

Principles of Literary Study

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review: iambic pentameter

- ▶ (o)BoBoBoBoB(o)
 - ▶ a line is in this meter if and only if it fits this pattern
 - ▶ but there are multiple ways to fit the pattern
- ▶ always mark stressed and unstressed syllables first (\bar{w} s)
- ▶ then determine beats and offbeats (B o)
- ▶ by default, each s is B and each \bar{w} is o, but...

review: metrical complications

W W
ǒ

S W W S
B ǒ B

review: metrical complications

W W
ǒ

S W W S
B ǒ B

W W W
o B o
—

S S S
B ó B

review: metrical complications

W W
ǒ

S W W S
B ǒ B

W W W
o B o
-

S S S
B ó B

S S W W
B ô B ǒ

W W S S
ǒ B ô B

making meter matter

- ▶ *sound* matters in relation to *meaning*
- ▶ meter creates expectations
- ▶ either fulfillment or surprise can be significant
- ▶ “emphasis” gets you somewhere but it’s only a starting point

further with meter

- ▶ other syllable-stress meters
 - ▶ same rules, just different base patterns
 - ▶ e.g. iambic tetrameter (o)BoBoBoB(o)
 - ▶ trochaic tetrameter BoBoBoBo
 - ▶ triple meters, e.g. oBooBooBooB
 - ▶ varying line lengths (patterned or free)
- ▶ other ways of regulating lines
 - ▶ syllabics (wait and see...)

blank verse

The Measure is English Heroic Verse without Rime, as that of *Homer* in *Greek*, and *Virgil* in *Latin*; Rhime being no necessary Adjunct or true Ornament of Poem or good Verse, in longer Works especially, but the Invention of a barbarous Age, to set off wretched matter and lame Meeter; grac't indeed since by the use of some famous modern Poets, carried away by Custom, but much to thir own vexation, hindrance, and constraint to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse then else they would have exprest them....

True musical delight...consists onely in apt Numbers, fit quantity of Syl-
lables, and the sense variously drawn out from one Verse into another,
not in the jingling sound of like endings, a fault avoyded by the learned
Ancients both in Poetry and all good Oratory.

John Milton, "The Verse," in *Paradise Lost*, [front matter](#), in *The John Milton Reading Room*, ed. Thomas H. Luxon (Dartmouth College, 2020).

elevation effects (1798)

For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Not harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of **elevated** thoughts; a sense **sublime**
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey," ll. 89–103

Marvell

“To His Coy Mistress,” ll. 13–14

W S W S W S W S
An hundred years should go to praise
o B o B o B o B

W S W W W S W S
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
o B o B o B o B

meter effects

S W W S W S W S
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
B o B o B

S S w? w w S W S
Stand still, yet we will make him run.
? o B o B o B

-
? o B o B o B

“To His Coy Mistress”

“To His Coy Mistress”

Had we but world enough, and time... (1)

But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near... (21–22)

Now therefore... (33)

rhyme and wit

And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews. (9–10)

 then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity (27–28)

The grave's a fine and private place,
But none I think do there embrace. (31–32)

Now let us sport us while we may, And now, like amorous birds of prey
(37–38)

world enough: space

which way / To walk (3–4)

Indian Ganges...Humber (5, 7)

Vaster than empires (12)

world enough: space

which way / To walk (3–4)

Indian Ganges...Humber (5, 7)

Vaster than empires (12)

At my back... / Time's winged chariot (22)

And yonder all before us lie / Deserts of vast eternity. (24–25)

world enough: space

which way / To walk (3–4)

Indian Ganges...Humber (5, 7)

Vaster than empires (12)

At my back... / Time's winged chariot (22)

And yonder all before us lie / Deserts of vast eternity. (24–25)

Let us roll all our strength, and all
Our sweetness, up into one ball; (41–42)

rhyme in general: syllable structure

onset	nucleus	coda
0+ cons.	vowel	0+ cons.
l	e	t
	ea	t
d	ie	
	eye	
str	e	ngths

- ▶ many syllables lack coda (*die*), onset (*eat*) or both (*a*, *eye*)

rime everything after the onset

rhyme in general: possibilities

- ▶ creates a larger-scale rhythm
 - ▶ especially marked with end-stopping
- ▶ links words across lines
 - ▶ which may be meaningful or not
- ▶ can register as musicality, jingliness...
- ▶ possibilities for stunts: fancy rhymes and hidden rhymes

Swift: joining like to unlike

Here various Kinds, by various Fortunes led,
Commence Acquaintance underneath a Shed. (39–40)

Now from all Parts the swelling Kennels flow,
And bear their Trophies with them as they go:
Filths of all Hues and Odours, seem to tell
What Street they sail'd from, by the Sight and Smell.
They, as each Torrent drives with rapid Force,
From *Smithfield*, or *St. Pulchre's* shape their Course,
And in huge Confluent join at *Snowhill* Ridge,
Fall from the *Conduit* prone to *Holbourn-Bridge*. (53–60)

heroic couplet end-stopped, rhymed iambic pentameter

Yeats: rhyme awry

- ▶ Choose a moment in “Adam’s Curse” where rhyme is working unusually. Explain how and why.

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poetry / maybe (3–4)

clergymen // thereupon (13–14)

school / beautiful (19–20)

thing / labouring (21–22)

enough // love (27–28)

strove / love (35–36)

grown / moon (37–38)

Owen: reasons not to rhyme

'Strange friend,' I said, 'here is no cause to mourn.'
'None,' said that other, 'save the undone years,
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,
Was my life also; I went hunting wild
After the wildest beauty in the world,
Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,
But mocks the steady running of the hour,
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.
For by my glee might many men have laughed,
And of my weeping something had been left,
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.
Now men will go content with what we spoiled,
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.' (14–27)

next: sonnets!

- ▶ exercise due Friday
- ▶ bring back today's selections
- ▶ read a lot of sonnets; print at least:
 - ▶ Shakespeare, Sonnets 20, 125, 138
 - ▶ Donne, Holy Sonnet 10
 - ▶ Yeats, "Leda and the Swan"
 - ▶ Heaney, "Clearances"
- ▶ read Vendler on Shakespeare (Canvas)