm both in Speech and Music*, especially as exhibited in the mechanism of English verse. Dublin, 1823. "Metre consists of a succession of parts, in subordinated proportions . . . which parts, abstractly considered, are those solely of time or duration. Hence metre . . . is the same wherever found; and all that is adventitious, or extrinsic, is to be sought for in the nature of its vehicle." "A foot . . . takes up about two-thirds of a second, and may therefore contain as many syllables as can conveniently be uttered in that time." All feet are equal in time, no matter how comprised; notation consists of a linear graph under the verse, marked off with short vertical lines, so as to denote the greater or lesser duration of the words in the feet by greater or lesser extension along the line. Finally, to confound clarity altogether, "feet are distinguished by accent and quantity. But, as feet distinguished by accent and quantity do not constitute different species of metre, but only give by their mixture an agreeable variety to the cadence; and as accent is the more general mark of distinction, and also commonly accompanies quantity; so, for the greater ease of expression, I shall mostly speak of the former indiscriminately for both."

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**E323** Routh, James. "English Iambic Meter." *PMLA* 40 (1925): 921-32; rpt in B187. Expanding on Scripture's work in phonetics, Routh distinguishes "word stress," "verse stress," and "sense stress"; he accepts isochrony (subject to pauses) and concludes that "English iambic verse is rhythmically nothing but
English prose so readjusted that, on an average, four ordinary prose accents, with the addition of a fifth accent made for the occasion by the heightening of an ordinarily less heavily stressed syllable, supply the singing accents. Statistics.

E324 Rudmose-Brown, Thomas B. Étude comparée de la versification française et de la versification anglaise: l’alexandrin et le blank verse. Grenoble: Allier Brothers, 1905. 216 pp. His dissertation at Grenoble. Holding that "there is no essential difference between the Latin and Greek system and the modern system" of verse, the author proffers his thesis that both English and French meters are founded on a single common principle, "the measure of isochronous intervals of time." Along the way he gives considerable attention to most of the major English and French metrical theorists.

E325 -----, "The Principles of English Versification." Dublin Magazine 5 (1930): 5-18. Initially a hostile review of Katherine Wilson (E411) and acoustic/musical metrics in general, but the article soon expands to a wide compass of foreign meters and metrists in order to substantiate the author's thesis that syllabic verse and stress verse are two distinct species of animal, producing a very curious hybrid type when crossed (as in English).


Imitative and expressive effects achieved by stress-patterns in lines of verse are not rhythmical because both rhythm and meter are "essentially temporal structures." Schwartz gives an Aristotelian account of rhythm: whereas the drama can only reproduce the external signs of inner emotion in others, rhythm "corresponds in its movement with the movement of the soul" directly. For Schwartz, whatever is abstracted is meter; the rhythm is inseparable from performance. Meters he thinks may correspond to "general classes of feelings."

All this is wooly, which Perry has little trouble showing in his reply. Imitative and expressive metrical effects are not to be denied, and Schwartz's whole account of the treatment of emotions in poetry is superficial, as is his conception of the semantic structure of verse.

E328 Schwartz, Elias K., W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Monroe C. Beardsley. "Rhythm and 'Exercises in Abstraction.'" PMLA 77 (1962): 668-74. Schwartz's side of the exchange (pp. 668-69, 671-74) is expanded as "Rhythm and Meter," chapter 4 of his The Forms of Feeling. Port Washington, N. Y.: Kennikat Press, 1972. pp. 43-58. Schwartz's reply to Wimsatt and Beardsley (E700) perceives clearly that unless they "recognize the psychological status of rhythm, they cannot be made to see its temporal basis." W & B amplify Leonard Meyer's distinction between pulse, rhythm, and meter, then clarify their own position: "meter... is what we actually hear in the poem when it is read aloud; rhythm is something which is aroused in the mind by means of the poem's meter, something which is felt by the listener and which in turn stirs his further feelings." (Thus, for them meter is objective, rhythm subjective, while for Schwartz meter is subjective and rhythm objective.) S. responds with his counterassertion "that meter is real,
that it is distinct from rhythm, and that both meter and rhythm are temporally measured." Being perfectly abstract, meter is never actually heard, but rather is inferred: It "exists in the mind of the reader" as a "normative pattern" of expectation. What we actually perceive are the strong stresses and the temporal intervals between them, intervals roughly but not precisely equivalent. It is neither necessary nor possible to show that syllabic durations are physically equal. "Meter is an ideal temporal norm." The meter and rhythm are correlated by the reader simultaneously, via "double audition." Schwartz argues that inverted feet are preceded by pauses, so that "trochaic substitutions" are actually a pause + a monosyllable + an anapest. W & B's final response expresses skepticism as to this last and reasserts their belief that Schwartz actually proves their own case.

E329  Schweinitz, George W., de. "Dipodism in English Verse in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Study in the Relations Between Thematics and Metrics." University of Iowa Abstracts of Dissertations 9 (1949-52): 394-96. Chapters 1-3 trace the development of dipodic meter from Burns to Auden (its use seems mainly confined to the oral tradition); chapter 4 surveys its treatment by prosodists (Patmore, Lanier); chapter 5 attempts to correlate some genres and themes with the use of this meter. Indebted to Stewart (E333) for scansion symbols.


Smith himself offers little that is new to the theory, but his treatise easily outdistances all its peers in tone, treatment, and scholarship: the explanation of the theory is remarkably balanced and thorough, leaving nothing slighted or ignored on any side, pursuing the argument with civility, and offering frequent, minute digressions on definitions of terms, Classical antecedents or etymologies, and treatment of various problems by other metrists.

E331  Stewart, George R., Jr. "The Iambic-Trochaic Theory in Relation to Musical Notation." JEGP 24 (1925): 61-71. Musical metrists have a problem with the metrical terms "iambic/trochaic" and "rising/falling," since these distinctions do not exist in music. One or the other--analogy or terminology--must go. Stewart, assuming that trochaic meter equals falling rhythm, counts the number of falling, rising, and neutral stress-patterns in the phrases of several "trochaic" and "iambic" poems, discovering thereby that the proportions of all three are in each case quite mixed, with many neutrals, and that the falling phrases are only slightly more frequent in "trochaic" verse than in "iambic," and not at all predominant even within the "trochaic." All that one can say is that the mixes are pretty thorough and that we discriminate some extremely subtle shifts quite markedly. But the distinctions "iambic/trochaic" and "rising/falling" Stewart finds unwarranted. Cf. Newton (E799), Hascal (E783), Creek (E18), Crapsay
Extending his earlier work on the ballad meters, Stewart shows that the pattern

\[ x - | x - | x - | x - | x - | x - | x - \]

is a septenary in Pope but a dipodic line in Kipling, based on the proportional frequency of occurrence of each of the parts of speech in each position. But a more simplified analysis a Dipodic Index can be derived for a given poem, and Stewart finds that dipodism begins to be clearly perceived at about index 35.

But the most intriguing question of all is that of the tendency toward dipodic structure in the stress system of the language itself.
Not strictly a "timer," Taig is cognizant of the complexity of these matters, and also of the natural limitations of assertion: the result is a refreshingly restrained, yet sophisticated discourse. He considers both "timers" and "stressers" to be mistaken in believing that any single dimension of speech-rhythm is supreme for metrical purposes or solely worthy of notation; as an alternative, he employs (with conscious dissatisfaction) two systems, a wave-graph and musical notation, to indicate both duration and intensity. Three basic metrical patterns or systems are identified: Variable, Doubtful, and Fixed. In the Variable pattern (example: Old English alliterative), the constraints are relatively weak. In the Doubtful pattern, the numbering of syllables is rigidly controlled but their timing is generally uncontrolled, causing metrists to be "doubtful" of the nature of the prosodic base. But as the constraints increase, the timing too is Fixed, creating that sort of stress-verse where the reader can scarcely miss the intended timing of the line.

A long fifth chapter takes up the "Spoken Line," a subject, current opinion notwithstanding, which is indispensable to metrics. Taig's analysis of the double-stranded rope of performance--the metrical expectation perceived simultaneously with the rhythmic/syntactic ordering--raises the tantalizing prospect that "the forms employed in the utterance can be reduced to a few well-defined types, that the speech-variations of blank verse can be classified at least as easily as those of the alliterative line in Old English." This analogy is pursued through a short analysis, and three Groups of line-patterns are also identified which seem to operate in the metrical orchestration of long passages of verse (5 waves, 4, and 3). A short final chapter traces the parallel historical development of rhythmical counterpoint in music and in verse.

Replacing Taig's term "wave" by the more familiar "bar" or "foot," one might claim that this book is merely old familiar tea in an unfamiliar package, yet the seeming glibness of the term belies the broad learning and deep thinking consistently evidenced here. Any reader who believes that deep thinking can come to a trivial and conventional conclusion does not understand deep thinking. This is a difficult book, in both the negative and positive sense of the word.

See also: B122, E845, N53, N60.

MUSICAL METRICS

The oldest line of temporal metrics derives (almost unintentionally) from Gildon in 1718, though it was impelled mainly by Steele in 1775, Lanier in 1880, and Thomson in 1923. In general, musical metrists may be recognized by their use of musical barring as a scansion notation for marking the syllabic durations in verse, though when musical notation is not present as reliable evidence of a theorist's position, the dividing of the (iambic) line so that stresses begin the "bars" is indicative. The central assumption is that verse-rhythm, being temporal, is precisely analogous to musical rhythm. All that one need remark in reply is that analogies have no logical validity.

I include here both the devout and the heretic, as well as three major essays by John Hollander, Northrop Frye, and T. S. Eliot which place this issue in a wider perspective. The reader should also consult Appendix C: Poetry and Music (as Metrical Analogues), which cites studies of the setting of verse-texts to music and the metrical problems arising therefrom, rather than the mere use of musical scoring to describe verse rhythm, as here.

An introductory handbook of versification; Part 1 sets forth the Principles and Part 2 the metrical and stanzaic forms. The metrical theory followed is Lanier's Musical approach (E364). Nothing bears notice except this definition of terms: "Stress is metrical emphasis; Accent is sense emphasis. When these do not coincide throughout a line we have: Light Stress, emphasis required by the meter but not by sense, or Extra Accent, emphasis required by sense but not by meter."


Bayfield pushes the musical analogy to verse to its ultimate logical end, that is, into absurdity: since the stress begins the bar in music, therefore all English verse has always been written in a trochaic meter; indeed, by definition, the iambic foot cannot exist. Stress is acknowledged central to English verse, but stressed syllables are said to last twice as long as unstressed in utterance, and recur at equal intervals, i.e. in "triple-time." Bayfield seems to have read none of his contemporaries.

Now, Omond's view of this whole business was that the whole uproar raised by the appearance of Bayfield's books was pointless and unnecessary, the argument itself being tautology and calling for no response. In other words, if everyone is agreed on the stressing of a line, it makes no difference where the bar-marks for foot-division are drawn: it makes no difference whether we call the line iambic or trochaic. Possibly this logic is too radically simple to strike me as correct, but I cannot believe that (1) there is no syntactic or metrical difference between what are commonly called "rising rhythms" and "falling rhythms," or that (2) the long history of what poets thought they were doing, in writing in the iambic pentameter tradition, counts for nothing at all. Cf. his E1093 and E1094.

E337  Beardsley, Monroe C. "Verse and Music." Wimsatt (A20), pp. 238-52. Essential reading--as much for what is not said as what is. Beardsley turns directly to the most important available (and widely ignored) source currently on rhythm in music, Cooper and Meyer (N30), summarizing its premises: "In music, meter is pulse plus accent, rhythm is accent plus grouping," and "a 'rhythmic pattern' in music is what prosodists are wont to call a 'metrical pattern' in verse." (Note the implication that rhythm is a higher-order concept than meter.) He does not, however, adequately explain their hierarchical scansion, as he does not adequately explain his own--his second subject. Proposed is a scansion-system I have not seen elsewhere, which appears to account for both metrical pattern and syntactic (i.e. rhetorical) grouping, and can explain the complex, unified, double sense of movement in lines of verse that we are commonly aware of. Beardsley then reviews, disinterestedly, the arguments for and against a musical scansion of verse, as well as the problems in setting verse to music.

E338  Brown, Calvin, S. "Can Musical Notation Help English Scansion?" JAAC 23 (1965): 329-34. Literally or systematically, no. It "indicates a regularity that [we] do not hear, creates more problems than it solves, and is in general more of a nuisance than a help." No one learns musical notation in order to apply it to verse, and any systematic application of the analogy becomes strained at once. Isochronous time-periods also seem unnatural contrivances, the span between stresses often varying widely. "Individual syllables have no simple relations in objective fact."
Hence musical scansion is legitimimized neither theoretically, practically, nor objectively.

Approves of the methods of Lanier and T. R. Price; believes that the poetic line is composed of "staves" (originally, hemistichs), which "may be of any length, from a single syllable carrying one accent, to a whole line less one such syllable." Obj ects to all borrowed Greek terminology for prosody. A curio. Had he been reading Guest (E543)?

See also the following chapter. Chandler reviews in detail the approaches of Scripture, W allin, Patterson, and Griffith, finally settling on a musical scansion of the verse-line as his own preference.

Followed by a second volume soon after:

E342 ------. The Original Rhythmic Grammar of the English Language. Edinburgh: James Robertson, 1821.
The two volumes may be treated together, since despite some variance of terminology and scansion notation between them they both seem to be virtual reprints of the system in Steele's Prosodia Rationalis (E394). One might naturally expect that the diligent student would wish to see his master's teachings carried on a generation or two after him, but such a characterization would be insufficient here: whole sections of Steele are reproduced verbatim by Chapman. Of the whole second work, the last section of chapter 13, "Errors of Prosodians," bears the most interest to us now: Chapman criticizes Pemberton, M itford, Walker, M urray, and C arey.

Lamenting the lapses of contemporary metrical theory from Lanier's system of musical scansion (E364), Croll reasserts that "the musical interpretation of our verse form is the correct statement of its rhythmic law." Syllable-counting, the concepts of iambic, trochaic, etc., and the notions of rising and falling rhythms "are real facts, of course, but they are not facts of rhythm"; they are "merely optional modes of procedure, customs that may be observed or not at pleasure."

This short monograph outlines Croll's system of musical metrics, which is derived from Lanier (E364) and closely parallel to Thomson (E404), whose
work Croll apparently did not see until its publication in 1923, the date of the first version of his own essay. For scansion notation Croll employs a system of superlinear horizontal bar-lines with flags to denote time-values. He considers iambic/trochaic verse to be in triple time, anapestic/dactylic in duple, so stressed syllables are tacitly granted double the duration of unstressed. Following illustration of these two, a long section treats the "double or compound measure," i.e. dipodic meter. Here Croll treats the ballad meters, though his attempt to scan every ballad as if it were dipodic is very obviously unreasonable. A final section postulates the existence of yet one higher level, the "double-compound" (double-dipodic) measure, in effect in double-quadruple time, one measure would therefore contain four degrees of stress, i.e.

This, too, seems an improbable complication, and examples are scarce.


E345a The Athenaeum, 18 April 1903, pp. 506-7, on "The Musical Basis of Verse," and a very late précis,


E348 Eliot, T. S. The Music of Poetry. Glasgow: Jackson and Sons, 1942; rpt in Partisan Review 9 (1942): 450-65. Rpt in his On Poetry and Poets. London: Faber & Faber, and New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1957; rpt Noonday Press, 1961, pp. 17-33. There is too much ore here to mine in one extract: Eliot reminds us that the study of metrics is a useful and necessary occupation but only at an early stage, for "a study of anatomy will not teach you how to make a hen lay eggs": assimilation and imitation create good poetry, not scansion or analysis. English verse has received influence from many foreign verse-forms, and Eliot suggests that there may be two systems operant at once in our meter even as accent and quantity both were attended to in late Latin verse. But he insists that meter cannot be studied apart from meaning. There is no such thing as appreciating the melody of verse without understanding its sense. "Melody" is not mere mellifluousness, and the mimetic or semantic range of pure sound is quite limited. Altogether, poetry is close kin to conversation, and cannot afford to stray far or long from the common speech. Blank verse and free verse are discussed.

E349 Ellis, Oliver C. de C. "Stream and Structure in English Poetry." In Poetic Technique. Altrincham: John Sherratt & Son, 1949. pp. 11-64. The three gentlemen who jointly wrote and published this book comprise the Poetry Lover's Fellowship; that may be taken as some indication of its quality. Mr. Ellis believes that "English Prosody, then, is a science of music." In his system every foot begins with a stress. He opines that the decasyllabic line is the progeny of two of the older octosyllables, so that the normal pentameter is to be thought of as followed by six metrical rests. An original scansion-system is included. (The following essay by Geoffrey Johnson, however, on
composing verse, contains some very sensible suggestions.) Cf. 110.


Subsequent alternative versions of this essay appear as:


Interested in "what affinities to music may be discerned in the features that poetry shares with music--sound and rhythm," Frye elucidates some of the manifold "confusion between the musical and the euphonious" in poetry. "Music" of course is not "beauty of sound" but "organization of sound." Hence, "when we find a careful balancing of vowels and consonants and a dreamy sensuous flow of sound, we are probably dealing with an unmusical poet. Pope, Keats, and Tennyson are all unmusical. . . . When we find sharp barking accents, crabbed and obscure language, mouthfuls of consonants, and long, lumbering polysyllables, we are probably dealing with melos, or poetry which shows an analogy to music, if not an actual influence from it."

Metrically, "when in poetry we have a predominating stress accent and a variable number of syllables between two stresses . . . we have musical poetry, that is, poetry which resembles in its structure the music contemporary with it." Frye believes that behind the iambic pentameter lies a four-stress line which "seems to be inherent in the structure of the English language," adding as proof some musical scansions of lines from Lydgate and Skelton. (This I think is a confusion of meter for rhythm.) Imitative effects are also discussed.

In sum, Frye posits that the two varieties of poetic melos arise "the one from the external influence of music, the other, internal, from the language itself."


See chapters 50 and 51 on "Rhythm in Language" and "Quantity" (pp. 476-98). Gardiner scans verse by musical scoring, the stress after the bar, iambic lines usually being set as Common (duple) Time.


Wherever the pied piper Lanier should lead. . . . Her only new verse to the song is to propose anew the old cardiac systole-and diastole as the basis of double meters.


Intended as an apologia for and simplified exposition of Lanier's system of temporal metrics (E364). Hendren considers the verse measure "the exact counterpart of that used in music," he considers the binary meters to be in triple rhythm, and he scans alternately with musical notation and with numerals indicating syllabic duration (he believes that the auditor can
discriminate syllable-lengths of \( \frac{3}{4}, 1, 1\frac{1}{2}, \) and 2). And though Hendren recognizes four degrees of stress, his scansion strongly suggest a belief that stressed syllables are doubled in length--a ghost we had thought long since buried. Hendren has no evidence for that claim other than an appeal to authority, and he recognizes rightly that objective studies of rhythm are less relevant than subjective (perceptual) ones. But any thorough study of Lanier will find some salient observations and sensible adjustments of his theory herein. See Hendren's earlier monograph at E871.


Hendren begins his reply to Wimsatt and Beardsley by collapsing several crucial distinctions ("to reject measured time as an integral character of metrical structure is to deny the existence of verse rhythm"; "we cannot... separate meter from the performance"; and tapping out the beats of a blank-verse line "will show its triple rhythm and its plain arrangement of long and short syllables"), then argues that the isochronism which may be demonstrated in tapping out lines is not mathematically precise; the durations are but "sensibly equal." He recites the obligatory temporalist litany of Poetry-and-Music, approves the work of Snell, Schramm, and Thomson, then returns finally to a methodical countering of the points raised by Wimsatt and Beardsley, especially the picket-fence analogy.

Wimsatt and Beardsley in their reply expand their scope to Hendren's monograph (E356), attacking his assumptions ("measures when recited will often differ enormously") as well as the experimental evidence for isochrony. They respond to Hendren's crucial query "If the stresses are not measuring time in the recitation of the verse, what are we to suppose they are measuring instead?" with a trenchant answer, "Syllables, number of syllables, are measured--syllables grouped according to stress and slack, so many slacks between each stress." And they summarize their traditional position concisely: "Syllabic quantitative meters are not possible in English because syllabic quantity is not an objective feature of English. Isochronism (of intervals between primary stresses, as urged by the linguists) is not a principle of English meter, because if it is an actual feature of the language, it is a constant feature and is hence not susceptible of the manipulation by which the poet distinguishes metrical from non-metrical." They even go so far as to disparage Hendren for "the irrelevance of his theory to actual problems of English meter."


With a supple grasp of the whole warp of western melos and with some deft analytical fingering, Hollander ravels out the knotted-up skeins of music's relation to verse, vis `a vis meter, from classical Greece to Sidney Lanier. That is, he traces out the divergence of verse meter from its origin in music, the later forced conflations of dissimilar metrical systems in verse (Latin with Greek, Romance with Old English), and the resultant confounding of prosodic terminology. Finally, his remarks on the convenient imprecisions and the category mistakes of musical theories of meter are trenchant, and his insistence on a recognition of the distinction between performative and descriptive systems of scansion amounts to something like a sine qua non for all future theories of English meter.


A surprisingly detailed immersion in the fundamentals of acoustic phonetics yields a surprising conclusion: strictly speaking, none of the three musical
terms key, pitch, or harmony may be properly used to describe verse structure—verse has only tone-color (the difference between two instruments playing the same note). Musical terminology really ought not be used at all for verse.


E361  -----. "A Principle of Prosody." The Freeman 5 (1922): 162. Reply by C. E. Russell, p. 402; rejoinder by Jones, p. 593. Jones disagrees with Lanier (E364) in claiming that lines are filled with both syllables and pauses, so that the timing is duple (2/4) not triple (3/8), each bar consisting of two quarter-notes rather than an eighth-note and a quarter-note. Russell defends Lanier.


E363  Kroeger, A. E. "Rhythm." Southern Magazine 11 (1872): 220-24. We are told that "reasoning has nothing whatever to do with the matter of rhythm," a statement this article indeed bears out. Kroeger scans by length, one long equaling two shorts, but marks meter (calling it rhythm) with musical notation, a procedure which results in the incredible blunder of calling iambic-trochaic patterns triple time and dactylic-anapestic patterns duple (common) time. Even so, he complains that the macron-breve notation of poetry cannot indicate more subtle variations of tempo, and he admits that quantities in speech vary enormously.

E364  Lanier, Sidney. The Science of English Verse. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1880, rpt 1898, 1901, 1927. "Imprint dates on copies vary." Rpt in The Centennial Edition of the Works of Sidney Lanier. Vol. II. The Science of English Verse and Essays on Music. Ed. P. F. Baum. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1945. (Baum's Introduction should not be overlooked). A seminal text in metrical theory, less interesting in itself perhaps than for the sake of the enormous influence it exerted on critical conceptions of poetic form for more than forty years after its publication. The axiom of all of Lanier's thought is that human speech (and, by extension, spoken verse—poetry) is a sound-phenomenon, produced by a reed instrument (the vocal apparatus), and organized in duration, pitch, and intensity (principally the first), making it theoretically indistinguishable from music. That is, he conceives of verse and music not merely as analogous phenomena but as coincident in origin and correspondent in ordering principles—"the two species of the genus art of sound." From this one axiom of the identity of all patterning of Sound, three propositions may be derived which apply equally to music and verse and produce differing effects merely due to the qualitative differences in "musical sounds" and "spoken words": these propositions express the co-ordinations of the ear in terms of duration, pitch, and quality as (respectively) Rhythm, Tune, and Tone-Color. Rhythm, the subject which occupies Part I of the treatise, may be classed as primary or secondary and occurs in 3-rhythm and 4-rhythm modes, as we learn in music. Lanier thinks "no circumstance in the history of aesthetics so curious as the overpowering passion of the English [poetic] ear for 3-rhythm as opposed to 4-rhythm." For
scansion, of course, the line of verse is denoted by a time-signature and musical notes expressing the durations of the syllables. Metrical (musical) rests are therefore permissible and valuable features of verse-structure. Part II, entirely ignored by subsequent scholars, treats Tune; Part III, rhyme (at length), alliteration (short notes), and Sylvester's "phonetic syzygy" (E402). Metrical analysis of Shakespeare's verse receives considerable attention; see pp. 185-224.

Lanier's achievement in the history of metrical theory was to systematize the verse-music analogy and to popularize the musical scansion-sigla suggested by Sir Joshua Steele (E394) a century earlier. A century later he is not followed at all, his musical scansions actually being thought unduly precise and therefore denoting features of performance rather than paradigms. And there is the added twist that Lanier's scansions depart from all established musical convention in not placing the accented note first in the bar--this seems a flagrant inconsistency in the sort of theory where consistency is only less crucial a criterion than clarity. Omond (A5) appreciated the book (see pp. 195-202) but Saintsbury rattled his armor (A8, vol. 3, pp. 493-97). See also J214. For two modern applications of Lanier's theory to Old and Middle English verse, see Pope (J241, J242) and Schiller (K329). See also Hendren (E356) and Niesner (E382).


E366 -----. "Description and Transcription of Temporal Patterns of Rhythm in English Verse." Language and Style 7 (1974): 192-204. Adducing all the familiar authorities, the author inquires as to which type of musical notation would be most accurate for English verse--the divisive (regular measure), the additive (changes in time-signature between measures), or the free temporal (no fixed time-signatures at all). She concludes that the first of these notations, the one we have known all along, is the best. Cf Mussulman (E380).

E367 -----. "Numerical, Sequential, and Temporal Patterns in English Verse." Quarterly Journal of Speech 57 (1971): 193-203. Observes, simply, that numbering (e.g. of syllables and/or of stresses), sequence (e.g. alternation of stress and slack), and timing (isochronous intervals between stresses) are three principles that conjointly organize verbal sequences into verse. She considers all three to be constitutive of meter. Both musical and acoustic approaches are embraced: scansion is in musical notation, and iambic verse is said to be in Triple time based on Snell's conclusion (E452) that stressed syllables are twice as long as unstressed. Meter we can only identify through Performance. Verse-types: syllabic, accentual-syllabic, measured accentual, and unmeasured accentual (free).

E368 -----. "Temporal Prosody: Verse Feet, Measures, Time, Syllabic Distribution, and Isochronous Accent." Language and Style 7 (1974): 245-60. An effort at clarifying some of the key terms in temporal metrics. "Verse feet" specify the numerical and sequential constraints on the verse, whereas "measures" reveal the durations of syllables and pauses "in verse rhythm." Lightfoot does not explicitly differentiate meter from rhythm, though she does hold that "verse feet and measures identify different phenomena, both of which are valuable to descriptive prosody." The same meter may have various time-signatures (though iambic verse is usually in triple time, stressed syllables
being double the length of unstressed), though transpositions occur in performance. "Rhetorical accents" are preserved as "isochronous accents" in the line even when they do not match the ideal pattern of "metrical stresses." The formulations here are new, but the concepts underneath them are not. Occam's Razor is wanted badly.

A critique of E. A. Sonnenschein (E236), particularly his rejection of isochronism; MacColl believes the stress-intervals to be perceptually equal if not absolutely so, and he argues for the metrical pause. Sonnenschein replies amicably (in Saturday Review) on pp. 293-94; final exchange of letters, p. 336 (MacColl) and pp. 367-68 (Sonnenschein).

Sometime after delivering his English Association lecture (E371), MacColl discovered Patmore's essay on the musical theory of meter (E384) which he here Elevates, with all due pieties, at the same time Excommunicating Hopkins for his "mistaken views on prosody," pausing only to enumerate the latter's metrical Sins. He believes that Hopkins recanted late in his life in favor of Patmore's views, and that no one has noticed this fact.

"My contentions will be (1) that the distinction between 'quantitative' and 'accentual' verse is a false one; that the current theory of English prosody [Saintsbury's] is unintelligible save by reference to the classical, and that the classical itself is a musical theory; (2) that the musical law of rhythm alone can explain the structure of English verse [Lanier]; (3) that it also underlies the structure not only of 'numerous' prose, but of all prose and speech." The essay is a long critique of Saintsbury's position from the perspective of Lanier and Thomson.

A very good example of the confusions fostered in British studies of versification in the middle of the last century by undue allegiance to classical philology. Malden, distinguishing between syllabic duration, pitch, and stress, reaffirms the commonplaces that quantity in English is simply more variable than in Classical Greek, and that while Greek accent was by pitch English is by stress, but he considers the guiding principle of versification in both languages to be Time, i.e. Music. "Indeed it is the peculiar characteristic of verse in all languages... that it is speech arranged in musical time." "Time, as essential to music, must be essential to verse." In English versification the feet are isochronous measures of time "beginning or ending" with a stress, preferably the former, Malden thinks, exactly as in music. The influence of Steele's disciples is still strong ca. 1850.

A treatise on rhythm--the clausulae of rhythmical prose and the regularized metrical feet of poetry. The whole discourse must have seemed pedantic even in the eighteenth century; it is saturated with classical prosodic and musical
terminology and is therefore quite convoluted. "Numbers" seems to mean "feet" (pp. 10-11), these being the aggregates of "R rhythms" (12-14), both irregular and regular. Of verse (Chapter 4), Manwaring holds that English Versification is "made according to the diatonic scale," i.e., the "half and whole Times" of the iambic or trochaic feet are analogous to the half and whole steps or Tones in music. Iambic verse on this account would be in triple time, and in fact it is barred so that the "first syllable in every full foot" is "acuted" (accent is based on pitch here). English verse, we are told near the end, must attend to accent, quantity, and "Concord" (caesure-placement); the pentameter "is a seventh in music." Fussell's remarks on this work (E34) show only that he failed to read it closely, or altogether. Cf. M 130.

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The concluding Section on "Poetic Rhythms" reprints four essays, three from Poetry--"A Word About Prosody" (E377), "Rhythms of English Verse" (E376), "Dr. Patterson's Researches" (E242)--and one from the English Journal, "The Free Verse Movement," (E1511).

Vigorous applause for the recent "scientific" approach to metrics, with particular approval of the musical notation-system for exactitude.

E376 ------. "Rhythms of English Verse." Poetry 3 (1913-14): 61-68, 100-11; rpt in slightly revised form in her Poets & Their Art (E374), pp. 268-84.
Praises Lanier as the sole Authority under the heavens, and triumphantly exclaims that "English verse is as quantitative as Greek verse." Musical scansion.

The essay is--in her words--"a repetition of the obvious."

A review of Liddell (E424), whom More redresses for an offensive messianic tone. Along the way, More himself postulates Three Laws of Rhythm ("Rhythm . . . is a branch of acoustics, is a measurement of time marked off by the regular recurrence of similar events, in verse is . . . much less absolute and regular than rhythm in music. . . ."). He argues that quantity is inseparable from stress (and also pitch) in both the Classical languages and Modern English, but that the laws of quantity in Modern English are not the same as those for the classical languages; he notes a "rhythmizing instinct" in our reading aloud of nursery rhymes, as opposed to our "normal unrhythmical enunciation" of speech. Approves of Lanier, Goodell, and Schipper.

E379 Readers interested in More's reputation may consult R. Shafer's Paul Elmer More and American Criticism (1935).

No writer who has wanted to describe verse rhythm with musical notation has displayed greater depth of comprehension about musical structure than this one. The concepts of divisive, additive, free, and numerical meter in music provide a more sophisticated and flexible prosodic instrument, each type of meter having relative advantages and defects for describing various situations in verse-lines. Do not neglect the final footnote on pitch. See also Lightfoot
Quality is as distinct from accent in classical Greek as it is in modern English; our verse is based on "emphasis," the term "accent" being used for pitch or musical tone, as in classical speech. Thereafter, Odell follows Steele (E394) on "cadence": "Rhythmus is a general term, comprising two distinct modes, which are called common time and triple time, or common and triple metre. . . . rhythmus has its essence in arsis and thesis, but metre in syllables and in their difference." Syllable length by position is rejected, and since emphasis is said to have controlled quantity even in Greek, "metre is always subordinate to rhythmus." The metrical cadence is "equivalent to a musical bar," and so begins an emphatic syllable; it may contain a metrical rest, so that all the cadences will have equal duration.


Though most of Patmore's ideas were not new at the time, still his essay has been very influential, and it stands as one of the three or four major documents in the evolution of the Temporal theory of verse. In the essay he pursues vigorously the case for verse being divided into "isochronous intervals," though he holds these to be perceptually (mentally) equal rather than physically. These intervals are to be demarcated by "an 'ictus' or 'beat,' actual or mental. . . . it has no material and external existence at all." (One notes the conflation or confusion of metrical ictus and speech stress here.) Mitford (E600) and Steele (E394) are praised, and Hegel's Aesthetics provides some further foundation. But Patmore's most important and original contribution is his argument that English verse is all dipodic "the elementary measure, or integer, of English verse is double the measure of ordinary prose,--that is to say, it is the space which is bounded by alternate accents; that every verse proper contains two, three, or four of these 'metres,' or as with a little allowance they may be called, 'diopodes.'" He also argues the importance of medial and final metrical pauses.

O'Brian's work prompts an argument that alliteration in Anglo-Saxon was no mere ornament but a metrical device needed to mark the accents; by extension, the, rhyme in modern verse serves a metrical function also.

See also Stobie (E944) chapter 4 of Holloway (E914), and Patmore
For further information on Patmore, see P. F. Baum's "Coventry Patmore's Literary Criticism" in University of California Chronicle 25 (1923): 244-60.

[Ramsay Allan, Jr.] An Enquiry into the principles of English versification, with some analogical remarks upon the versification of the Ancients. Manuscript in the British Library. n.p., n.d. Omond owned the MS before bequeathing it; see his discussion in A5, pp. 95-97. Ramsay generally follows Steele (E394).


Ruskin, John. Elements of English Prosody for Use in St. George's Schools. Orpington (Kent): George Allen, 1880. 62 pp. A pamphlet tract for students. Saintsbury (A8) noted the "eccentricities of nomenclature," and concluded that "M. r. Ruskin was himself very imperfectly trained in these matters" (vol.3, p. 450). If Ruskin in fact was trained, this would be fair, but he seems mainly interested in setting verse lines to music, and he hardly troubles himself about precision of either thought or terms (he believes that "the stress-accent on English words will be found always to involve delay as well as energy or loudness of pronunciation, and that, at all events in verse, it may be considered as identical with quantity"; if the examples he gives prove false, we are told to substitute other correct ones), so I suspect that he taught himself such as he knows.

Sapir, Edward. "The Musical Foundations of Verse." JEGP 20 (1921): 213-28. Perhaps a misleading title: Sapir approves of Amy Lowell's idea that the lineation of free verse corresponds to demarcations of time, yet though free verse is timed, S. admits that standard English verse is stressed verse, and that in fact the feature used to mark the "sectioning" or "periodic structure" of verse can be any of a number of things. He also thinks "the same rhythmic contour" will be verse or prose depending on how deeply it strikes our attention--it is not an objective phenomenon.

Scholl, Evelyn H. "English Metre Once More." PMLA 63 (1948): 293-326. An effort to show that the meter of the songs written by the school of English lutenists (1597-1632) is in fact the meter of all modern English verse--that is, a temporal meter, barred in measures beginning with a stress, in duple and triple time, with metrical rests. The chief feature of the lute-songs is that the musical rhythm is completely subordinate to the words; in fact, they are "like speech with a definite pitch." In general Scholl rejects the notion that syllable-counting is one axiom of English meter. She also discusses, in the course of her exposition, the views of virtually all the major modern metrists.

Sibbald, James, ed. Chronicle of Scottish Poetry; from the thirteenth century to the union of the crowns. 4 vols. Edinburgh; C. Stewart, 1802. See the preface to vol. 4, esp. pp. xlvi-lxiii: "in many of the antient Scottish, as well as English poems...the measure seems rather to be regulated by the division of the time required for recitation of the line, into portions like musical phrases; not necessarily equal in the number of syllables, but requiring an equal period of time for their pronunciation...which in music is called common time." "The mechanism and scheme of Anglo-Saxon versification seem..."
to depend entirely upon quantity . . . without any other regard to the number of syllables than that the longest line shall not contain more than twice the number of the shortest corresponding line." Musical scoring is used for scansion of examples.


Bysshe's influence on the eighteenth century is greater (simply by precedence), but Steele is among the two or three most influential figures in the entire history of English versification, as well as a major figure in the history of phonetics. He is responsible for charting an entirely new course in verse-theory, despite the fact that his magnum opus, Prosodia Rationalis, is a treatise on suprasegmental phonology, not metrics. Steele's theory of verse influenced Thelwall, O dell, Chapman, and Roe, and after them Coventry Patmore, A. J. Ellis, Sidney Lanier, T. S. Oman, and John C. Pope. He devoted his career to devising a set of orthographic symbols to transcribe the inflectional features of English speech (stress, pitch, and duration) and, by extension, the structure of English verse; these were quasi-musical. Hence Steele transfers the structure of music, \textit{vis à vis} verse, from the level of analogy to the level of identity. In adapting music to describe verse he was preceded by Gildon (E164), but Gildon never applied the idea beyond a mere example. Steele deserves the credit for elaborating the system formally; he shrugs off the half-hearted efforts of the earlier prosodists and reaches out to grasp the wider theoretical implications of the ideas he is pursuing.

Prosodia Rationalis, however, is more a book to be read about than read. It began as a reply to Lord Monboddo and his doctrine that "the music of our language . . . [is] nothing better than the music of a drum, in which we perceive no difference except that of louder or softer." But as each section of Steele's argument was completed, he sent it off for Lord Monboddo's comments, which were then incorporated along with Steele's replies in subsequent sections of the book: "consequently, Prosodia Rationalis is, in effect, an extended dialogue between the two men, to which is appended, in the second edition, an additional series of questions from other hands, together with the author's replies." (Omond). Steele obviously went far out of his way to present his system as even-handedly as possible.

His system distinguishes five features:

- **accent**: by which Steele means pitch, or tone, and which he is perceptive enough to recognize changes in even \textit{slides}, not in discrete or abrupt shifts;

- **quantity**: meaning relative duration of syllables or pauses. Steele uses quasi-musical symbols to denote "accent" and quantity simultaneously, the heads denoting the direction of pitch-change, the tails (tails above heads in his system), duration:

- **emphasis**: a term Steele uses ambivalently and confusedly to denote both the absolute duration between stresses (cadence, bar), and also the stresses themselves, based on the analogy of the systolic circulatory system of the human body, the heartbeat of which is both regular and intensified. Hence Steele considers syllables either "heavy" or "light" (\textit{poise} is the general term for this phenomenon), and he distinguishes three degrees, \textit{heavy}, \textit{light}, and
lightest: "the rhythmus or measure of speech is the number of cadences in a line or stanza";

- **pause**: in four durations: *semibreve*, *minim*, *crotchet*, and *quaver*; and

- **force**: or loudness, also in four gradations: *louder*, *loud*, *soft*, *softer*.

In versification, time not syllables is to be the basis of meter; the concept of the metrical pause originates with Steele. But he recognizes also that even if the structure of verse is actually that of music the pentameter line cannot be scanned with bar-lines before the stresses, i.e. with a final monosyllabic foot and an initial anacrusis; instead, Steele scans it with a stressed rest beginning the line and an unstressed rest at the end:

\[(/p) I \text{ do not think that you will ever know} \ (p).\]

The five-foot line thus becomes a six- or even as much as an eight- in some cases; Steele does not seem to mind the extremities of this position. Mixing of common and triple time is therefore no problem at all, nor is trisyllabic substitution, since everything depends solely on time.

Altogether, one may say that Steele's ideas were, with some slight qualifications, essentially sound. The notion of emphasis is the chief weakness of his analysis. Some of his transcriptions are unreliable, but since he had no technology to support him, no recorders or oscilloscopes for playback, he had to rely on his ear alone for the one and only hearing of the line. In the history of phonetics he position is very firm. In the history of versification he represents the first, perhaps the foremost, proponent of a view that has not been widely accepted as the correct account of meter but which has been widely recognized as legitimate, even indispensable, as an account of rhythm. After Lanier even several of the prominent Temporal metrists shied away from the concept of music as anything more than analogy to verse, yet these judgments could be comfortably made from the distance of a century and a half from Steele's pioneering work.

Reference: Omond (A5), pp. 87-95, Fussell (E34), pp. 139-43.

See also the following very informative essays:


See also D. Crystal, Prosodic Systems and Intonation in English (1969), 22-25.


This happens to be a study of whether or not the actual performances of rhythmic groups in music (e.g. "iamb", sixteenth-notes followed by accented dotted-eights) correspond to the theoretical values (they do not, the authors conclude), but it has relevance for Temporalist metrics, since its conclusion is that "the sense of rhythm cannot be explained in terms of judgment of time intervals."
Drawing upon concepts from the earlier work of Steele (E394), Andrews (E335), and Stewart (E333), Stevenson deploys a full-fledged theory of English meter that rests on both stressing and timing, distinguishes metrical ictus from speech stress, adopts some of the features of the analogy of verse to music while recognizing sensibly and explicitly the weaknesses and limitations of that analogy, and derives a "foot-free prosody" based on the whole line. With a very striking illustration, Stevenson demonstrates the difference between "metrical stress" (ictus) and "accent" (speech stress) and the functions of the former: as conspicuously regular markers of the metrical paradigm, metrical stresses "have a partitioning effect: they help us to see the pattern as composed of sub-patterns. . . . [they] provide consecutive 'frames' that divide the total 'picture' into smaller 'pictures.' The frames, moreover, are similar frames. So they invite us to compare the pictures within them, noticing when they are alike and when they are different. . . . The frames help us to make the visual comparisons on which our sense of organization depends." The two features which establish ictus are approximately equal timing and limited variability of syllables (i.e. the number of syllables must be relatively small and relatively uniform). Stevenson sees that timing is only "a part of the explanation." Alliteration, stanza-pattern, and pitch can also occasionally help mark ictus. "Metrical stresses are as if ornamental frames, of aesthetic interest in their own right." Music is indeed analogous to verse in that the stresses in verse begin "stress-intervals" equivalent to musical bars (Stevenson claims that "to call a stress-interval by the name foot" is "entirely misleading," but what's in a name? The concept of sub-linear metrical unit is retained.), and metrical pauses are admissible, as is syncopation. Yet pauses in verse may be ambivalent, though not so in music, and verse pauses cannot be "held" over several beats as in music, even besides the obviously greater syllabic variation possible in music, so the analogy has decided limitations and is "always a little misleading" anyway. But syllabic length and syntactic phrase structure, though both quite variable in English verse, are susceptible to marking in scansion and should be noticed. Finally, in a long and important penultimate section, Stevenson argues that the stubborn retention of the "foot" by prosodists has been a result of a fundamental misconception: they have been sidetracked by undue emphasis on the beginning of the line and have believed that the metering of the rest of the line must operate on a principle of the "best echo" of the onset. But the phrase-structure usually belies any clear echoes, and the "foot" therefore appears very artificial. This misconception may have arisen from the general nature of poetic composition, which Stevenson hypothesizes operates mainly on the principle of limited syllabic variability between ictus, extended also to the line-beginning. Such a general principle produces "facts" capable of varying interpretation. Stevenson's interpretation, on the whole, is provocative and extensive; his approach is remarkably sensible.
verse translations and an inaugural address in mathematics. But the Preface and pp. 64-71 discuss metrics. Sylvester agrees completely with the theory of Poe (E315), adding only musical notation for scansion. Rhythm, we are told, consists of metric, chromatic, and synectic, meter itself comprising accent, quantity, and suspensions. The synectic, again, consists of anastomosis, symptosis, and phonetic syzygy; it is this last that especially interests him. He may have found this idea in Mason (E584-86) though the sense is not the same and the transmission seems tenuous.

E403 Thelwall, John. Selections for the Illustration of a Course of Instructions on the Rhythmus and Utterance of the English Language . . . London: J. McGreery, 1812. The section on “Principles of Metrical Proportion, and of Rhythmus,” pp. xlv-lviii, is of interest to us in this elocution and rhetoric manual; Thelwall adopts Steele’s (E394) principles and notation entirely. For reasons I cannot fathom, Omond (A5) devotes three pages to this work.

E404 Thomson, William. The Rhythm of Speech. Glasgow: Maclehose, Jackson, 1923. 559 pp. Many adherents of musical metrics consider Thomson the authoritative treatment of the subject in this century; at the very least it can be said that the massive volume was ahead of its time. The last third of the book concerns Greek and Latin verse. Chapters 1-5 treat the general nature of temporal grouping or rhythm (“a series of blows” is the crux of the definition). Chapter 6 gives the formal statement of his 24 Laws of Speech Rhythm, followed by exemplary analyses in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 redresses Lanier and Goodell for accepting only quantity (Thomson is commonly very contentious without naming names at all), chapters 11 and 12, Mayor, Latham, and Bridges for accepting only accent. Chapter 9 discusses “unsuspected meters” and chapter 10 provides analyses. See the longer discussion of Thomson in Sumera (E401).

Thomson’s magnum opus was based on the following earlier publications:


E407 -----. Notes to accompany a paper on ‘The Role of Numbers in the Rhythm of Ancient and Modern Languages.’ Edinburgh, 1907.


Two disappointing elementary and unhelpful essays by men who scarcely accepted Lanier's views. The Science of English Verse is taken up on pp. 39-53 and its reviews (generally hostile) are reprinted on pp. 82-97. But one may be amused to read that "the trouble began early in life in an inability to choose between music and poetry." Amused or not, one should not trouble to look up this puerile book.

Following an opening review (and rejection) of the Psychological approach to poetic rhythm (Attention Span and Kinesthesis theories), the author comes to her point and method. "We are going to collate the prosody of poetry with that of music." This thesis she will pursue even beyond the shortcomings of Lanier and others. "We may define [the foot] in accents, in quantities, as an isochronous interval, a monopressure, a centroid. . . . We disagree in almost every conceivable way about the composition of the foot, delimiting and refining, but here let us take our motto--Prosody, beware of exclusion. There is not one thing, metrical form." This is fair, but worse follows: "Consequently we shall not narrow the meaning of foot, but follow Saintsbury's lead in shirking a farther definition." But her scansion shows not only notes and bars but also "feet" which seem to be basically syntactic and word boundaries. She accepts a system from Prout's Musical Form providing "Fore Phrase" and "After Phrase," each of these having an A and B section, each section having a and b "feet" (exemplified in the hemistichic octosyllabic couplet). This system allows her to describe (for fifty pages) complex phrasing patterns in verse.


Remarks on rhythm both in music and in poetry, the latter beginning on p. 72; Young's view of poetic measure is derived entirely from his larger conception of rhythm in music, so that for example iambic feet in verse are simply trochaic feet with anacrusis. Part 2 of the essay considers the pleasing forms of variation on "regular and perfect rhythm."

ACOUSTIC METRICS

The invention of devices for recording and measuring speech near the end of the last century immediately offered itself to temporal metrists as an opportunity for obtaining objective evidence about verse-structure. Scripture (E430) was the main impetus. Actually, only a few researchers have pursued this approach, and interest died almost entirely after Schramm, but more recent analyses of recordings by Chatman and others are of the same class. See also the studies discussed in the section on "Kinesthetic Rhythm" in Chapter Five above.

Concludes that the temporal rather than the accentual aspect of rhythm is fundamental. Experiments in finger-tapping and the reading of both iambic pentameters and nursery-rhyme verses show greater irregularities in force than in timing.

An important study, unjustly neglected, which draws some radical conclusions from kymograph recordings of speech (Brown makes some trenchant criticisms of the assumptions behind all finger-tapping and motor-response methodologies) and applies them to theories of meter and rhythm. "There is nothing in the temporal regularity of simpler rhythmic processes which contradicts the assumption of a non-temporal theory of rhythm. And the lack of temporal regularity in verse makes such an assumption inoperative." There is no equality of durations in verse-rhythm. "Is it not natural, then, to conclude that time equality is an inference derived from the apparent equality of two impressions or expressions and confirmed by actual equalities in many rhythms, but not really a constitutive factor in the rhythm at all? . . . In the end it will be much simpler to talk of a rhythm which is actually present . . . the beats of which are not fixed in time, while its effect upon us is that of a series of equal time intervals." And none of the six theories of meter hitherto advanced (quantitative, accentual, musical, stress-verse, centroid, temporal-syllabic) can account for the facts by itself. An adequate theory of meter will have to account for everything—duration, intensity, pitch, etc. "The empirical facts leave no room for a theory of verse rhythm based merely on time." Cf. Booms, Creel, and Hastings (E282).

Repeats some of Snell's (E452) experiments, confirming her conclusion that line-end does not itself desiderate a pause unless the syntax at line-end does, and adding the discovery that readers tend to place pauses either by clause boundaries or by punctuation, with about one pause per line. Discusses (skeptically) the "silent stress" or "metrical pause" pp. 10-11.

Criticizes the Shen-Peterson study of isochronism (D171) for mistaken methods based on misconstrued sources. "The boundaries of the isochronous units are not primary stresses, but are junctures instead." Oscilloscope analysis of recordings of Hopkin's "Pied Beauty" shows isochrony between junctures in the lines.

E418 Hurst, Albert S., and John McKay. "Experiments in Time Relations of Poetic Metres." *University of Toronto Studies, Psychological Series* 1 (1900): 155-75. From experiments in which subjects read verse lines aloud with attention to the rhythm and simultaneously tapped their fingers on a recording device, the authors conclude that isochrony does exist in poetic meter. Yet while agreeing that feet are temporally equal, they deny that the syllables of the feet have any simple and fixed ratios, such as two to one. Dactylic feet are shorter than anapests, trochees shorter than iambics. But a real difference can be found between dactylic and anapestic feet, and to a lesser extent between trochaic and iambic, in terms of the temporal durations of the constituents of the foot: where a is the shortest syllable and c the longest, the dactylic pattern in bac, the anapestic abc.

E419 Jacob, Cary F. "Concerning Scansion." *Sewanee Review* 19 (1911): 352-62. Defends the musical conception of verse with an appeal to scientific authority (acoustics) and a capsule history of ancient music. But Jacob thinks Lanier made three significant errors in method: (1) he believed all English verse to be in triple time (much of it is commonly double); (2) he believed the meters (e.g. iambic and trochaic) to be rhythmically distinct from each other (Jacob denies it); (3) he believed meter a crucial element of verse ("the one essential of verse is rhythm... the phrase and not the line is the thing to be considered").

E420 Jacob. *The Foundations and Nature of Verse.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1918. Based on his dissertation at Columbia. Rev: in *MP* 17 (1920): 727-29; in *JEGP* 19 (1920): 430-33. A temporal theory of verse-structure based on the work in Acoustics by Scripture (E431) (Jacob accepts his "centroids") and in Psychology by Woodrow (D199), Wallin, (D198), and others. Thus, although Jacob advocates musical notation for scansion, the experiments here recorded durations for words, silences, and phrases. Cf. Snell (E452). Jacob believes, by the way, the differences between iambic and trochaic meters to be a subjective impression—a perceptual grouping of phenomena which may occur either way without any objective difference.

E421 "Rhythm in Prose and Poetry." *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education* 13 (1927): 357-75. A maundering essay upholding distinct rhythm as the differentia of poetry. Of interest as curiosities are the very elaborate scansion of prose (North, Malory, Conrad) compared to poetry (Shakespeare, Tennyson, Pound); these mark syntactic groups, time, stress, and quantity. Such gardens need weeding.

E422 Kaplan, Robert B. "An Analysis of Contemporary Poetic Structure, 1930-1955." *D.A* 24 (1963): 3749A (Southern California). English and American poets writing between these dates are classified as "New Puritans" or "New Pagans." Oscilloscope analysis of oral interpretations of poems, providing subtler gradations of stress, pause, and duration, reveals that both traditional metrics and linguistic metrics have deficiencies in terminology. Of metrics: "the field is choked by a great clutter of unscientific thinking."
prejudice, and ignorance." At 315 pages, a very ambitious thesis both thematically and methodologically.

E423 Liddell, Mark H. A Brief Abstract of a New English Prosody Based Upon the Laws of English Rhythm. Lafayette, Ind.: Murphey-Bivens, 1914. 47 pp. The bulk of this little book gives rules for assigning degrees of stress to the various parts of speech, though late chapters indicate how "verse-stress" may modify the speech-stresses. His unit of verse is the "rhythm-wave," which "corresponds to the 'foot' in metrical prosody, to the 'bar' in music." A stress metric, no matter what he calls it. Six degrees of stress are distinguished.

E424 -----. An Introduction to the Scientific Study of English Poetry: Being Prolegomena to a Science of English Prosody. New York: Doubleday, Page, 1902. 312 pp. Resolute for a scientific prosody, Liddell eschews all talk of "feet" or any suggestion that English verse follows quantity; he resolutely upholds Stress as the key, but unfortunately then confounds this clarity with talk of "thought-moments" and graphs of "rhythm-waves." The book may be said to begin on p. 166; the most accessible synopsis is chapter 16, but there is a précis on p. 251. See Morris (next entry), and see More's criticisms in E378.

E425 Morris, Amos R. "Liddell's Law of English Rhythm." Papers of the Michigan Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters 22 (1936): 485-91. Calling for a review of the methodological utility and perceptual validity of Liddell's six-level stress system and his 86 laws of speech rhythm, Morris formulates three questions as criteria for evaluation: "the question of how accurate is his notation of the relative stress. . . . the question of the relation of stress to the other four component physical factors, pitch, time, tempo, and tone color. . . . and a third question of the relation of normal word-stress to sense-stress." Criticizing Liddell's treatment of the third problem and setting aside the second, Morris examines the first: four men read then scanned passages of verse; phonetic analyses of the readings, along with the scansions, were then compared with Liddell's own scansions. All three were very similar, and so the six-level notation is tentatively confirmed as perceptually valid.

E426 -----. The Orchestration of the Metrical Line: An Analytical Study of Rhythmic Form. Boston: Richard G. Badger/Bruce Humphries, 1925. 162 pp. 2nd ed. 1936. 155 pp. Based on his dissertation at Michigan in 1923. Readings of twelve short passages of blank verse, lyrics, prose, and free verse are phonetically analyzed on instruments to produce graphs and tables of duration, pitch, and stress. Time seems to be given the first position, but the interaction (conflicts and correspondences) shown between the three features is the more complex, more interesting matter. Morris finds seven temporal patterns in the ballad but only three in blank verse; also, "pitch, stress, and quantity coincide less exactly as we get further away from the song lyric and the scanned reading of verse." Conclusions on pp. 159-62. N. B.: the prose is terribly elliptical.


E428 Schramm, Wilber Lang. Approaches to a Science of English Verse. University of Iowa Studies, Series on Goals and Progress of Research, no. 46. Iowa City: The
Along with Snell (E452), Schramm is the principle researcher in acoustical metrics using the kymograph for "objective" measurement of verse. He pays his respects to Lanier and Scripture; he notes that accent normally comprises intensity, duration, and pitch increases together; he constrasts "speech melody" to musical melody. Chapters on rime, rhythm, and the metrical foot.

Though this methodology has not been much admired or followed by later prosodists, nevertheless the calm reasonableness of tone here is refreshing and admirable. Short annotated bibliography at the end.


Stress marks the meter in English verse, stress which comprises pitch, duration, and intensity. Which of these is the most important? Experiments show pitch to be largely irrelevant, while duration correlates 50% more often with metrical ictus than intensity does. And on the average, stressed syllables are exactly twice as long as unstressed.


E. W. Scripture was one of the world's leading phoneticians in his day, a pioneer in the recording of speech on a mechanical apparatus, the kymograph, for analysis. His magnum opus in acoustic phonetics, and a sort of capstone to his career at the University of Vienna, is:


In his later years, however, Scripture turned from phonetics to versification, studying a variety of verse forms in both English and German and publishing a considerable number of articles on meter and "the melody of speech" (pitch) in verse as he codified and applied his theory of versification, which is summarized in the last major work of his life, the Grundzüge. All of the articles on verse that Scripture published both before and after that book are based on its theory, so I cite them below with little commentary.

The core of that theory is the postulate that the poetic line, based on observed recordings of speech, is a continuous soundstream, not segmented into any discrete units called "feet," but rather organized by major internal peaks of "energy" (convergences of intensity, loudness, pitch, articulation) which group their proclitic and enclitic syllables around themselves to form wave-like forms in the soundstream. Scripture refused to admit that syllable-boundaries could be identified (though inconsistently he admitted the existence of syllability), so no segmentation was possible. The result was that he was forced to search for line-types, given his view of the line as unit, and though a great many were identified, they could never be reduced to a satisfyingly small number of basic types, as in Sievers. But Scripture's work was a stimulus to Schramm (E428), whose method seems much more sensible.

Other studies by Scripture:

E432 -----. "Analyses of Verse from Herrick, Scott, and Hood." Ar chives néerlandaises de phonétique expérimentale 5 (1930): 64-76.


Abandoning in part his earlier rejection of the "foot," Scripture finds many choriambi (denoted :..: where : represents a strong vowel and . a weak one; alternatively, / x x / ) in English verse. But he does so only by terming the running sequence : . . : . . : . . : . . :  choriambic as well, which seems dubious; traditionally such a sequence would be called dactylic or anapestic.
Kymograph experiments on twenty five lines of Paradise Lost show that 84% of the stressed syllables are longer than the unstressed, by an average of .2 sec.

In iambic, trochaic, anapestic, and dactylic meters 90% of the syllables under ictus were longer than the unstressed syllables outside of ictus in the same foot. Conclusion: "it is evident that Saintsbury's theory that the rhythm of English verse may be interpreted in terms of quantity, and that the foot is the unit, has justification in fact. That stress marks off the time-unit, or the foot, and produces length, is undoubtedly true."

Acoustic-phonetics analysis, via kymograph measurement, of the position and length of pauses (N. B.: rhetorical, syntactic, and logical, not metrical pauses) in the reading of Paradise Lost by eleven subjects, as compared to their readings of lyric verse. Then, measurement of the phrasal units or syntactic groups demarcated by the pauses (these average 6.3 syllables and 1.9 sec. in length). Chapter 4 treats the questions of "metrical rests" and equal-timed feet, concluding that "when it is possible for a foot in a given poem to be five times as long as another in the same poem, and when one foot may frequently be twice as long as another, it is obvious that the theory of equality of time cannot be maintained, and that the omission of light syllables is not compensated by pauses." Summary of Results at the end. Readers by and large agree on the placement of pauses, of which a third more appear within the line than at its end. Interestingly, the word preceding a pause is significantly lengthened.

A study of the meter and stanza forms of Stress Verse--specifically, nursery rhymes, collegiate cheers, and military tunes and chants. Fingertapping and timing experiments on both adults and children show roughly isochronous intervals between beats, with some variations.

Volume 1 presents the theory of Acoustic Meter, volume 2 the more general theory of rhythm (in prose, song, and verse) including a valuable chapter (5) on comparative versification, and volume 3 the kymograph experiments on Isochrony. Verrier is the most substantial study of English metrics ever undertaken which attempts to apply the assumptions and methods of acoustic phonetics. (It is not, however, necessarily the most authoritative; Verrier has been criticized sharply for using too few subjects in his tests to guarantee valid results.) He also uses musical notation as well, though not systematically. Meter is considered a species of rhythm, and metrical feet, which begin with the stressed vowel, are perceptually equal if not objectively so. (In practice Verrier
takes as equal feet that are unequal by as much as 40%). In fact, though the whole third volume concerns the acoustic experiments, Verrier is finally not committed to objective versification; the psychological theories discussed in volume 2 are much closer to his central conception of the subjectivity of the perception of rhythm. Synopsis: "le rythme n'y est constitué que par la coincidence de l'accent avec le temps marqué. . . . il est constitué, comme celui de la musique, par le retour de temps marqué à intervalles sensiblement égaux."

Verrier's researches generated the following studies, though see also L988-96.

A small manual setting forth the metrical types. Rising and falling rhythms are emphasized. Short appendices on Accentuation, Terminology, and an interesting table of Lagaoedic Meters.


E457 -----. "Une variation métrique ('Inversion of Accent')." Revue de phonétietique 2 (1912): 133-38.
Argues that the so-called trisyllabic substitution in the first foot of the iambic pentameter is actually a catalexis followed by a trisyllabic foot; the scansion of the line should not be

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| / x | x / | x / | x / | x / |
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but rather

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| (x) / | x x / | x / | x / | x / |
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See also C178, D242, D248, D323, E236, L1072.